

# *Innisfail Memory Café Facilitators Guide*



**Innisfail Public Library:** 5300A 55 street C

**Date:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each Month

**Time:** 1:30 pm – 3:00 pm

**Coffee and Tea provided by Library.**

**If participants would like snacks then a charge will be added. Please discuss this with the participants**

A second Memory Café may be added in the future at a different location in Innisfail

Thank-you for volunteering to be a facilitator with the Innisfail Memory Café. Information in this booklet is provided to assist you in facilitating the café and in supporting the participants. If you need further information or support please contact FCSS at 403-227-3376 ext. 233 or 225 and they will connect you with who is best able to assist.

Memory Cafés are meant to be a friendly, welcoming and safe place that provides social interaction, emotional support and learning opportunities for people living with dementia and their care partners. Care partners can refer to family members, friends or other individuals that support people living with dementia. Memory Café's will are not only to support people but are to combat stigma and promote discussion about dementia.

### ***What happens at a Memory Café?***

Memory cafes offer a relaxed atmosphere- often set up like a coffee shop- free of judgement and stigma. Over light refreshments (such as tea, coffee and snacks), people can socialize, share experiences and discuss their concerns. Memory cafes can provide a safe place and the camaraderie of others who understand what it's like to live with dementia. However, ***the cafes are not intended to provide respite. They are also not replacements for support groups, dementia education programs, memory clinics or Adult day support programs.***

The Memory café will run for approximately 1.5 hours and will meet at a designated location that will be consistent each month. Be sure each participant wears a name tag during each memory cafe so that if participants have some memory slips, they can still connect with others by name. Information provided below will include potential topics of conversation, as well as possible activities that can be done depending on what the participants would like to do.

### **Facilitator Responsibilities:**

1. Facilitator is responsible for organizing each café by engaging all participants. Feel free to utilize topics listed in this guide to stimulate conversation. May also use games or other activities to engage the group. Public Library has some games that can be used or if participants have games or other items they would like to bring please encourage this.
2. If participants would like to have speakers come periodically the facilitator is encouraged to connect with the speaker and make those arrangements.
3. The facilitator is responsible to ensure that all participants have a name tag with their first names on it **at each session.**
4. Sign in Book: a book will be provided for the participants to sign in at the beginning of each memory cafe. This information will only be shared with the Dementia Friendly Communities Steering Committee for use of reporting sustainability of the program and attendance. Please keep this information in a secure location and do not share with others. It is important to respect the participant's privacy.
5. Welcome the participants and ask if anyone is celebrating a Special Event or news such as Birthday or Anniversary etc.
6. The facilitator can contact (by telephone) participants to inform them of any changes to the Memory Café or to connect with participants if they have stopped attending the café. Facilitator is encouraged to inquire if changes need to be made to better support participants in the memory café to maintain participant's attendance.

Several sessions may be required before a bond and trust will be established between you and the participants. In the beginning, participants may simply not know how to accept your attention. The following suggestions may help to guide you.

## DO

- ★ Take time to learn something about the participants. Story sharing is vital to making this group work. Some suggestions are included: Interests, background, and needs.
- ★ Touch and hug. Physical touch can go a long way toward letting the participants know you care. Be sure that the person is comfortable with physical touch and that it is appropriate.
- ★ Respect confidentiality. Keep private conversations private.
- ★ Be a good listener. Your participants may often have no one else who spends time to talk.
- ★ Keep promises. **Be careful what you promise.** Never say anything unless you mean it.
- ★ Be gentle, kind and sincere.
- ★ Respect privacy.
- ★ Remember that the participants are adults and should be treated as such. Accept and respect each participant as a unique individual, regardless of mental or physical condition.
- ★ Remember that you are a vital part of the community; so are the participants.
- ★ Be enthusiastic!
- ★ Introduce yourself and say why you are there.
- ★ Greet participants by name.
- ★ Start with “small talk”  
(How are you, what have you done today, weather report ...)
- ★ Smile lots.
- ★ Show sincere interest.
- ★ Be the participant’s link to the outside world and our community.
- ★ Have a desire to learn from them.
- ★ Tell them about your day.

