



Course [®]Booklet

Group Session

Day 3

Engaging[™]
Dementia

“The Sonas[®] Programme is a therapeutic communication activity for people with moderate to severe dementia, which focuses on sensory stimulation, in the belief that the senses are the gateways to communication.”

Sr Mary Threadgold, MSc. MRCSLT

Sr Mary Threadgold devised the Sonas Programme and established Engaging Dementia™, an organisation was originally established as Sonas apc.

Engaging Dementia manages the development and delivery of training in the use of the Sonas Programme, and supports the Sonas Licensed Practitioners who implement the programme. It also provides a range of other dementia training and resources, as well as community-based and initiatives.

www.engagingdementia.ie



Sonas Course

Day 3

The following is the format of Day 3 training and a recap of learned material.

There will be a morning refreshment break and lunch.

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Appendix: Sonas Quality Standards

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The logo for Engaging Dementia is located in the bottom right corner. It consists of an orange speech bubble with a tail pointing towards the bottom right. Inside the bubble, the words "Engaging" and "Dementia" are written in white, stacked vertically. "Engaging" has a small trademark symbol (TM) to its upper right.

**EngagingTM
Dementia**

Section 1 - Introduction

- Your name _____
- Your workplace

- Your occupation

- Your experience of facilitating Sonas sessions since completion of Level1

- What you hope to gain from this training

Section 2 – The Sonas Programme

The Sonas Programme was developed and continues to be managed by Engaging Dementia™, an organisation which was formerly called Sonas apc.

Recap of the Sonas Programme

The Sonas Programme is a person-centered method of activating potential for communication. It was pioneered in 1990 by Sr. Mary Threadgold, a Dublin-based Sister of Charity and Speech and Language Therapist who had been aware of the lack of communication among some older people and the absence of stimulation in their environment.

There are three types of Sonas session: Sonas Group Session, Sonas Individual Multi-sensory Session (SIMS) and the Relaxing Individual Session. The sessions are packaged on CD to free those who are carrying out the sessions to completely focus on the participants. The CDs are available only to those who have completed the 3-day Course.

The essential features of the programme are:

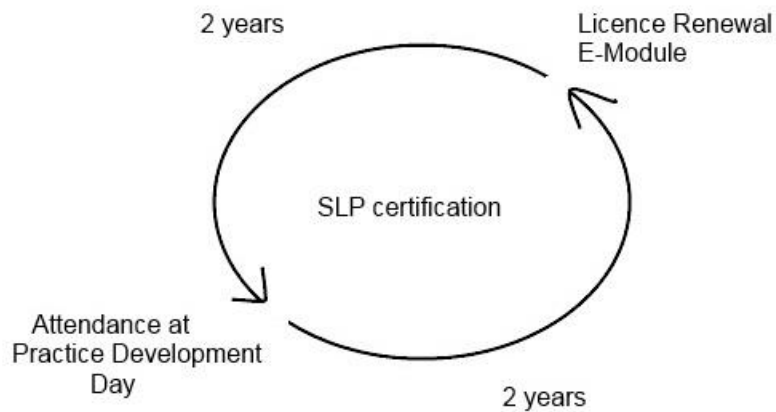
- multi-sensory stimulation
- focus on communication
- use of structure and repetition
- focus on abilities
- person-centred

The Sonas Group Sessions provide cognitive, sensory and social stimulation. There is stimulation of all five senses (taste, touch, sight, hearing, smell) and the programme involves gentle exercise and touch, relaxing music, singalongs, memory-focused exercises and personal contributions by participants.

The Sonas Individual Multi-sensory Session (SIMS) is an adaptation of the Sonas Group Session for use on a one-to-one basis. SIMS may be used in the care or family home setting. The Relaxing Individual Session provides a relaxing, interactive environment, which facilitates communication through music and touch.

The Sonas Licence Renewal Programme

The Sonas licence is valid for 2 years. All SIPLP and SPLPs must renew their Sonas Licence every two years if they wish to continue delivering the Sonas programme. The cycle involves an e-module (2 years after certification) and a Sonas Licence Renewal Day/Practice Development Day two years later. This is a repeating cycle.



- E-learning (on Moodle) [2 years after certification] via our website.
- Sonas Licence Renewal Day/Practice Development Day [2 years after the e-module]

Sonas Programme – Certification of Care Centres/Nursing Homes

Engaging Dementia runs a certification system to recognise care centres that demonstrate a high standard of implementation of the Sonas programme.

The benefits of being successfully approved as a Sonas Programme Certified Centre

- A stamp of approval by Engaging Dementia for the care centre of the quality of its implementation of the Sonas programme.
- Certificate which can be publicly displayed by the centre
- The centre can display the Sonas Quality Standard (SQS) mark on its website if it wishes.
- Membership of a network of care centres that display best practice in the Sonas Programme, a therapeutic intervention for those people with dementia who have high care needs and are often unable to participate in other activities, whether therapeutic or recreational.

Application criteria

A care centre or Nursing home which has 40+ beds must have a minimum of 3 Sonas Licensed Practitioners (SPLP) on its team in order to apply. For centres with less than 40 beds, the minimum SPLP number is 2.

