

## **Activity: Locks and Keys**

Elders in late stage dementia do have preserved abilities. They enjoy things that are familiar and can often continue old habits by relying on motor memory. Simple activities that draw upon procedural memory and engage the senses can be of great benefit to elders in late stage dementia.

### **Purpose:**

- Develop control and coordination of movement
- Maintain manual dexterity and fine motor skills
- Maintain hand-eye coordination
- Practice sustained focus and attention
- Sensory stimulation
- Fulfill role of work around the home

### **Materials:**

- Tray
- Placemat that contrasts with the table and materials
- Small bowl or basket
- 3 locks and keys of different sizes that are big enough for people with compromised manual dexterity to use

### **Participating in the Activity:**

*First demonstrate the steps, then invite the person to participate in and complete the activity.*

- Unroll the mat.
- Place locks on the mat in order from largest to smallest, left to right.
- Place the keys on the mat in order from largest to smallest, left to right.
- Pick up the largest lock in one hand and the largest key in the other hand.
- Look at the bottom of the lock to determine how the key will go in, insert the key, and turn it.
- Pull the shackle (u-shaped part of the padlock) up and open it all the way to the right.
- Place the lock and key back on the mat.
- Repeat with the other locks.
  
- Go back and pick up the largest lock.
- Turn the shackle back to the left and push it into the lock.
- Place the lock back onto the mat.



- Repeat with the other locks.
- Remove the largest key and place it back into the bowl.
- Repeat with the other keys.
- Roll the mat and put it back on the tray.

**Modifications to Simplify**

- Paint part of the lock and the matching key the same color to give another cue for which key goes with which lock.
- If three locks at a time is too much, you can bring out one lock and key set at a time.