## DON'T

- ★ Don't be a clock-watcher while visiting. Quality, not quantity of time is important.
- ★ Don't feel obliged to solve the personal problems of the participants. Just being there to listen and empathize, is important.
- ★ Don't let the participants dwell on negative feelings. Allow them to express themselves, and then move on to a positive activity.



## Dealing with the unforeseen

### Difficulty in getting participants to talk

- Ask leading questions or choose a controversial topic.
- Use props. Props can include items to stimulate conversation such as milk can etc.
- Ensure that seating is arranged to:
  - Allow eye contact
  - Enable participants to hear
- Sit across from the participant to ensure eye contact.

### A participant seems more withdrawn than usual

- Try to ascertain the cause – is it due to a medical problem or emotional upset?
- Ask what the problem is. Ask if they can share it with you. Do this privately away from Others
- Sit nearby and use touch if appropriate.
  - Redirect by engaging in conversation
  - Care partner may chose to leave early.

### A participant repeatedly tries to leave the room

- Make sure that the activity or conversation is compatible with participant's abilities.
- Ascertain why they wish to leave – are they bored, unhappy or wanting the toilet?  
Rely on the care partner to manage these behaviors.

### A participant becomes distressed during the group

- Encourage participant to share and offer individual support and time to listen. Again rely on the Care partner to provide this support or direction. If this is a sudden change in behavior, encourage the care partner to seek medical advice.

## Be aware that certain topics of conversation could trigger negative feelings or signs of emotions

### In Case of Emergency

#### Fire:

- Follow instructions given by the organization or agency where the program is hosted. **Example:** go to the designated muster point which is generally outdoors.
- Facilitator should keep a count of the participants to be sure everyone is together and away from harm.

#### Health Emergency:

- Assist if safe to do so for example is someone falls but is not seriously injured then safely assist them to get up and into a chair. Always recommend after a fall to get checked out by a health care professional.
- Call 9-1-1 and support the injured individual and the other participants. Medical personnel will direct people when needed.

## Topics to Stimulate Conversation or can be utilized as Session Themes:

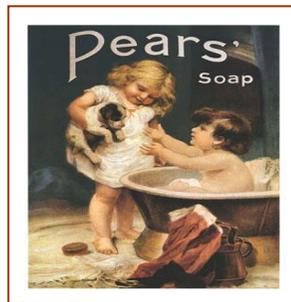
### Family and Ancestry

- ★ What was your mother's name?
- ★ What was your father's name?
- ★ What did you call your grandparents?
- ★ What country were you born in?
- ★ Do you have any brothers and/or sisters?  
If so, where do they live?
- ★ Was your family a religious one?
- ★ Did you attend church services together?
- ★ What did your dad do for a living? Your mother?
- ★ Were you named after someone in your family?
- ★ Did you have family reunions?
- ★ Did your family have pets?
- ★ Did you consider your family rich, poor, or middle class?
- ★ What were the toughest times for you and your family?  
What times were the most happy and memorable?



### Home Life

- ★ What did the house that you grew up in look like?
- ★ Did you have a bedroom of your own or did you share it?
- ★ What rooms did your home have? How were they decorated?
- ★ Was there a lot of talking in your house?
- ★ Did you have a yard? What do you remember doing in your yard?
- ★ Did your family have a garden? If so, did you like helping out?
- ★ What sounds or smells do you remember enjoying around your home place?
- ★ Did you have electricity? An indoor bathroom?
- ★ What, if any, modern conveniences did you have in your home?  
(e.g. A toaster, electric stove, television, radio, dishwasher....)
- ★ Did your family have visitors over often? What did you do together?
- ★ Did you have a fireplace or a wood stove? Who kept it full of wood?
- ★ Did your family ever have to move? If so, what were your feelings?





