

“Definition and Usage - Reminiscence Arts”

David Savill



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Reminiscence Arts is the practice and exploration of lived experience through the arts. Reminiscence Arts may be narrative, linear, experienced through embodied memory, and as sense memory. When effective it has resonance and value where the focus is to explore past life experience to influence relationships, learning, care and creativity in the present.

At the heart of Reminiscence Arts is the focus on empowering the individual, enabling them to share reminiscence through a range of arts mediums and to interact creatively and positively with others.

Reminiscence Arts has relevance across cultures and generations. It is practiced by professionals from multidisciplinary arts backgrounds to which a focused training in reminiscence, ethics, and activity, enriches their potential to empower older people through triggering connections with lived experience.

It is highly effective in work with vulnerable older people, specifically older people with dementia. In these care and community settings professionals work with a highly person centred and empathetic focus. Reminiscence is explored organically through a wide range of stimuli as the professional reaches to find the trigger that enables the participant to engage, communicate, and create. This may be through encouraging sense memory, smell, touch, taste, or use of music, or most effective where language and formal memory may appear lost – through embodied memory. Looking at how a work movement, home chore, dance, may be reconnected with and enjoyed in the present. In this field of work Reminiscence Arts is highly valued in using a person's found life history to influence quality of life and well-being in the present.

Reminiscence Arts is used to train care staff, to provide them with relevant skills enabling them to use the life story of residents or patients and provide meaningful activity that is person centred. In this way reminiscence is used not for the sole purpose of reaching into long term memory, but in order to use knowledge of a person's life history to influence the quality of care they receive on a daily basis.