Application Process

The Sonas Programme Care Centre Certification application process involves an on-site assessment of the quality of delivery of the Sonas programme in a care centre. The assessment includes a review of Sonas programme documentation, discussion with the centre's SPLPs, discussion with a member of the management team, and observation of a Sonas Group Session. The care centre receives a written report from Engaging Dementia following the assessment, informing it whether it has reached the standard necessary for certification. If a centre has not reached a high enough standard, the report will set out the areas for improvement, and a tutor will give a follow-up call to the Director of Nursing/SPLP if they wish further feedback/guidance on it.

Section 3 – The Sonas Group Session

*There is no doubt that **non-verbal** communication is the single most powerful form of communication, far more important than the verbal actual content.*

UCLA Psychology professor - Albert Mehrabian.

It is important to remember that communication is taking place all the time regardless of whether we are intending to communicate or not.

Benefits of Sonas Group Session

1. Communication – different means of communication are featured in the Sonas session: verbal and non-verbal.

2. Awareness - if a person is more aware of her/his surroundings through the stimulation of the senses, (s)he is more likely to interact with the environment.

3. Initiative – the Sonas session gives opportunity and encouragement without judgement. In this atmosphere people are more likely to take initiative and try something without fear of making a mistake. The repetition within the Sonas programme brings familiarity and a sense of security, which also helps initiative.

4. Relaxation & enjoyment - people are more able to relax and enjoy themselves when they feel secure. Familiarity brought about through repetition promotes security.

5. Interaction - other people are there to interact with and the activities are designed to facilitate this.

6. Self worth and positive attitude - if participants find they are able to do things, and are appreciated for what they do, they are likely to gain a more positive attitude to themselves. Staff also benefit as they are enabled and empowered, through the programme, to facilitate the participants, and often see them in a new light. This can encourage more involvement with them and benefit both parties.

7. Time – the Sonas session gives quality time as opposed to functional time to group participants. This is a very valuable gift.

8. Individuality - focusing on each person with frequent use of her/his name, together with recognition of and reinforcement of abilities, acknowledges each person as an individual.

9. Abilities - because the emphasis is on activating potential, the focus is on abilities rather than disabilities.

10. Memory - as well as long-term memory being triggered by e.g. smells and old songs, the constant repetition of the programme may help to build up new pathways which could aid memory.

Note: Sensory deficits – because all the senses are stimulated, there is compensation for any sensory deficits.

Summary benefits

- ~ enhancing communication
- ~ raising awareness of surroundings
- ~ encouraging initiative, relaxation and interaction
- ~ promoting self-worth, agency and empowerment
- ~ giving people quality time
- ~ focusing on individuality and abilities
- ~ stimulating long-term and procedural memory
- ~ creating real connections
- ~ offering the opportunity of a sense of belonging

General Points about Selecting Individuals for Group Sessions

1. People should be given the opportunity to participate in the Sonas programme.
If it is not possible for the person to understand an explanation of the Sonas session
 - speak to relatives or a key worker
 - bring to a session and observe
2. Thought should be put into identifying participants for a group session and the management of those with extremely shy or extrovert personalities.
3. Balance of the group re:
 - gender – mix if possible
 - abilities – have some energisers
 - restlessness / drowsiness – not too many of either
4. A Sonas group should –
 - be in general a closed one i.e. keep the same members.
 - be in a place where it is not watched by others. Occasionally someone e.g. staff member could be invited to sit in so that s(he) knows what the Sonas session is about and how it benefits participants.
5. It is necessary to have a Sonas-trained leader. The trained leader can have an untrained person as helper so long as that person has appropriate qualities.

Reasons for inclusion in

Group /Relaxing Individual / SIMS Sessions

Note: The SPLP completes this form when identifying suitable participants for Group, Relaxing Individual and SIMS sessions.

Name of session participant _____ Date _____

Type of session(s) (please tick): Group ☐ Relaxing Individual ☐ SIMS ☐

Reason: _____

Name of session participant _____ Date _____

Type of session(s) (please tick): Group ☐ Relaxing Individual ☐ SIMS ☐

Reason: _____

Name of session participant _____ Date _____

Type of session(s) (please tick): Group ☐ Relaxing Individual ☐ SIMS ☐

Reason: _____

Name of session participant _____ Date _____

Type of session(s) (please tick): Group ☐ Relaxing Individual ☐ SIMS ☐

Reason: _____

Name of session participant _____ Date _____

Type of session(s) (please tick): Group ☐ Relaxing Individual ☐ SIMS ☐

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Type of session(s) (please tick): Group ☐ Relaxing Individual ☐ SIMS ☐

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Type of session(s) (please tick): Group ☐ Relaxing Individual ☐ SIMS ☐

Reason: _____

Name of session participant _____ Date _____

Type of session(s) (please tick): Group ☐ Relaxing Individual ☐ SIMS ☐

Reason: _____

Name of session participant _____ Date _____

Type of session(s) (please tick): Group ☐ Relaxing Individual ☐ SIMS ☐

Reason: _____

Note: You will be completing this form when identifying suitable participants for Group, Relaxing Individual and SIMS sessions.