## Memories of Growing Up

- ★ What were your favorite things to do and games to play as a child?
- ★ Who was/were your best friend(s) in school? What did you do together?
- ★ Did you play sidewalk games? Games with balls? Singing games?
- ★ Did you have chores around your house? If so, which ones did you not mind and which ones did you not enjoy at all?
- ★ Do you remember having any illnesses as a child (measles, mumps, and chicken pox)? Did you ever have to go to the hospital?
- ★ Did you ever experience a flood, tornado, or big snowstorm? What do you remember about it?
- ★ What kinds of activities did you enjoy (swimming, baseball, hockey, skating, and horse riding...)? Where did you do them?
- ★ What did you ever do that got you in serious trouble at home? How did your parents discipline you?
- ★ Do you remember celebrating birthdays? What was your favorite kind of cake? What kind of presents did you receive?
- ★ What were your favorite holidays? How do you remember celebrating them?



## School Days

- ★ What was the name of your school? What kind of school was it? Did you or anyone in your family have the chance to attend high school?
- ★ How did you get to school?
- ★ Did you sit in a desk of your own? What kind of school supplies did you have?
- ★ Did you pack a lunch for school? What did you carry it in and what do you remember eating?
- ★ What did you do in the summer when school was out?
- ★ Did you have homework to do?
- ★ What were your favorite subjects? Why?
- ★ Do you remember any teachers? What did you like or not like about any of them?
- ★ Were you involved in plays, music, school sports, Christmas concerts...?
- ★ What did you want to be when you grew up?
- ★ Do you remember dating anyone in school? What did you do on a date?
- ★ What activities did you do for fun as a teenager? What is your favorite memory as a teenager?



## Military Memories

- ★ Were you conscripted into the army or did you sign up?
- ★ Where were you stationed?
- ★ What did your uniform look like?
- ★ What do you remember about the war?
- ★ Did you lose any friends? When did you first see combat?
- ★ Was it difficult to return home after the war? Were there jobs? What did you do when you came home?



## Work and Career

- ★ What was your first job?
- ★ What did you enjoy about the job(s) that you have had?
- ★ What did you not like?
- ★ Did your work require any special training or did you learn on the job?
- ★ What do you remember about the people you worked with?
- ★ Do you think you were paid fairly for the jobs you've had?
- ★ Were you ever fired or laid off from a job?
- ★ What did you have to go through to get a job (write a resume, have an interview...)?



## Food

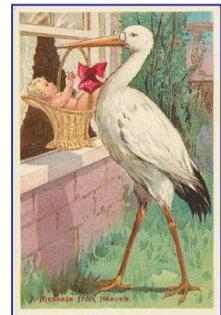
- ★ What is your favorite food?
- ★ Did your family ever go out to restaurants? What did you like to order?
- ★ Were you a good cook? What kinds of things did you enjoy cooking?
- ★ What do you remember as your mother's specialty?
- ★ What kinds of treats did your family have at Christmas?
- ★ Did you have special meals with certain holidays or festivities?
- ★ What is the most delicious meal you have ever had?
- ★ Have you tried different ethnic foods? Which ones do you enjoy?



## Romance and Relationships



- ★ Did you date anyone as a teenager or young adult? What did you do on your dates?
- ★ Do you remember your engagement? How did your husband propose to you? (How did you propose to your wife?)
- ★ Describe your wedding day. What date was it? What was the weather like? How many guests did you have? Who were they and what did they wear?
- ★ What was your wedding dress/suit like? Do you still have it?
- ★ Did you go on a honeymoon? Where did you go?
- ★ What were the hardest times in your marriage?
- ★ What was the most romantic time in your marriage?
- ★ How many children do you have?
- ★ Do you remember telling your husband that you were pregnant?
- ★ How did you feel for those nine months?
- ★ What did maternity clothes look like?
- ★ What names did you choose for your children?
- ★ Why did you choose those particular names?
- ★ Were they named after relatives?
- ★ What kind of relationship did you have with your children?
- ★ Did you talk a lot?
- ★ Laugh a lot together?
- ★ What did you do to discipline your children?
- ★ Did they seem to learn their lessons quickly?
- ★ What did you find difficult about being a parent?
- ★ What did you enjoy the most about parenting?



