



# Guidance Manual

*Level One* *Drumming for Dementia*



INSPIRED BY PEOPLE WITH EXPERIENCE OF DEMENTIA



**GUIDANCE OF HOW TO DELIVER A ONE TO ONE  
DRUMMING SESSION TO CALM AND SOOTHE**

To deliver these sessions you require a Hoop drum and beater

## WELCOME

Regardless of a medical diagnosis, changes take place in our sensory perception as we age.

Our vision becomes less acute, certain sounds are harder to capture, our taste and smell change, and touch becomes less sensitive.

These natural changes are even harder to adapt to when dementia is present.

Memory fades and words become fragile, yet we still retain memories gained through our senses.

The purpose of this Level One Drumming for Dementia course is to help you develop an alternative way of connecting with your loved one or patients without the need for words.

If you are taking part in this Level One Drumming for Dementia course you probably care for someone with a dementia. That is not an easy path to walk.

It is hard to reach the person you remember, leaving you lost in knowing how to help.

The good news is you can make a real difference. Drumming for Dementia has been designed to help families and carers stay connected.

One of our challenges has been to create a resource that accounts for different stages and types of dementia. You know the person, so it is up to you to decide if this type of activity is suitable.

More than anything, we hope you enjoy your time together creating music and rhythm.

Kindest

*Kim*

Dr Kim Brown

## A DRUM BEAT IS SIMPLY ONE HEART SPEAKING TO ANOTHER

Do not leave anyone out of a drumming session in the belief they will not be able to participate. We have seen some incredible results of people connecting. Even if it is only for a short period.

One to one drumming should take place with just one individual in a quiet area where they will not be disturbed.

Set up for success by ensuring they are warm and comfortable.

If they are agitated try and see the world through their senses. Do they need the toilet, could they be in pain such as toothache, is there distracting background noises like a television, radio or someone shouting?

Ensure you approach them at a slow pace giving them plenty of time to respond.

Approach them front on and come down to their eye level if they are sitting.

Try and get eye contact before you proceed.

Smile.

Ask their permission to take part in some drumming.

Watch and listen carefully for response.

Make sure you give off a calm and caring energy.

Make sure drums or percussion instruments are already adapted to meet their needs if they are taking part with you – Velcro is a great help for adjusting handles.

Invite them to listen to you drum first.

Just gently tap a heartbeat with your fingers.

Then move to a beater if they do not object.

Try gently singing.

If they are hard of hearing, they will still feel the vibrations.

Give them your drum or invite them to take part with another drum.

Take everything very slowly – it is a form of meditation for them and you.

Do not question their reality. If they tell you they are waiting for their boyfriend then suggest you drum together whilst waiting.

Enter their world – do not try and drag them into yours.

Be aware of their sensitivity to sounds - everyone is different in this.

You can use the lup dup of the heartbeat or add a whoosh of the blood pumping round the body by rubbing your hand across the drum.

One to one drumming is a fantastic aid for connection thereby reducing feelings of loneliness and isolation.

Encourage them to play and sing if they want to.

Ask them what music they love.

Create a playlist together.

Alternatively, they might just want to listen to you and the meditative heartbeat rhythm.

Continuous heartbeat is known to induce theta brain waves – trance brain waves seen in regular meditators.

Do not try and restrain them if they become agitated – move back and try again another time.

Even if they settle just for a few minutes, it is a success.

There is no failure, just try again.

If they drum applaud them, delight in their creation and recognise their achievement – your delight will be absorbed.

Remain open minded where the session goes and how long it lasts.

The person may cry – do not be disturbed by this as it is often a release of emotion. Ask if they want you to stop. Dementia can result in labile emotions.

Always remember music is basically fundamental to our species.

Do not limit the time or be concerned if the session only lasts for a few minutes to start.

The more you involve drumming sessions the more attuned the person will become.

Continue for a while if they fall asleep as it may be the drumming that is helping them sleep.

Syllables of words can be played such as 'Your Name is An – a belle'.

You can drum a short poem or song or meditation.

Constantly be aware of their reactions to avoid exacerbating any distress.

Be aware of the environment through their senses.

Say what you are going to do before you do it so no nasty surprises.

Sit alongside them at eye level but not too close to appear threatening.

Use their name.

Always give time to respond – there is no hurry in drum world.

Remember beautiful music can be found in the silent gaps between the notes.

Don't shout if someone does not appear to hear you – slow down your voice and pronounce each word slowly and carefully.

Heartbeat rhythm can be shown graphically like this ...

Timing	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
Heartbeat	B B - -	B B - -	B B - -	B B - -

B= Base or Beat



---

# GUIDANCE FOR COMPLETING YOUR CASE STUDIES

---

You are welcome to send in video or photographs but please ensure you either have consent or do not identify the person.

You can include anything you think might be helpful – as everything will be helpful because we are starting from a zero base of knowledge on one-to-one drumming.

You can submit more than three sessions if you so wish. We most certainly would appreciate that.

Ideas of what to include:

**Describe the situation** – if you know the type of dementia they have this might help. Do they live alone, with you or in a care home? Are you a relative or a professional carer. Where did the session take place?

**Document what happened during the session** – did they take a time to settle or were they willing to engage from the outset? Did any of their usual behaviours change in any way? What helped and what did not help? What would you do differently? Did the person sleep well after? Did they seem less agitated – if so how long for?

**Length of session and date, number of prior sessions**

How **you** felt before, during and after

*You can use the following template if easier*



## Level One Case Study

Your name

Date

Number of Case Study ie 1,2 3

Describe the situation

Describe the outcome

What you did in the session

How you felt before, during and after the session

How long did the session last

*Helping families' stay connected*

*Wwww.naturetherapy.co.uk*

*Nature Therapy CIC*

*Drumming for Dementia*

*© 2019*