Safety and Other Considerations Assessment in relation to Sonas Group, SIMS and Relaxing individual sessions

Hearing loss

Compensate for hearing loss by ensuring that any appliances such as hearing aids and available amplifiers are used and are working. Position the person where (s)he will best be able to lip read the leader.

Poor vision

Extra help may be needed at times in the form of physical prompts.

Check that glasses are clean and if the person needs an up-dated eye check.

Consider the possibility of hemianopia – a condition where part of the field of vision is impaired. Positioning of such a person is important, as is the need to approach her/him from either the front or from the intact side – this will avoid a startle reaction.

Mobility problems

These have to be handled very carefully. In assisting participants be cautious that you do not encourage any movements that would cause pain or damage. Consult with a physiotherapist if you are in doubt about any of the exercises. Also consult a physiotherapist and/or an occupational therapist about appropriate seating and the person's position in a chair.

The following are some causes of reduced mobility with appropriate cautions:

1. Contractures: abnormal shortening of the muscle tissue, rendering the muscle highly resistant to passive stretching.

Caution: assistance with exercises should be done with *extreme* care, advice should be sought and the helper should be very alert to indications of pain or discomfort.

2. Poor balance: there may be different reasons for this, such as:

- postural hypotension (a drop in blood pressure that occurs when rising to an upright position, which can lead to dizziness).
- hemiplegia (paralysis of one side of the body).

Caution: do not involve the person in any activity that would put her/him at risk, e.g. getting up to dance (particularly in the case of postural hypotension) or leaning forward in the chair (particularly in the case of hemiplegia).

3. Weight-bearing: a person not able to bear her/his own weight e.g. because of hemiplegia or weakened muscles.

Caution: do not get the person up to dance or encourage her/him to lean forward in

the chair.

4. Stiff and painful joints: there can be many reasons for this e.g. arthritis.

Caution: care should be taken when encouraging or assisting movements that involve the affected joints. Be alert to non-verbal signs of pain or discomfort.

5. Lower back pain: pain experienced in the lower back.

Caution: care should be taken when encouraging or assisting leg movements, or when the person is bending forward. Be alert to non-verbal signs of pain or discomfort.

6. Osteoporosis (brittle bone disease): abnormally low density of bone.

Caution: care should be taken when encouraging or assisting movements. When touch is used e.g. rubbing the shoulders, light touch should be used. Advice should be sought before the person is encouraged to get up and dance, and particular care should be taken to avoid falls.

Swallowing / Dysphagia

Some people have difficulty swallowing certain things. A person with a swallowing difficulty may not be able to take anything by mouth, even water, or is restricted in what s(he) is able to safely eat or drink.

This can be a very serious and possibly life-threatening condition and it is vital that nothing is given to eat or drink that is contra-indicated by the person's condition. Guidance should be sought from the medical/nursing team, and/or a specialist speech & language therapist.

Caution: consult regarding what is safe and appropriate to be given as a taste item.

Dietary restrictions

- Different types of illness may require special diet. Always consult regarding what is appropriate for the person to be given as a taste item.
- Be aware of any dietary restrictions that apply as a result of e.g. - Diabetes, Coeliac disease, food allergies or cultural differences

Other factors to be considered for the taste item

1. Cultural needs: different cultures have certain dietary restrictions which may apply at all times or at specific times of the year.

Caution: consult regarding what is appropriate for the person to be given as a taste item and be aware of changes throughout the calendar.

2. Allergies: these can be many and varied and very specific to individuals.

Caution: consult regarding what is appropriate for the person to be given as a taste item, and be aware of ingredients of items given and action to take if an allergy is triggered.

3. Personal taste: this can be as varied as the individuals in your group.

Caution: consult regarding people's likes and dislikes also vegetarianism, vegans and Gluten Intolerance need consideration.

Smell items

Essential oils: Engaging Dementia™ do not recommend the use of undiluted essential oils.

Topical products: sometimes hand creams or lotions etc may cause allergies.

Caution: find out if individuals are allergic to particular products.

Always –

1. Know the participants life history/ 'A Key to me'
2. Keep your knowledge up to date.
3. Ensure the safety of the participants and of yourself.
4. Consult if you are in any doubt.

Safety and Other Considerations Assessment

Sonas Group / Relaxing Individual / SIMS Sessions

Important: Safety of Sonas session participants is paramount. This form must be completed by the SPLP in consultation with a healthcare professional prior to involving a person in the Sonas Programme, and updated three months later. The form must be renewed every six months or if the participant's health status changes.

Name of session participant: _____

Signed (SPLP) _____ Date: _____ Review Date: _____

Co-signed (healthcare professional) _____

Does the person have	Yes	No	Comment	Specific Advice for the Sonas Session
Safety considerations				
Hearing loss				
Visual impairment				
Restricted movements				
Difficulties with balance				
Difficulty standing				
Arthritis				
Pain				
Swallowing difficulties				
Dietary restrictions				
Allergies				
Other considerations				
Specific cultural needs				
Any strong dislikes re items to taste or smell				
Other relevant factors				

Review Comments: _____

Checklist for setting up and reviewing a group

Note: This form is to be completed to assist you with setting up and facilitating a Sonas Group Session. It prepares you for the group session and assists you with the facilitation of it. It is recommended that an SPLP set up a Sonas Group and carry out group sessions with that group for eight weeks, after which the group is reviewed.

