

Method

- Allow 40-50 minutes for a session which leaves time for feedback, conversation and fun between songs.
- It's best to sit down to lead the songs as your eye level will be the same as the group which encourages participation through eye contact.
- It's helpful for the group if you let your body move with, and show the flow of the music. That's what conductors do!
- Try to stay relaxed and encourage a sense of fun.
- Encourage eye contact and singing across the room.
- Make sure that all participants are as involved as they can be in the singing group, from choosing the songs and singing to sharing any feedback with the group.

- Vary how you use songs to suit the group – for example only sing two verses if they have several verses, speak a verse rather than sing it.
- Try to learn some of the words of songs so you can keep your focus and energy on the group rather than looking down at words.
- Build up a list of favourite songs over time such as good songs to begin with and good songs to end.
- It can be useful to run the singing session for six to eight weeks then take a break to evaluate it and plan the theme and songs for the next set of sessions. This can help to keep things fresh and exciting.
- Why don't you invite family and friends to your final singing session of a block, and celebrate all your individual and collective achievements?

Variation: During a singing session people may begin to sing solo or with one or two others. Nurture this and encourage it. It gives variety and most importantly gives the opportunity for individual participation. The group also gets the chance to cheer on individuals and show appreciation.

Singing sessions have lots of health benefits. This includes strengthening breathing, keeping the speaking voice strong and reducing tension and stress.

Try out new songs and rise to the challenge together! This creates shared experiences and can help to develop a stronger sense of community along with lots of fun, laughter and making of memories.

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This activity enables participants to enjoy music, use their voices, socialise and have some fun. A singing session is best done in a group. If your group is quite big (more than 12) try to make sure you have enough people to help you.



A facilitated singing session is different from a sing-a-long. It requires you to lead from the front with lots of energy and enthusiasm, offering encouragement trying to make sure everyone is included and can participate in some way.

Leading from the front allows you to make observations which only you may see and you can then respond to participants when they make contributions whether that is singing, speaking a reflection, laughing or clapping.

Even if you don't consider yourself a musician or singer, you will bring an important sense of focus to a singing session facilitating it in this way.

Ingredients

- A nice, bright space which is as free as possible from clutter and big enough to encourage eye contact, social interaction and give space for friends and family to join in.
- Live accompaniment – piano and/or guitar would be best. This helps to pick out the tunes. Change the speed of the music and change the key to suit people's voices. An amateur or retired musician or music teacher might be waiting to be asked!
- Alternatively, a quality music device and playback speaker will allow you to scroll through songs and devise play lists. Remember to check recorded songs aren't too low or high for people to sing.
- Have a variety of song styles. Use less well known songs and some favourites chosen by the residents.



Here are some ideas to help you to have variety.

Choose six songs from different decades 50s, 60s, 70s, 80s, 90s, 00s.

Choose six songs from different styles, Blues, Musicals, Rock, Reggae, Folk, Gospel, Pop and Country.

Tip: A good song to use is 'Shall we dance' by Rodgers and Hammerstein (1951). It's impossible not to smile, the tune is infectious and it's a great story.

Tip: Musicnotes.com is one of the user-friendly digital download shops which have reasonably priced piano and guitar music. It also allows you to choose the key of the music before you download.

