
WANNA DANCE?



A guide for creating opportunities to
dance with people with profound
intellectual and multiple disabilities

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What is WANNA DANCE?

Wanna Dance is a movement programme developed by Vivo Care Choices, Cheshire Dance and Dance Artist Ruth Spencer.

The programme was developed during the Coronavirus lockdown in 2020 when weekly face-to-face dance classes run by Cheshire Dance at Vivo Care Choices centres had to stop.

Wanna Dance has been inspired by, and is underpinned by, the attitudes and approaches outlined in the HOP – Hanging Out Programme, created by Sheridan Foster.

We wanted to find the best way to enable centre members who loved to dance the opportunity to continue to have good dance experiences.

Wanna Dance has been made to help staff and residents at the Canal Street and Lightfoot Street centres in Chester to find a focused time each week for dancing and moving, and to discover how their dancing partner likes to dance.

What attitude and skills do staff need?

- A 'give it a go' attitude.
- The willingness to spend time with someone.
- The ability to observe what is meaningful to a person.
- The flexibility to drop things that are not working and come up with something else.
- Skills to reflect on what they have done - and write it down.

A belief that:

- All people benefit from interactions.
- All people want to connect with another person - but this is hard for some people.
- Enjoying the company of another person is one of the most fundamental communication skills that needs to be supported.
- Part of our role in supporting people with multiple disabilities is to engage with them.
- Engagement must be meaningful to the person with a disability and the interaction partner.
- If the person cannot understand the 'language' of the support person, then the support person must adapt their language. It should match the language of the person with a disability and what is meaningful to them.
- Communicating with people with multiple disabilities is everyone's job - including managers, all staff and even other service users!

What is the WANNA DANCE approach?

Wanna Dance is about spending time with someone, giving them 100% attention and finding ways to move and dance together.

Wanna Dance is about valuing all movement as expression - from the blink of an eye, the rise and fall of a chest, to full bodied, expansive, rhythmic movements through space.

The Wanna Dance approach guides you through 20 minutes of focused moving time and supports you to record and review your observations to enable you to maintain a connection with your dancing partner.

*All people need to move, all people need to interact with others,
all people need opportunity to express themselves - and
Wanna Dance supports all of these.*

Getting to know your Dance Partner

Dance Partner Name:

Staff Member Name:

Time period of observations: (i.e. April 2021)

How do you know when your dance partner is well? What signs do you notice?

How do you know when your dance partner is not well or not happy? What signs do you notice?

Spend 10 minutes observing your dance partner - what movement do you notice them doing? See if you can notice the small movements as well as the bigger, more obvious ones. Repeat this 2-3 times during the week and add anything you notice here.

What do you notice that your dance partner enjoys, responds to, or is inspired by in their daily life? Sounds, music, objects, sights, smells, textures, characters, songs, games... What are their favourite tunes or pieces of music?

Getting Ready

Take some time to get ready to move

1. Make a conscious choice about **WHERE** you are going to do your dance session together. Think about: light / temperature / sound / minimising distractions.
2. Setting up your **SPACE**...
 - Is your partner comfortable? Are you comfortable?
 - Is there potential for movement in the space around you?
 - Is your space free from clutter and distractions?
 - What resources might you need? Music, objects, recording sheet?
3. Take a moment to pay attention to **YOURSELF**...
 - Find your feet firmly on the ground
 - Allow your spine to lengthen, hands resting comfortably
 - Notice your breath - how do you feel right now?
 - Allow your breath to deepen
 - Take 3 deep breaths in and out. Let your out-breath become longer.
4. Take a moment to tune in to your **DANCE PARTNER**...
 - Give your partner your full attention
 - Notice how they are standing / sitting / lying
 - Notice their breath
 - How are they today?
 - Can you connect through eye contact or a simple touch?

Dancing with your partner: **JOIN**

Join your dancing partner's breathing...
Join the rhythm of blinks in your partners eyes...
Notice...

Where else is there movement happening in their body?

Respectfully join in with your partner's moving:

Join with the same part of the body

Join with them, holding the moment

Try joining with the same movement but with a different body part.

Notice...

- responses in your dance partner
- how your partner's movements feel in your own body?

What else is moving?

Switch and join in with another movement in a different body part

Offer stimuli such as music or objects to encourage movement. (See 'Ideas for Interactions' pages).

Developing your 'joining in dance':

Return to the first movement you joined in with - revisit / repeat.

Try changing the location that you copy from - close / far way, high up / low down; try stopping and starting your joining in.

You may be able to build up a repeatable sequence of joining in movements.

Allow a 'joining dance' to emerge.

Dancing with your partner: **SUGGEST**

Once you are comfortable with your joining dance
Notice... can you describe the movement that has arisen?

How might your dance develop?

Ways to gradually develop the movement:

Suggest changing...

