Guidelines for developers designing playful reminiscence activities with people living with dementia.

The *Memory Through Touch* research project aims to understand the viability of incorporating play through tactile reminiscence. Through lived experience and exploration of prior literature, the study finds that there may be overlap between reminiscence and play from a higher-level philosophical view which may extend to practical applications on play.
The following guidelines emerged from lived experiences and may not translate to other engagements. However, they could be helpful pointers for your own approaches in exploring and developing playful reminiscence. Guidelines are categorised with game teams in mind, with the headings of *Production, Design, Reminiscence, and Tactility.*

Production

- Participatory design appears essential and people living with dementia should be involved in the design process.

  Refer to mature and reputable resources. We used the Mindful Self-empowerment and Social Engagement (MinD) project for guidance on designing with dementia.
  See https://designingfordementia.eu/

- PLWD audiences may differ between care facilities, community engagements, and homes may provide different outcomes.

- Typical game production processes might result in inaccessible designs for people living with dementia such human-centred design – or user-centric design – paradigms.

- Designs might be more accessible when developed using universal design.

Memory Through Touch

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- Open-ended projects may afford over scoping. Scope should still be managed in universal design.

- Production processes still benefit from iterative and agile development practices in universal design.

- Sometimes, disagreements between people in positions of care and people with dementia might occur. You should aim to avoid designed approaches that cause disagreements.

  For instance, we encountered disagreements occurred regarding personal agency and approaches to care.

- People with dementia should not be excluded from participatory social engagements and should have space to provide meaningful contributions towards the project.

Design

- Prepared for and understand the needs of people living with dementia.

- Designing reward systems related to reminiscence risks devaluing reminiscence experiences.

  This could be dangerous as this risks putting people with dementia off engaging in reminiscence.

- Designed approaches should be affordable for people living with dementia.

- Many people with dementia and with advanced dementia can find technology and systems of play perfectly accessible.

  This may not be ubiquitous. You should aim for approaches that are accessible and test for usability.

- Prevalence of technological ability will also likely increase in the future.

Reminiscence

- People in positions of care are essential for reminiscence experiences to be successful for people living with dementia.

- Playful reminiscence therapy – accounting for games or experiences offering structured play – likely should not embody strict rules that could frustrate people with dementia.

- Playful reminiscence experiences are likely more effective as prompts rather than complex systems of play.

- Designed approaches may not act as a replacement for reminiscence or other pre-existing and familiar social activities for people living with dementia.

- People with dementia can and likely should be afforded the ability to engage in taboo or controversial topics.

  Do not infantilise people with dementia. Infantilisation is frustrating and disrespectful for people living with dementia.

Tactility

- Multisensory stimuli (touch, smells, sight, sound) appear to allow for highly emotional and expressive responses from people with advanced dementia.

- People with dementia – and especially people with advanced dementia – may be able to communicate through interaction with multisensory stimuli if they are non-verbal.

- Some logic relating to game design – such as game objects and formal, dramatic, and dynamic elements – might be able to be related to reminiscence objects. (Meaningful personal objects often used in reminiscence therapy.)