

Song-makers

Music

10 minutes

You will need:

Recognisable tunes
your group will know

One-to-one
Dementia-friendly



Creative
Spontaneous
Functional

Familiar, well-known tunes can be used to facilitate singing together, even when you don't know all the words. By changing or completely removing the 'original' words to the song, you can make it fit any circumstance!

To begin:

From your knowledge of the group or individual you are with, choose a recognisable tune that you think they will know. The simplest tunes work the best, but there are no limits!

Begin by humming the tune or 'la-la-la-ing' along. You can lead and then invite the group to sing back each line of the song.

Next::

You have two options now: you can reword the tune yourself and present it to the group or individual, inviting them to sing it with you as you repeat it many times, or you can hand responsibility over to the group or individual to choose the words themselves.

Choose a topic to focus your new lyrics on. For example, you could say that the new lyrics will be inspired by actions that the group are doing, or by clothes that people are wearing. Feel the rhythm of each line of the song, and, thinking about the desired topic, see whether a word, a name, an expression or a whole line comes into your mind to replace the original lyrics.

For example, if you choose the tune of *She'll Be Coming Round the Mountain*, you might as a group decide to change the words to 'Sally taps her toes in time to the song... David claps his hands in time to the song'.

Or, if you're working with an individual, it could be 'Norman's wearing a red jumper today.'

You could also:

Use this activity as part of a sociable activity or as an accompaniment to a specific part of a daily routine.

If you manage to come up with new words for a whole song or a section of a song, you could also think about adding actions.

Credit:

Manchester Camerata /
Music in Mind.