- the **size** of the movement... make it bigger or smaller
- **speed or the rhythm**... make it faster or slower, play a stop/start game, build anticipation.
- the **body part**. e.g circling hands, could change to circling ankles, fingers, head.
- **quality** of the movement... can it be sharp? Smooth? Bouncy? Light? Heavy?

Notice...

- How does your dance partner respond to your suggestions?
- Is your dance partner making their own suggestions? Can you join these?

Other suggestions could you offer:

Can you change **your position or orientation**? Side to side / face to face, low down / high up, close by / far away...

Does your dance partner want to change their position?

Try **contrasting** your partner's movement - can you do the opposite of what they are doing?

Notice... your partner's responses - use these to guide your suggestions.

Don't forget, you can always return to your 'joining in dance'.

Dancing with your partner: **CONNECT**

Touch provides a way to further develop dancing with your partner.

- **Touch can bring awareness to movement in the body.**

It's important to be clear with your touch. Place your hands where there is movement. Touch might be gentle (without weight) or firm (with weight).

Notice... Responses in your partner. How do they respond to direct touch? Do they prefer gentler or firmer touch?

- **Touch can offer sensory experiences.**

Try different qualities of touch such as rhythmic tapping, a light tickle, long brushing movements, firm pressing, gentle pulling and pushing.

Notice... How does your partner respond? Keep a record. Are there particular qualities of touch that your partner enjoys/moves in response to? How do they move?

- **Touch can inspire moving and dancing together**

Place your hand underneath your dance partner's hand.

Feel any movement responses from your partner - Can you follow their movements? Can you follow whatever dance emerges - a small hand dance, a whole bodied travelling dance?

What music might support your dancing today?

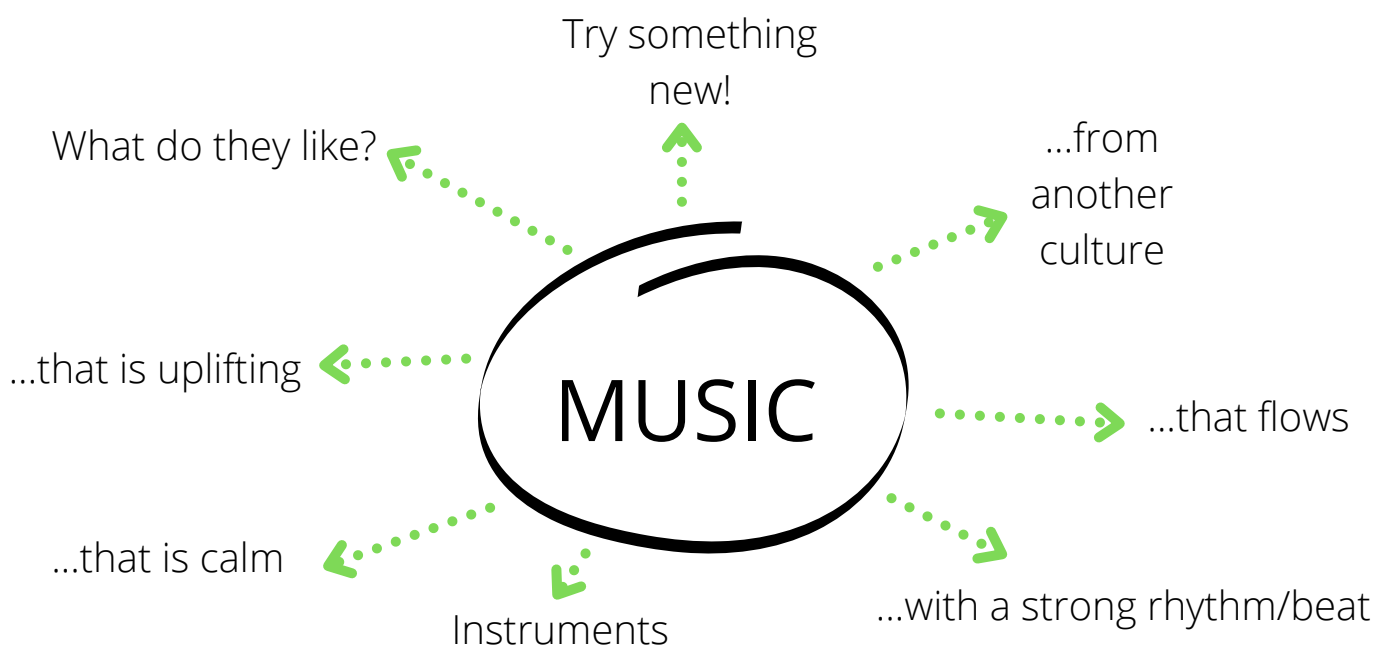
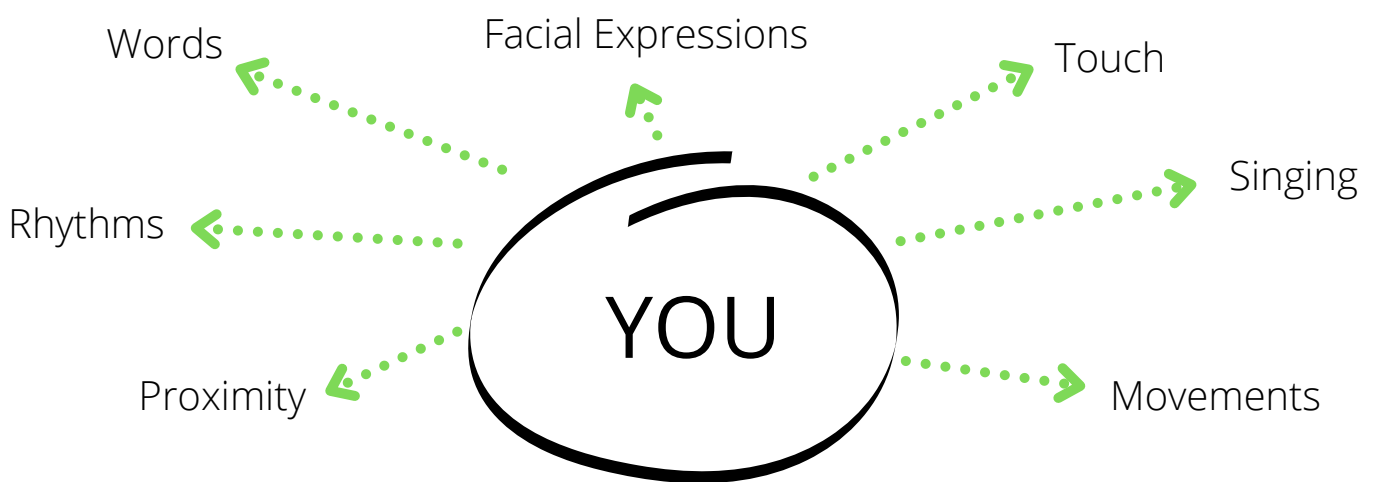
Sensitively, allow a hand-to-hand dance to develop.