## Favorite Things

- ★ What was the best day of your life?
- ★ What is/was your favorite:
  - Candy bar
  - Cake
  - Ice-Cream
  - Perfume or cologne
  - Flower
  - Color
  - Book
  - Song
  - Movie
  - Season
  - Sports team
  - Hobby
  - Drink
  - Piece of Clothing



## Hobbies and Special Interests



- ★ Were you interested in sports as a child or adult? Which ones?
- ★ Did you enjoy plays, singing, music, or dancing?
- ★ Were you a green thumb? What kinds of flowers did you grow?
- ★ Did you have a big garden? Where did you keep your vegetables in the winter?
- ★ Did you make homemade jams, jellies, and syrups? What kinds?
- ★ Did your family have a television? What programs do you remember watching?
- ★ Did your family pray or read the Bible together?
- ★ Would you say that you are a crafty person? What kinds of things did you make?
- ★ Are there any other things you remember doing to pass the time?



## Travel

- ★ Where is the farthest you have traveled?
- ★ What place(s) would you like to have gone?
- ★ When your family was growing up, did you ever go on vacation? If so, where did you go and what did you enjoy doing?
- ★ Did you and your spouse go on a honeymoon? Tell me about it.
- ★ Have you ever taken a trip alone?
- ★ Have you ever traveled by car, train, boat or plane?
- ★ What is the most unusual memory you have from a vacation?



## Transportation

- ★ Did you have a bike? Was it your own or did you have to share with your brothers and sisters?
- ★ Who taught you to ride your first bike?
- ★ Have you ever had your own vehicle? When did you get it?
- ★ Do you remember getting tested for your drivers' license?
- ★ How much did it cost for a tank of gas?
- ★ Do you prefer driving an automatic or a standard?
- ★ What is your favorite vehicle, car or truck?
- ★ Have you ever been involved in a car accident? Were you seriously injured? What did your vehicle look like?
- ★ What do you enjoy about driving? What do you not enjoy?
- ★ Would you consider yourself a responsible driver?



## Fashion

- ★ What kind of clothes did you wear for working around the house? For going to school? For attending church?
- ★ What were your favorite clothes?
- ★ Did your parents buy your clothes or were they homemade?
- ★ If you bought them, where were they purchased? Did you enjoy shopping for clothes?
- ★ What was your favorite way to wear your hair?
- ★ Did you use curlers, hair dryers, curling irons, and/or barrettes?
- ★ What did your shoes look like? Did you have many different shoes for different occasions?
- ★ Do you remember sharing clothes with your brothers or sisters?
- ★ What are some fashions that you have seen come and go in your lifetime?
- ★ What do you think of the fashions today?



### **Other Topics of Conversation**

A theme is a subject or topic that acts as the focus for a series of varied, but linked, activities.

**For example:**

- Annual national events, e.g. Canada Day events and memories
- Childhood days – schooling and education, family life, games and play
- Clothing
- Colors
- Communications
- Countries
- Countryside
- Courtship
- Entertainment – home and outside
- Family life
- Farms
- Films
- Food and drink
- Friendship
- Games
- Gardens and gardening, flowers and plants
- Historical eras
- Hobbies and occupations
- Holidays and travel
- Homes and housing
- Marriage and weddings
- Money, wages, cost of items, coins
- Music
- Outings
- Pets and animals
- Professions, trades and apprenticeships
- Religious festivals (remember to consider cultures other than your own)
- Royalty
- Saints and national days
- Seaside
- Seasonal activities (e.g. new year resolutions, harvesting)
- Seasons – winter, spring, summer, autumn
- Sports
- Television and radio programs and personalities – then and now
- Transport
- Uniforms
- Weather
- Workplace

## **Activity Ideas**

Make sure you are aware of any key dates within the participant's lives (cultural, religious calendars, birthdays or anniversary). These are just suggestions, other areas of conversation and tasks that can be done together.