Preparation

Preparation	Yes	No	Comment
Have you informed and gained support from management?			
Have you completed the reason for including each participant? (You record this in the Reasons for Inclusion Form)			
Have you completed the Safety and Other Considerations Assessment for each participant?			
Where will the session take place?			
What time will the session take place?			
Have you agreed the session dates for the eight weeks?			
With your line manager, have you confirmed you and your helpers' rotas are in sync for the planned 8 weeks?			
Have you informed other staff about the purpose of the group session?			
Have you created a Sonas Programme Folder?			
Have you an area to store materials for the Sonas Programme?			
Have you identified helpers and given them guidance on what is expected of them during the session?			

During the Group Session

During the Group Session	Yes	No	Comment
Have you all the equipment necessary to carry out the session?			
Have you a taste item for people with different taste needs?			
Have you the group session outline to hand?			
Have you arranged seating that maximises benefit for each participant?			
Have you got your paperwork pre copied for each session and in folder?			

After the Group Session

After the Group Session	Yes	No	Comment
Have you completed the Group Record Sheet?			
Have you completed the TCT for each participant?			
Have you completed the Information for Participants Care Plan (If necessary)			

Review of the intervention

Review – to be completed 8 weeks after the first Group Session	Yes	No	Comment
Have you reviewed the TCT evaluations for each participant and compared the results?			
Have you filled in all the documentation in relation to the group?			
Have you informed the staff of your findings after the eight week Sonas group sessions?			

Remember *YOUR* Role

Role of the Leader

- Ensures that safety forms have been completed (and up-dated) for all participants
- Plans the timing and location of the session in conjunction with the ward manager and staff. Also keeps updated on health status of participants.
- Takes overall responsibility for the session. Ensures that everything is in place for the session - CD player, smell and taste items, percussion instruments, chairs in correct position, brings or arranges for participants to be brought to the room on time.
- Opens and closes the session. Only the leader will interact with each individual during the greeting and closing songs.
- Discusses with the helper his/her role within the session. Liaises with the helper throughout the session.

After the session, the leader should take some time to reflect, and record his/her observations on evaluation forms. Also update ward staff, particularly if it might influence the quality of care of individual participants.

Role of the Helper

The role of the helper is invaluable.

- It is not necessary for the helper to have completed Sonas training but it is essential that he/she is clear about their role within the session. A Relative or Volunteer may be suited to this position. Adhere to local policies/procedures for involvement of same.
- The helper should assist the leader to prepare for the session and place his/her chair beside the person who most needs assistance.
- He/she should remain seated during the opening and closing songs.
- Actively engage in observing participants during the session and intervening as necessary. For example, adjust the position of a person who becomes uncomfortable or calm an agitated participant.
- Assist the leader (taste item, smell item, touch).
- Assist the leader to complete evaluations after the session and ensure participants are returned to their location and the room is left tidy.

The Group Record Sheet

The majority of the first page of this two-page document can be filled out before the session begins. You will know in advance your:

- taste item
- smell item
- which CD number you will be using
- any other stimuli that you have planned for the session
- who will be the leader
- who will be the helper
- the majority of the residents that will be attending

Filling out this sheet prior to the session will save you time after the session.

Sonas Group Record Sheet

Note: This form must be completed for every Sonas Group Session. Please complete pg 1 before the session and pg 2 immediately after the session.

Date of Sonas Group Session _____ **Time of day** _____

Location _____

SPLP _____ **Helper(s)** _____

Names of participants:

1. _____ 5. _____

2. _____ 6. _____

3. _____ 7. _____

4. _____ 8. _____

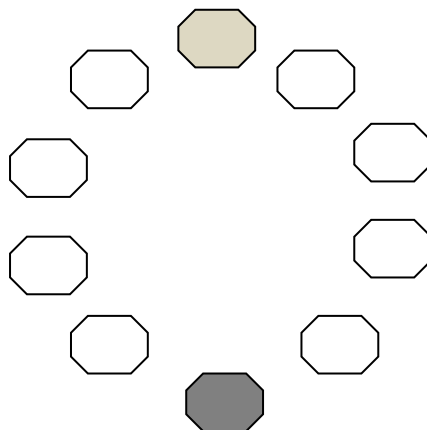
CD number _____ **Session number** _____

Taste item used _____

Smell item used _____

Other stimuli _____

Seating - e.g. who sat where (diagram allows for the SPLP and one helper)



Group Record Sheet pg 1

Comments on group in general

Comments on individuals

Recommendations for future sessions

This form has been completed by (name) _____

The Group Session

- *The signature tune*
- *The opening song*
- *Exercises to music*
- *Sense of smell*
- *Singalong 1*
- *Sense of taste*
- *Sense of touch*
- *Sense of rhythm*
- *Proverbs*
- *Poetry*
- *Personal contribution*
- *Singalong 2*
- *Closing song*
- *Signature tune*

The **Signature tune** introduces the session.