Always feel for/observe your partner's response - be aware of how your partner wants to dance today.

Ideas for Interactions: **STIMULI**

What do you notice that your dance partner enjoys, responds to, or is inspired by? These things can be a great starting place. Think about what kinds of movement your stimuli might encourage.

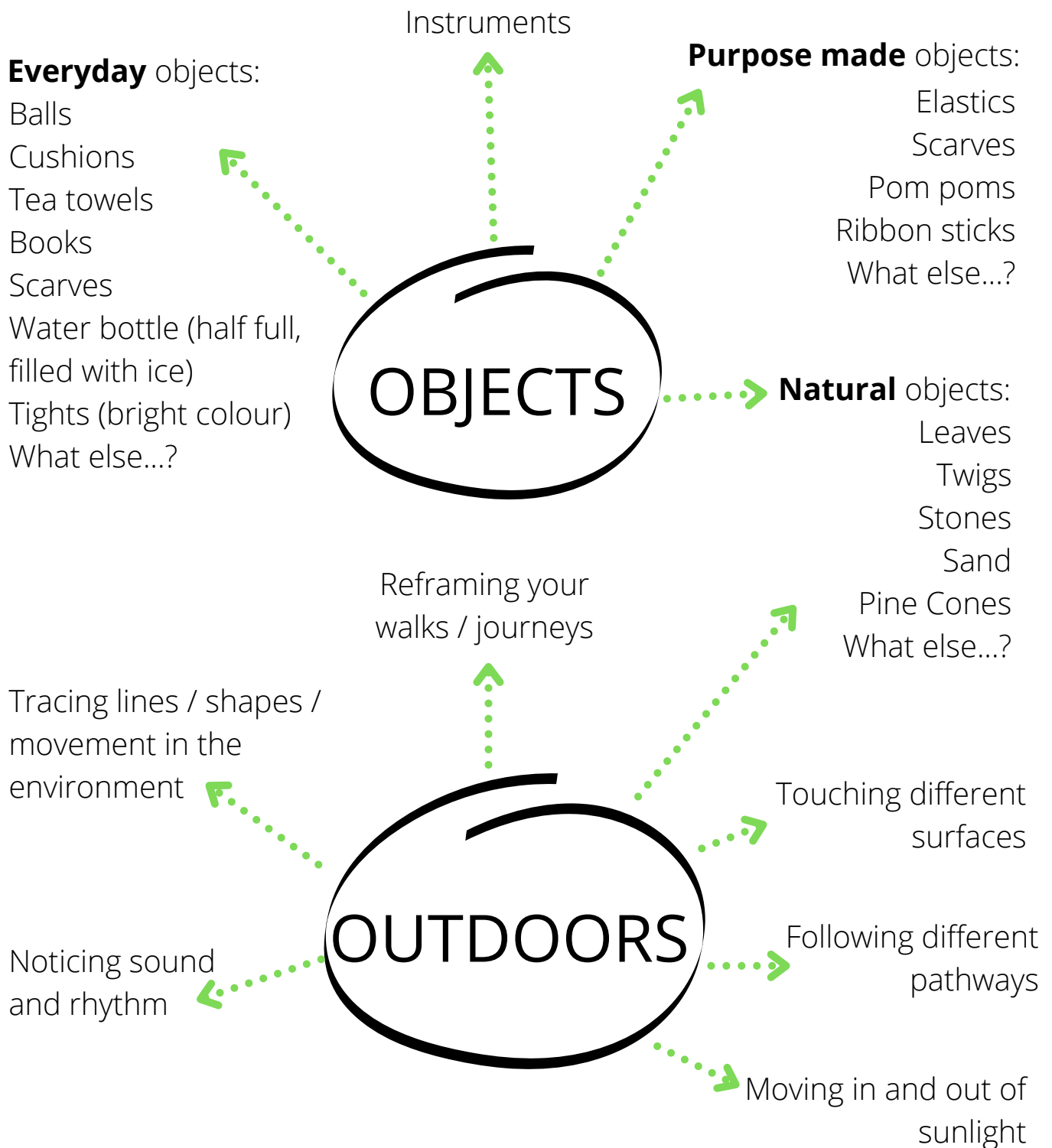
YOU are the best starting point - and you are enough!



