

BALLOON PLAY CONVERSATION

These are the training notes for the JABADAO team for using balloons to support good conversation - that doesn't need words or memory. We're sharing them with you in case they are useful



1

TAKE A HUGE BALLOON

Huge balloons float much more slowly than small ones - which opens up many more possibilities for the play (or interaction) that unfolds

2

THINK CONVERSATION RATHER THAN GAME

Start by thinking of this as a conversation conducted in movement, (rather than just a bit of a knockabout). And the subject matter belongs to the person with dementia

3

NEUTRAL TO START

Offer the balloon in a neutral way - a gentle float towards your partner with no specific game in mind. Get the measure of the balloon for a bit ... with no other agenda. Probably no words. Let the focus be on the movement

4

WATCH, WATCH, WATCH

Spend time really noticing what your partner does, and the way that they do it. You need to see so much that you could reproduce your partner's body language to show someone else. You could 'be' them

5

MIRROR YOUR PARTNER'S MOVEMENT

Gradually mirror the way your partner plays with the balloon. Bat it back with the same force (gentle or boisterous), with the same shape arm, the same quality of attention. Follow their rhythm - easy flow, start-stop whatever it is. Our job is to find the flow and support it ...



6

TAKE CARE OF THE ENDING

A good conversation - sharing ourselves, our feelings - needs careful rounding up. Find a way that feels right. Respectful. Honour the closeness that may have built between you. (Or not!)