1. It should be playing as the participants arrive and if necessary play it a second time. As the tune becomes familiar it alerts the participants to the session (memory being triggered by association). Retain this association by not playing this music at other times.
2. When arranging the seating –
 - leave space behind the chairs so that you have room to move behind the participants
 - make sure the chairs are not so close together as to interfere with movements, but close enough so that people can make physical contact if they wish.

The **opening song** gives a personal touch.

1. The leader remains seated for the general greeting and moves from person to person for the individual greetings. Each person is addressed by name and greeted with a handshake to emphasise the interactive value of the item. Make sure that the name used is the one preferred by the individual. The helper remains seated throughout.
2. Only one person should be addressed at a time by the leader. The song allows for nine names so that the helper can be included.
3. Make eye-contact, ensuring that you are on a level with each person and not towering above.
4. Participants should be addressed by name frequently during the session.
5. The leader should tell the group his/her name.

Exercises to music encourage group participation and it is thought that increasing the physical activity of older people increases sociability and may improve cognition. It is important to note –

The exercises should be encouraged and assistance can be offered to participants. However, it should not be thought that group members *have* to do the exercises. There are certain conditions that need careful consideration when offering help and these are referred to under Safety Considerations Assessment.

Smell The sense of smell can be stimulated by the use of pleasant-smelling items e.g. soap, flowers or baking spices. If essential oils are used it is important that you seek expert advice with each individual participant in mind. Some units have a policy that prohibits the use of essential oils so be guided by this. In general, be aware of any condition that would contra-indicate the use of topical lotions, creams or oils.

Link music plays between some of the items, giving a brief rest and allowing a change of mindset from the focus on one item and the focus to the next.

Singalong 1 allows for expression through song. Some people who may not have any speech are able to sing.

1. Songs may well trigger memories
2. Rhythm can stimulate participation
3. Interacting with people at every opportunity eg., holding and moving people's hands and arms while making eye contact facilitates interaction
4. Dancing is not encouraged during this item - it is better left until the music and percussion section. However, if people get up spontaneously and dance or move this should, within reason, be accepted as a form of expression.

Taste Relaxing music is played while the sense of taste is stimulated.

1. The taste item given can be anything which is safe (see Safety Considerations P 27) and suitable. It is not a refreshment break. It is trigger for this sense and the focus is stimulation. With this in mind it is important to have a different taste for each Sonas Session. Also be aware that foods that are experienced on a daily basis are not stimulating i.e. Bananas, Yogurt, Custard, Grapes, Rice dessert, sweets etc.
2. Always tell or show what the item is and ask the person if s(he) wants to taste it. As we are supporting agency and empowerment give the person the taste item to place in their mouth themselves where possible.

Touch Relaxing music is played while the sense of touch is stimulated.

1. Rubbing the shoulders and back is carried out as demonstrated and keeping to this routine preserves the familiarity that comes from repetition. **Permission to touch must be sought.**

Rhythm section, music with percussion instruments emphasises rhythm.

Participants can be encouraged to express themselves through: -

1. The use of instruments.
2. Dance/movement.

Proverbs are rote learned and often the first part of the proverb will act as a trigger so that some people may be able to complete it even if they have a speech difficulty.

Poetry is there to be listened to rather than learned, but people may become familiar with it and join in.

Personal Contributions from members of the group are encouraged at this point, but no-one is pressured to take part.

It is important that you know as much as possible about the participants as taking a person-centred approach will help you to understand the abilities and difficulties of each individual. It will then make it easier to know the level of help and encouragement required for each person/session. Also remember the varied abilities of participants and ensure that no-one is excluded during this section. It may be that someone is only able to hold or touch something or someone briefly but it is important that they are given the opportunity. It is important that the SPLP also contributes and it can help if a person is shy or unsure if the SPLP gives their contribution first.

Verbal

- Participants may know the words of a **poem** or a **song** and could be encouraged to share with the group. They may need encouragement and/or verbal prompts.
- **Reminiscence** can be encouraged, this will usually require an object to initially stimulate conversation, consequently the Sonas™ practitioners will need to plan ahead in preparation for the session.
Suggestions ... a piece of coal, wash-board, butter churn, hot water bottle/jar, fob watch, brownie camera, curling tongs, bicycle clips, darning mushroom.
- **Sensory Stimuli**, practitioners are encouraged to take advantage of the changing seasons and to introduce seasonally appropriate items.
 - * Spring; daffodils, catkins, may blossom, hyacinths, pictures of baby animals, Easter eggs, baby chicks, Easter bonnets, palm.
 - * Summer; sun-tan lotion, bathing costume, postcards, picnic basket, seaweed, sand, sea-shells.
 - * Autumn; conkers acorns, coloured leaves, apples, fruits, Halloween items, eg pumpkin.
 - * Winter; Christmas items, eg decorations, cards, mistletoe, holly branches, wrapping paper, snow domes

Let your imagination influence the creative opportunities.

Non-verbal

- A ball, balloon or a bean-bag can be thrown from person to person using people's names as it is thrown to them.
- Passing an object around the group is an interactive process of give and take. People could be encouraged to say something about it if they are able when they handle it.
- Blowing bubbles.
- 'Pass the Parcel'.
- Tactile objects, eg pieces of material, bubble wrap, stress cushions, rosary beads
- Soft toys, soft bodied dolls.