**Examples:** New Year's, Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, Easter, Birthday or Wedding Anniversary, Canada Day, Thanksgiving, Halloween, Remembrance Day, Christmas etc.

### **Memory**

Word and number games (crosswords, hangman, target, word chains) and quizzes  
Simple games (solitaire, Uno, crib, snap, war or other card games, dominos, Chinese checkers, scrabble, Yahtzee)  
Picture matching  
Debates or newspaper discussions  
Memory games (completing proverbs)  
Puzzles (crosswords, word search, Sudoku, jigsaw puzzles)

### **Communication**

Discussions (local news, ask the client's thoughts on a topic)  
Story making  
Reminiscence (talk about family, travels, use a magazine to stimulate conversation)  
Reading (newspaper, novels, short stories- e.g. Chicken Soup for the Soul books)  
Writing (Christmas, valentine cards to deliver to a supportive living location in town) or making cards  
Poetry reading/recitation

### **Music** – Can be incorporated into so many other activities

Listening to participant's favorite music on the radio etc.  
Reminiscence: sing old songs and talk about where they heard them or what life event reminds the client of the song  
Singing: sing a longs, singing hymns, karaoke. Song sheets can be found on the internet  
Music played to encourage relaxation – slow and calming sounds, or birds singing

### **Reminiscence**

Discussions (using props such as photo albums, pictures, old newspaper articles or info taken off the internet, items from the museum)  
Intergenerational (watch children play in the school grounds or discuss what participants did growing up or with their children)  
Singing  
Link with local libraries and schools (history books or looking at National Geographic)

## **Sensory**

Different textures and fabrics, exploring smells – foods, perfumes – these will all elicit reminiscing and memories

Pets – talk about favorite pets and what made them special. Share pictures of pets

Personal care activities (using creams, oils)

Music or sounds – birds singing, moose call

Plants and Flowers – smelling

Rummage boxes: filled with a wide range of objects such as familiar household objects or items of interest such as fishing box, sewing box, grooming, farming, school days, seasonal items (Christmas), gardening box. This can also be a project by the Memory Café participants for their own use or for use at home.

## **Games**

**Participants may have other games or suggestions. Ask participants or friends if the below games can be borrowed to use at the Memory Café. The Public library also has some games that can be used during this time.**

Apples to Apple

Checkers

Cards (matching games or 21, solitaire etc.)

Tic-Tac-Toe (X and O's)

Easy Word searches, crossword puzzles, hidden words

Jigsaw puzzles

Dominos

Jacks

Who is it game (pictures of past movie stars, Prime Ministers Etc. Can also use famous buildings or animal pictures, grocery items)

Hangman

Crib

Yahtzee

Ante Up (penny ante)

Horse racing game

10 thousand (dice game)

Sequence

Rummy

Dutch Blitz

Crazy 8's or Go fish (other card games)

## **Memory Café Speakers can be arranged to join group for information sharing session or intergenerational visits:**

### **Examples:**

Tai Chi, Yoga, Pilates, Animal Therapy,

Local business owner to come and talk about what they provide and how they can support participants such as a private physiotherapy clinic, massage therapy, acupuncture,

Fire or RCMP department on home prevention or safety tips,

PCN exercise specialist on the importance of exercise,

Community event organizer to talk about what is coming up in community, or FCSS programs available in Innisfail,

Encourage school groups to come and join a session to visit or to do a project together,

Invite Mom and Tots group to come for a visit,

Volunteer with the Art from the Heart program to come talk,

Encourage participants to consider attending Wisdom or Wellness Wednesdays at the Lundgren Center for further education topics or

The Innisfail Public Library has a section on Dementia so encourage participants to connect with the library for topics of interest to them.