### MARDIS GRAS NATURE MASKS & CROWNS

### Residents will learn about the Mardi Gras celebrations and history and then create nature masks or crowns to prepare for the festivities!

Please amend this lesson to adapt to the abilities and interest of your residents. You know your residents best!

If you don't have a garden, you can still interact with nature by collecting other bits of nature during a garden courtyard or walk. You can also safely enjoy nature from a window!

#### Wellness Objectives:

- 1: Resident will engage cognitive stimulation (CS)
- 2: Resident will engage creative expression (CE)
- 3: Resident will engage motor skills (MS)

Eldergrow offers a **therapeutic connection** to nature where residents engage in meaningful ways – cognitively, socially, spiritually, emotionally, & physically.

# MATERIALS:

### BUDCET:\$6 -\$10

\*<u>NOTE:</u> For all botanical crafting projects, please use safe plant materials. Consult the <u>Approved</u> <u>Plant</u> list in your resources page to find out if your plant material options are safe.

#### FOR MASK OPTION:

- Collect colorful leaves & flowers (either press ahead of time or from a previous class to wear masks right away, or sandwich masks made with fresh flowers and leaves between paper towels and a book for 1-2 weeks until dry (See "<u>Pressing Leaves & Flowers Lesson</u>" for instructions if you didn't conduct that prior class.)
- 19" wooden stick: a wooden kebab (cut off the spiky ends) a woody plant stem, or a chopstick (to make the mask holder) (Dollar store)
- Thick card stock, paper or thin cardboard (Dollar store)
- Tape, glue sticks / Elmer's glue and paint brushes (Dollar store)

#### FOR CROWN OPTION:

- Floral wire (or pipe cleaners) and floral tape: Dollar store, from a previous lesson, or Link here
- 2-3" long herb or flower cuttings (Garden, Store, or florist)
- Advanced Option: Review this tutorial: Link here
- Safety scissors and optional wax paper (Dollar store)
- Talking Points: "Mardi Gras Celebrations and History"
- Mask templates (print out onto card stock or glue ahead and allow to dry ahead of time on thin cardboard.) Link here
- Optional: Feathers and ribbon (Dollar store or Link here)
- Optional: Mardi Gras beads (Dollar store or Link here)

# PREPARATION:

- If you have a garden, have residents gather around it, or at table by a window with a view of nature. Have journal ready for garden/nature observations. Set out materials and **Talking Points.**
- Watch our short video on the Nature Connect portal for tips & tricks on this activity.
- Present a finished demo product mask or crown or a photo to show residents what they will be making.

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## ACTIVITY DIRECTIONS - CHOOSE 1 OR ALL 3 PARTS:

### 1. CARDEN OBSERVATIONS & CONVERSATIONS

If you have a garden, gather around it so residents can make observations, or gather around a window. These are options to connect with nature. Skip to #2 for the Lesson Plan.

- Bring safe scissors for leggy plants and garden tools, journal with pen, and half full watering can (keep it light).
- Jot down 3 things in the journal (or ask for a volunteer resident to be today's garden/nature secretary)
- Bring a ruler & have residents measure plants. Mark their heights in the journal & observe their growth over time!
- Do you notice anything different or new about the garden? There are no wrong answers.
- How does the soil feel Too wet? Too dry? If too dry, ask a volunteer to water.

## 2. TALKING POINTS & CONVERSATION STARTERS

• Have residents take turns reading the **Talking Points:** "Mardi Gras Celebrations and History".

- Have you ever celebrated Mardi Gras?
- How did you celebrate?
- Have you been to New Orleans for Mardi Gras?

### 3. MAKING NATURE MASKS & CROWNS





#### NATURE MASKS (EASIER CRAFT):

#### Watch our short video on the Nature Connect portal for tips & tricks on this activity.

- Choose one of the mask templates that is printed on card stock and cut it out. (Residents may need help cutting out the eyes, so consider cutting ahead of time). You can also glue a couple of pages together to make a homemade thicker paper stock to hold the mask shape.
- Distribute collections of flowers, herbs and optional feathers, along with glue and paint brushes.
- Apply glue to mask with paint brush. Add various leaves, flowers, ribbon and feathers to the mask.
- Attach masking tape to the wooden skewer or chopstick on back middle or side of mask as a holder.
- Allow masks to dry (you may need to rest under wax paper with a few rocks or heavy book to keep flat).

#### OR NATURE CROWNS (MODERATELY DIFFICULT):

- Form wire into a circle and attach ends together by wrapping them around each other and securing with floral tape to the size of the head (16-20"). Make sure there are no sharp edges sticking out. Bend over and tape sharp pointy wire ends to avoid scratching skin.
- Wrap wire with floral tape (tutorial).
- Cut a piece of floral tape about 3" long. Take your first cutting and wrap the end with floral tape around the wire. Make sure your herbs/flowers/leaves/ribbons are on the outside of the crown. Take your next cutting and place it slightly below the first, hiding the floral tape from the last cutting. Continue cutting pieces of floral tape and wrapping the botanical bits until you fill the crown.
- When finished, place your crown upon your head and be the Queen/King of Mardi Gras that you are!
- Feel free to create a larger wreath in lieu of a crown and hang it up so everyone can enjoy it!

### CLOSING & AMENDMENTS FOR DIFFERENT LEVELS

- Consider taping the mask temporarily to the table so it stays in place while the resident glues down the embellishments. Please do not use items that could pose as a choking hazard.
- Residents may need hand support assistance wrapping the floral tape around the herbs, tying them to the wire, cutting out the masks and taping or gluing the sticks to the masks.
- For a simpler crown craft, take a long stemmed flower & wrap it around the wire & add ribbon.
- Perhaps a resident **doesn't want to create the craft may prefer planting new plants** in the garden or outside or window pots. If this is difficult, have one resident choose where new plants can be planted (the designer) and then another can plant it for them (the planter)! Or simply have residents explore a bowl of leaves and flowers to stimulate their senses.
- Assist as minimally as possible to the particular resident's ability. This way it's a collaboration that plays to the resident's strengths, allowing them to be successful and fulfilled!
- Residents who would like more activities or **more challenging options**: Access the Daily Programming on your Nature Connect Portal to sprinkle in your calendar throughout the month.
- Changes in the garden, inside or out, can help stimulate memories, so encourage residents to make nature observations as well as reflect back on previous observations so they can see how their garden is changing over time.
- Some residents prefer to only assist with gross motor garden care. One may enjoy hand tilling the soil or adding new soil around the plants. Someone else may like to water each plant to the count of three or dust off the shelves and garden structure.
- For something a little more challenging for IL participants- Advanced Option: Review this DIY crown tutorial- <u>Link here</u>



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