Please remember that this section should be no longer than 10-15 minutes. Consideration needs to be given to the multi-cultural differences of participants as this will influence the various topics and stimuli introduced during the sessions.

Singalong 2 allows for vocal expression and further interaction through holding hands and moving to the music. By this time in the session members may well be more aware of each other and able to interact in a closer way.

The **Closing song** is similar to the opening one and members are again affirmed by use of their names and farewell handshakes by the leader. If singing the opening or closing song is felt to be inappropriate a spoken greeting or farewell can be used in time to the music.

The **Signature tune** provides closure to the session and the participants can –

1. be escorted from the room while the music is playing or
2. stay and chat with perhaps a cup of tea. If the potential for communication has been activated try to provide opportunity for it. Above all try to be consistent.

Sonas Programme Evaluations

In line with the Sonas Quality Standard 2: Documentation, as an SPLP you are required to record and evaluate each Sonas session. Evaluation is the making of a judgement about the amount, number, or value of something; assessment.

It is important to consistently maintain your Sonas documentation.

The aims of evaluation are:

- Record how a person is communicating during the Sonas session
- To assist in reflecting on practice
- To inform future sessions
- To assist in informing others and affecting overall care
- To inform caring planning for each session participant

As all evaluation takes time it is important to

- Include the time needed for completing the documentation into the overall session time
- Select a schedule that is possible
- Ensure that it is acceptable within the unit
- Use evaluations in such a way as to benefit overall care.

The Threadgold Communication Tool (TCT)

The Threadgold Communication Tool (TCT) measures expressive communication behaviour during a Sonas Group Session or SIMS. It is designed primarily for older people with dementia (Engaging Dementia™, 2018) and a key evaluation document.

REMEMBER

Evaluate after the 1st session, the 4th session and again after the 8th session

Let us remember that even though speech becomes an inefficient communication tool and people have to rely on others for their care, they retain a wide repertoire of verbal and non-verbal behaviours that can be used to keep them involved in the social world.

Threadgold Communication Tool (TCT)

The Threadgold Communication Tool (TCT) measures expressive communication behavior during a Sonas Group Session. It is designed primarily for older people with dementia (Engaging Dementia, 2018). Sonas Group Sessions are delivered by Engaging Dementia-trained Sonas Licensed Practitioners (SLP). TCT consists of 14 items, with a scoring range from 0-4. The scores measure the average evidence for each item during the Sonas Group Session. The higher the score, the greater the level of expressive communication behavior, with a total score of 56.

No evidence = 0, very little evidence = 1, some evidence = 2, regular evidence = 3, frequent evidence = 4. Cut-off scores: Scores below 14 (Severe communication difficulties); 15-25 (Moderate communication difficulties); 26-44 (Mild communication difficulties); 45-56 (No communication difficulties).

Name of participant: _____

1. Speaking	0	1	2	3	4
2. Vocal sounds	0	1	2	3	4
3. Eye contact	0	1	2	3	4
4. Smiling	0	1	2	3	4
5. Singing	0	1	2	3	4
6. Using gesture	0	1	2	3	4
7. Interactive touch	0	1	2	3	4
8. Exercises	0	1	2	3	4
9. Rhythmic movements	0	1	2	3	4
10. Contribution	0	1	2	3	4
11. Using instruments	0	1	2	3	4
12. Interactive posture	0	1	2	3	4
13. Smell	0	1	2	3	4
14. Taste	0	1	2	3	4

Subtotal:

Total score (out of 56): _____

Comments: _____

Date: _____

Name of SLP: _____

The number of items was increased from 12 to 14 in this edition of the TCT (2018) to include the senses of smell and taste, based on the results of the psychometric test carried out in 2016 (Strøm, Engedal & Grov, 2016).

Verbal communication

1. *Speaking*: expresses ideas or feelings in words, samples of verbal interaction could be recorded
2. *Vocal sounds*: expresses with sounds only, no identifiable words, but any sound uttered by the participant e.g. laugh

Non-verbal communication

3. *Eye contact*: briefly meeting the eyes of another person, either the group leader, helper or other member of the group.
4. *Smiling*: using lips/mouth to convey pleasure enjoyment or satisfaction.
5. *Singing*: indicating the ability to sing the words, 'la, la' or hum during this section of the group.
6. *Using gesture*: any gesture that could be interpreted as having meaning e.g. waving, pointing, conducting the music, or indicating the person does/doesn't want something.
7. *Interactive touch*: patting or stroking someone's hand, holding hands. Can be observed when shaking hands during the greeting and farewell song.
8. *Exercises*: partaking in any of the exercise section. No matter how small the movement, it is about the person participating to their best ability.
9. *Rhythmic movements*: shaking or beating instrument in time to music, swaying to music, clapping hands, tapping feet, beating time with a finger to the best of the person's ability.
10. *Contribution*: evidence of willingness to attempt to sing, say a poem or any other personal contribution, either verbal or non-verbal or the person being facilitated to contribute by the leader e.g. the leader telling the person's story
11. *Using instruments*: any appropriate active use of an instrument e.g. beating time with drumstick, or shaking maracas.
12. *Interactive posture*: open posture, turning towards someone, reaching to take someone's hand e.g. Does the person appear engaged with the session, how does their body language reflect their engagement?
13. *Smell*: response to stimulation of smell.
14. *Taste*: response to stimulation of taste.