Can you create a personalised dance playlist with your partner?

Ideas for Interactions: **STIMULI**

Which objects inspire your dancing partner to move?



Can you find dancing moments in your everyday activities?

Endings

Marking the end of your dance session before transitioning back to the rest of your day is important for both you and your dance partner.

Your dance might find a natural end, or you may need to slowly bring it to a close. Once you have found an ending with your dance partner...

- * Maintain connection with your dance partner through eye contact or touch
- * Find your feet firmly on the ground
- * Allow your spine to lengthen; hands resting comfortably
- * Notice your breath - how do you feel right now?
- * Allow your breath to deepen
- * Take 3 deep breaths in and out. Let your out-breath become longer.

Thank your dance partner for the dance with words or through a smile, a bow of the head, a squeeze of their hands...

You might choose a specific piece of music or a song which you always end with.

Ending in a familiar way lets your dance partner know that the dance session is finishing and prepares them to return to their day.

Recording what happened

Take 2 - 3 minutes to write down what movement happened.
Keep it simple, catching your thoughts of what you felt was significant.

This record will be important for helping to tune into the person with a disability. It will be helpful for colleagues and dance artists, and will be something to share with family and friends.

It will also be a record of outcomes of being involved in Wanna Dance.

Recording Sheets

Dance Partner Name:

Place:

Staff Member Name:

Date:

Time:

What happened?

Describe some of the movements your partner did.

What worked well? How do you know? What did you see in your partner to confirm this?

What didn't work so well? How do you know? What did you see in your partner to confirm this?

What might you try in the future?

Make lots of copies of this!

Reviewing your recordings

After our 3 sessions together, we would like you to continue finding focused time to move with your dancing partner for 20-30 mins once a week for 6 weeks.

Group 1: until w/c 14th June

Group 2: until w/c 19th July

It's really important that we take time to review the record sheets and make a short summary of things that have been working, things that haven't been working, and things to try.

Looking at the recording sheets can help decide how movement experiences can best support our dance partner's individual interests and needs.

Example: Some things learnt:

Stimuli that worked: *familiar music, hand under hand, working outside.*

Responses to look for: smiles, initiating movement, laughs, anticipating stops and starts.

Movements observed: *reaching left arm forwards, and to the L side. Some reaching across body with LH to the R. side to side movements in upper body – shoulders and ribs leading, likes to move to different spaces, some pushing/resistance through LS, opening of RH through touch work.*

Things that didn't work so well: *working with objects – frustration in grasping certain objects.*

Important learning points: *responds more positively to music and environment than objects; loves to copy and the anticipation of stop start; best during a morning in a space with minimal distractions.*

Reviewing & improving Wanna Dance

We are also keen to gather your thoughts on the Wanna Dance Programme and how we might improve and develop it.

Is the Wanna Dance Programme working for you?

How do you feel about doing the Wanna Dance sessions?

How did you find working with your dancing partner?

What adaptations might you want to make to Wanna Dance?

Is there any additional support you need?

Will you continue with Wanna Dance?

We will ask you to share these thoughts after the training sessions and again at the end of your independent 6 weeks.