

Therapeutic Recreation Protocol: Guacamole

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Overview

This product of this activity is guacamole that is created in a zip-top bag. The ingredients are used as a sensory element. A simple word game ends the activity. This activity involves sensory, cognitive, and social components and can be charted as such.

General Purpose

- Stimulate senses.
- Engage in a novel experience.
- Enhance self-esteem by completing a project.
- Promote social interaction through a cooperative project.

Populations

Targeted primarily at low-functioning participants such as people with dementia, Alzheimer's or traumatic brain injuries. For this population to receive the true therapeutic benefit of this activity, limit the group to eight participants. This allows for facilitator(s) to perform hand-over-hand assistance and for participants to have ample time to interact with sensory elements and speak or communicate.

Materials Needed

- Quart freezer -grade zip-top bag
- 3 medium ripe avocados
- 1 lime
- Lemon (lime) juicer tool (optional)
- 1 tomato
- 1/2 white onion
- 1 bunch cilantro
- Knife
- Safe utensils for cutting such as a manual food chopper (the kind with a jar, lid and plunger with a blade), pastry cutters, and/or rolling pizza cutter that is not too sharp
- Garlic cloves
- Garlic press
- Salt
- Pepper
- Rubber spatula
- Cutting boards for each participant (flexible cutting boards may be used)
- Serving bowl
- Bowls for participants to hold some guacamole and bread to sample
- Spoons
- Napkins
- Kitchen towels for clean up
- Bowl or wastebasket to discard avocado shells, pits, cilantro stems, onion skin, etc.
- Aprons or clothing protectors
- Table measuring spoon
- 1/2 cup measuring cup
- Pita bread or other soft bread to dip into guacamole
- Hand sanitizer/gloves as required
- Music for Mexican Hat Dance and device to play it. Use instrumental version.
- Maracas

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- Sombrero
- Each letter of the alphabet printed large on individual pages and covered in plastic sheet protectors
- Whiteboard and dry erase markers

Setting Up the Environment

Participants should arrive with hearing aids and glasses to maximize the therapeutic benefit of this activity. Additionally, the environment should be free from distractions particularly noise and interruptions. For the Mexican hat dance, participants should be in a circle with enough room to move their arms. After the Mexican hat dance, participants need to be at a table with clothing protectors. Plan for a recreation therapy aide, assistant or CNA to help participants with limited abilities. Each participant has a cutting board.

Contraindicated Criteria & Cautions

Participants with limited arm and hand abilities may need assistance. Know participants' allergies and diet restrictions and provide an appropriate alternate tasting experience.

Activity

Opening the Activity with Music and Objects: Open activity with movement to music using the Mexican Hat Dance. Put sombrero on floor and dance around it. Some participants may do well using maracas to participate in the music. Assist participants in moving, dancing, clapping as required or touch participants's hands, knees or toes in rhythm to the music. Encourage them to say "Ole" loudly or "Aye, aye, aye!" Some moves to use are heel taps, hand to elbows, and claps.

Show the sombrero, maracas, and any other Mexican objects allows them to describe them. Prompt them to guess the country where the music and objects are from, guiding them towards answering Mexico. Explain that we are going to make something to eat from Mexico and it is called guacamole. Query to see if participants are familiar with guacamole.

Ingredients and Utensils: Give each participant an ingredient or utensil that will be used to make guacamole: avocado, lime, onion, cilantro, tomato, garlic head, rubber spatula, Have each person describe their object according to their abilities. Query about color, size, shape, weight, use, etc. Adapt complexity of questions to each participant's ability. Involve other participants and encourage them to interact with each other by asking them to confirm another participant's observation or to help out on an answer to a question.

Preparing Ingredients: The facilitator will need to use a knife to prepare some ingredients for this activity—such as cutting the avocado in half and removing the pit, slicing an onion in half, and cutting limes. Ideally, this part of the preparation could be done in front of the participants and then the knife immediately stowed out of sight and reach. This preparation can also be done prior to the start of the activity away from participants in an area where they will not be able to touch knives.

Each participant gets an ingredient (or part of an ingredient) to chop. As ingredients are chopped, allow all participants to smell and describe what they are doing with the ingredients. Participants can assist in measuring the ingredients into the quart zip-top freezer bag.

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Mixing Ingredients: When all the ingredients are in the quart zip-top freezer bag, pass the bag around so each participant can squish the bag to further mix the guacamole.

Serving: Squeeze or spoon the guacamole into a serving bowl. Serve the guacamole on pita bread or other soft bread. Participants with swallowing or chewing issues may just taste the guacamole from a spoon without the bread.

Word Game: Position the white board so all participants can see it. The game is a modified version of hangman without the “hanging” of the stick figure. Mark a line for each letter of a word. Give participants printed letters of the alphabet. Each participant says a letter and if it is part of the word, write the letter in the appropriate space. If participants cannot think of a letter on their own, they can refer to the letter on the sheets of paper. Here are some examples that you can match to the abilities of participants.

Mexican hat dance
Avocado
Lime
Mix
Spoon
Guacamole

Relate the words used in the game back to the activity of preparing guacamole. When the word is completed and the participants have guessed the word, all the participants say the word and then the facilitator celebrates by putting on the sombrero and dancing a short version of the Mexican hat dance song and

Closure: Thank each participant for attending. Play the Mexican Hat Dance while cleaning up.

Reference Materials

Guacamole Recipe (<http://paleoleap.com/quick-easy-guacamole/>)

Ingredients

- 3 medium avocados or 4 small ones;
- 1 firm tomato, finely diced
- 1/2 white onion
- 1/2 cup chopped cilantro
- 2 tbsp fresh lemon or lime juice
- Optional salt and pepper to taste

Preparation (Not adapted for recommended population.)

Open the avocados and scoop out the flesh. An easy way is to cut it length-wise around the pit and then using a chefs knife strike the pit and then twist the knife so you can easily remove the pit and scoop out the flesh. Mash the flesh with a fork, it can still have hard parts, follow your preference. Stir the other ingredients. Enjoy right away or store in the refrigerator. A trick is to put a plastic wrap that touches the guacamole so it doesn't brown because of contact with air.