

Protocol for object handling sessions

Camic, Dickens, Zeilig & Strohmaier (2021). Subjective wellbeing in people living with dementia: Exploring processes of multiple object handling sessions in a museum setting. *Wellcome Research Open*.

Pre-session tasks and measures (15-20 minutes)

- Position 360fly cameras (x2 with medium/high resolution) and audio recorder
- Sync (and activate) Empatica wristbands with video and audio devices and begin recording
- Show participants into the object handling room
- Invite any persons who have accompanied a participant to explore the museum or surrounding area and to return for refreshments after the session
- ‘Tag’ and attach Empatica wristbands
- Complete Canterbury Wellbeing Scales
- Complete verbal fluency measures

Object Handling Session (60 minutes)*

- Display a range of 6-7 objects in the centre of a table. Provide chairs for participants to sit down around the table in a circle
- Ensure objects are novel and diverse in their cultural, historical and sensory qualities
- Researchers are to participate in the object handling sessions as participants do
- Facilitator to:
 - Lead sessions in a non-didactic way maximising on group participation and to ensure a balance is struck between encouraging participation/allowing people to speak and not putting participants on the spot
 - Introduce the session and ask participants to share their name with the group. Sticky labels will be provided to write names on *5 mins*
 - Allow the objects to be passed around and discussion to take place. *10 -15 mins*
 - Place objects back in the centre of the table *30 - 35 mins*
 - Pass 1-2 objects around the group at a time asking a range of questions to stimulate group discussion and curiosity (see example questions below). Do not provide factual information on the object until the group has discussed it
 - Bring the session to a close and notify participants that post-measures will be collected and refreshments provided *5 mins*
 - Provide each participant with a session summary sheet consisting of pictures and information on each object included in the session and the time and date of the next session

Post-session tasks and measures (15-20 minutes)

- Complete Canterbury Wellbeing Scales
- Complete verbal fluency measures
- ‘Tag’ (if possible), remove and deactivate Empatica wristbands
- Provide refreshments in the object handling room
- Session end – thank participants for their time
- Turn off 360fly cameras (x2)
- Turn off audio recorder
- Upload Empatica data and delete from wristbands
- Upload audio and video data and delete from devices
- Store paper questionnaires securely
- Hand out shopping vouchers

- Each of the 3 object handling sessions will follow the same format, however objects and questions/discussion topics will vary

- Pre- and post-measures will be taken individually at different points during the allocated 15-20 minutes before and after the object handling session. Allow participants to socialise between completing these measures. Multiple staff members will be present to assist with collecting pre- and post-measures to ensure 15-20 minutes is sufficient.

* Facilitators to use this flexibly as a guide and draw on their professional experience of leading handling sessions with the public and training in working with PWD.

Example questions for facilitators

- How does this object make you feel?
- Who would you give this to?
- Where would you keep this in your house?
- What do you think this object is?
- What is its purpose?
- What is your favourite object?
- What is your least favourite object?
- How old do you think the object is?
- Where did this come from?
- What stands out about this object?
- Who might own this?
- What does the object make you think of?
- Does the object tell a story?
- What is the objects most striking feature?

These are to be used flexibly, depending on what comes up in sessions.

Session 1

- Objects for session:
 1. Lucky Iron Fish (WC)
 2. Obsidian Mirror (WC)
 3. Yoruba Twin Figures (WC)
 4. Agate slice
 5. Ceramic salt shaker
 6. C18th glass floor protector
- Display objects in the centre of the table
- Introduce the session and welcome participants to the group *5 mins*
- Facilitator picks one object from the group of objects on the table and passes it around the group. After it has been passed round once (or sooner, according to the response from the group) facilitators will start to ask questions, similar to the example questions given, to elicit participants' ideas and feelings about the object. Factual information about the object usually emerges in the course of this; if this doesn't happen, facilitators will end by telling participants more about the object. *10-15 mins*
- Second facilitator picks a second object and the process above is repeated. It may be that a lot of conversation is stimulated by the first two objects and the whole timeslot will be filled, but further objects will be selected if there is time. If a third or fourth object is to be chosen, facilitators may ask the participants if they would like to choose what to focus on from those remaining. *25-30 mins*
- Five minutes before the end of the session the facilitators will bring all the objects back together and ask all participants a) is there one object they would chose to have in their home, and where would they keep it?
b) is there an object they would like to give to someone else- and why? *5 mins*
- Bring the session to a close, provide handout and notify participants that post-measures will be collected and refreshments provided *5 mins*

Session 2

- Objects for session:
 1. Sandalwood Elephant
 2. Woven Basket
 3. Images of pomanders from WC
 4. Black pepper spice container
 5. Clove spice container
 6. Cinnamon spice container
 7. Turmeric spice container
- Introduce the session and welcome participants to the group *5 mins*
- Facilitators pass the two handling objects (basket and elephant) around the group, ask open questions about them (similar to example questions), for 5 to 10 minutes. We ask participants what they think the two objects once contained (no right or wrong answers). Show participants [MUSEUM NAME] images of pomanders and discuss with participants what pomanders were used for and draw comparisons with the two objects. *10-15 mins*
- Place the two objects and the images back in the centre of the table
- Bring out four closed containers with air holes containing fresh spices. Pass each around in turn encouraging participants to identify the spice. Elicit conversation about the spices, again using example questions, but particularly focusing on topics around preference, memory, taste, use, properties of each spice and which spice participants might like to place in a pomander. *30 - 35 mins*
- Bring the session to a close, provide handout and notify participants that post-measures will be collected and refreshments provided *5 mins*

Session 3

- Objects for session:
 1. Box by Antonio Gomez
 2. Box by Antonio Gomez
 3. Fisherman's floats
 4. Tile replica
 5. Metal key
 6. Acupuncture figure
 7. Baby's feeding bottle (can't be included in glass case display)
 8. Knitted neurons
 9. Prosthetic hand (can't be included in glass case display)

- Introduction to session *2 mins*

- Pass objects around the group one by one -or two by two- from a box kept beneath the table. Ask participants questions, similar to example questions, about each object as it comes around. Different techniques may be used – for example, if there are four participants, putting them into pairs, and giving each pair an object to talk about, as well as passing single objects around the entire group. Objects will end up in centre of table. *35 mins*

- Participants will be put into two pairs (if there are enough participants) and each pair will be given one of the Antonio Gomez boxes to discuss between them; after three or four minutes they will be asked for their response to the boxes and if they think there is a story or theme to each box. The boxes are then put to one side. *5-7 mins*

- Participants will then choose objects, from six remaining in the centre of the table, to form a display: objects they think share a theme or tells a story. An example may be given of how objects might be linked by a story. The group will be asked which objects they would choose and what links they think there are or could be between them. The objects will then be arranged on a sheet of paper on the table before being arranged in the display case. *15 mins*

- Bring the session to a close, provide handout and notify participants that post -measures will be collected and refreshments provided. Carers will be invited to look at the display case. *5 mins*