References

Engaging Dementia. (2018). *Sonos Course Booklet*.

Strøm, B. S., Engedal, K., & Grov, E.-K. (2016). A Psychometric Evaluation of the Threadgold Communication Tool for Persons with Dementia. *Dementia and Geriatric Cognitive Disorders Extra*, 6(1), 150-160.

Section 4 The Sonas Programme Informing Care Planning

Information for participant's Care Plan

Sonas session which took place on:

Venue: _____ Date: _____

Participants:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Points of note:

Signed _____

Section 7 – Work Based Learning

An online 2-hour session will take place a few weeks after the face to face training of the group session to give you ample time to deliver a number of Sonas group sessions for your WBL. It will also give you the opportunity to tease out any issues or support that you may need. The focus of the day will concentrate on feedback from your delivery of the Sonas group session.

Appendix

Sonas Programme Quality Standards

Sonas® Programme Quality Standards

Engaging Dementia oversees the delivery and quality assurance of the Sonas Programme.

One of the purposes of Sonas® Programme Quality Standards (SPQS) is to establish and maintain standards of conduct amongst practitioners and management of Nursing Homes in which the Sonas® Programme is being delivered. Sonas Programme Quality Standards will help ensure consistently high quality in the delivery of the Sonas Programme. These standards, together with any guidelines and policies published by Engaging Dementia from time to time, are intended to provide a common standard of conduct and guidelines for Sonas Programme Licensed Practitioners (SPLP) and management to follow.

Standard One: Delivery of the Sonas® Programme

- 1.1 The Leader of the Sonas programme shall be a Sonas Programme Licensed Practitioner (SPLP).
- 1.2 The SPLP shall have at least one helper during the Sonas Group Session.
- 1.3 The SPLP identifies and decides which residents are suitable for inclusion in the Sonas programme. This is done as per Sonas Programme training and in consultation with staff and/or family members.
- 1.4 The SPLP establishes, from the residents identified, one or more Sonas groups, each of which shall have a maximum of eight participants.
- 1.5 The SPLP ensures that consent for involvement in Sonas sessions is sought from any potential participant.
- 1.6 The Safety and Other Considerations Assessment must be completed for all Sonas Session participants and updated on a three to four monthly basis, as per HIQA Standards (HIQA 2016).
- 1.7 The SPLP and helper(s) should be allocated a minimum of 1½ hours, to include the delivery

and documentation of the Sonas Group Session. The allocated time should be 1 hour for the Sonas Individual Multi-sensory Session (SIMS) and Relaxing Individual Sessions.

- 1.8 Sonas Group Sessions should be held regularly i.e. one or more times per week.
- 1.9 When carrying out SIMS or the Relaxing Individual Session, the SPLP should be aware of and adhere to all HIQA Standards (2016), in particular Theme 3.
- 1.10 The SPLP ensures that the guidelines on delivery of the Sonas Programme, as taught at the Sonas Course, are adhered to.
- 1.11 Sonas Programme materials (Sonas CDs, USB stick etc.) are only to be used by SPLPs.
- 1.12 The SPLPs and helpers should adhere to the centre's own policies.
- 1.13 The SPLP ensures that Sonas Group Sessions are scheduled into the centre's Activities Time-table and noted in participants' care plans.
- 1.14 The SPLP ensures that the Sonas sessions and progress of participants are documented, as per Sonas training and current Sonas Programme guidelines.
- 1.15 The HIQA Standards (2016) themes that are particularly relevant when implementing the Sonas Programme, and must be borne in mind by the SPLP and helper, are: Theme 1 (Person-centred Care and Support), Theme 2 (Effective Services), Theme 3 (Safe Services), and Theme 4 (Health and Wellbeing).

Standard Two: Documentation

- 2.1 The SPLP should adhere to the documentation and evaluation protocols of Engaging Dementia and the centre. HIQA Standards (2016) are also particularly relevant here.
- 2.2 The Safety and Other Considerations Assessment should be completed for all Sonas session participants and updated on a three-monthly basis.
- 2.3 The SPLP and helper(s) should, at a minimum, complete a Sonas Group Record Sheet (where applicable) for each Sonas Group Session and also the Threadgold Communication Tool (TCT) when required. The SPLP should complete the TCT for a person following SIMS, and the Relaxing Individual Session evaluation form following that session.
- 2.4 The SPLP ensures that all documentation relating to the Sonas session participant is kept in his/her care plan/personal file, in line with the HIQA Standards (2016), Theme 2, Standard 2.1.
- 2.5 The SPLP ensures that information gained from the Sonas session, into effective methods of communication with each participant, is conveyed to staff and integrated into the individual's care plan. This is done with reference to the HIQA Standards; Theme 2, in particular Standard 2.3, Theme 4, in particular Standard 4.1. (2016).
- 2.6 The line manager should ensure that an individual care plan includes consideration of the SPLP(s)' documented recommendations from the Sonas sessions.

Standard 3: SPLP Training and Sonas Licence renewal

- 3.1 The candidate SPLP must work with or care for older people who have dementia or condition involving a significant cognitive/communication impairment.
- 3.2 The candidate SPLP must attend the three-day Sonas Course.
- 3.3 The candidate SPLP must complete the required work-based learning, as assigned by the Sonas Tutor(s) during the Sonas Course.
- 3.4 On successful completion of the Sonas Course, the candidate SPLP is issued with a Sonas Licence, which is valid for two years.
- 3.5 Sonas Programme Licence renewal is by means of an e-module or attendance at an upskilling day. Engaging Dementia will keep the SPLP informed of the renewal method applicable to them in advance of renewal.
- 3.6 The SPLP shall ensure that the Sonas programme is delivered professionally and its integrity maintained.

Additional Sonas Programme Standards relating to Independent SPLPs

- 3.7 The Independent SPLP shall inform the PIC that a condition of delivery of the Sonas programme is that the PIC gives a written commitment to ensuring that the core requirements for programme delivery are met and confirms that s/he has read this document.
- 3.8 The Independent SPLP, in conjunction with the PIC, shall ensure that a structured channel of communication is established to ensure that information from Sonas sessions is incorporated into the residents' care plans (see Standard 2).

Standard Four: Management

- 4.1 The PIC is responsible for ensuring that the optimal conditions for the delivery of the Sonas programme are consistently met. The HIQA Standards (HIQA 2016): Theme 1, Theme 2, Theme 4, Theme 7, in particular Standards 7.2, 7.3 and 7.4 are of particular importance.
- 4.2 The PIC must commit to the standards and guidelines, as set out in this document by Engaging Dementia. This commitment will be given when the Sonas Programme Commitment Form is signed by the PIC.
- 4.3 The PIC should ensure that an appropriate designated space is available for the Sonas Group Session to take place.
- 4.4 The PIC ensures that adequate time and resources are allocated to facilitate the person-centred philosophy of the Sonas programme.
- 4.5 The SPLP and helper(s) should be allocated a minimum of 1½ hours, to include the delivery and documentation of the Sonas Group Session. The allocated time should be 1 hour for the Individual and SIMS Sessions.
- 4.6 The line manager ensures that all staff are made aware that the Sonas Group Session(s) are taking place and actively support the resident(s).
- 4.7 The Person In Charge (PIC) ensures that all staff support the SPLP and helper(s) (where applicable) in the delivery of the Sonas session(s). The staff in the centre, in consultation with the SPLP, should assist residents to and from the Sonas Group Sessions
- 4.8 The PIC should participate as a helper in at least one Sonas Group Session every year.
- 4.9 The PIC should co-present a Sonas information session with the SPLP and ensure that time is allocated to enable all staff to attend.
- 4.10 The PIC should provide funding for the purchase of musical instruments and resources (smell/taste items) for the Sonas sessions.

Standard Five: Staff Development in the Care Centre

- 5.1 The SPLP and the PIC must deliver a comprehensive Sonas Information Session, as per guidelines.
- 5.2 The PIC ensures that the Sonas Information Session is attended by every member of staff in the care centre.
- 5.3 The PIC and SPLP will identify two or more interested helpers to assist with Sonas Group Sessions.
- 5.4 SPLP should ensure that identified helpers are fully informed of their role prior to their first Sonas Group Session.

Standard 6: Sonas Programme Certified Centre (SPCC)

- 6.1 Every care centre that is implementing the Sonas Programme to the Sonas Programme Quality Standards may apply for certification as a Sonas Programme Certified Centre (SPCC).
- 6.2 The centre must fully comply with SPQS and will be subject to an onsite assessment as part of the certification process
- 6.3 Every SPCC must have the following minimum number of SPLPs on its staff, as determined by the size of the centre:
 - Two SPLPs (centres with less than 40 beds)
 - Three SPLPs (centres with 40-79 beds)
 - Four SPLPs (centres with 80 beds or more)
- 6.4 The assessment will involve a formal evaluation of the implementation of the Sonas Programme by a Sonas Programme Assessor from Engaging Dementia. Assessment will cover all aspects of the planning, delivery and documentation of the Sonas Programme.
- 6.5 The centre will receive a report on the outcome of this evaluation within four weeks of the assessment, with findings and recommendations. If the centre meets the required standard, it is then approved as an SPCC. If it doesn't meet the standard, it will be given guidance on how to improve its delivery of the programme and may re-apply for assessment if it wishes.
- 6.6 On approval as an SPCC, a centre will receive an SPCC certificate, which it can display publicly

if it wishes. The SPCC may also display the Engaging Dementia Sonas Programme logo, with SQS logo, on its website. Once an SPCC certificate expires, it must remove the logo from its website.

- 6.7 The duration of the certificate is two years.
- 6.8 If the SPCC wishes to ensure that there is no lapse in Sonas Registration, it must apply for renewal of certification no less than three months prior to the expiration of its Sonas Programme Certification.
- 6.9 Upon receipt of a renewal request, Engaging Dementia will schedule a visit by an Engaging Dementia Assessor to re-evaluate the centre.

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Keep up to date with the latest knowledge on dementia in Ireland and connect with other SPLPs by logging into your [Engagement Hub](#) account, following us on social media and visiting our website



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