

# The Art of Love: Arts Engagement as Relational Maintenance

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## Introduction and Literature Review

**Goal:** To explore the therapeutic and relationship-building potential of arts engagement

### Alzheimer's Disease (AD)

- Limited communication (Stone, 2013)
- Care partner burden (Butcher, et.al., 2001)
- Grief and loss (Allen, Oyrbode, & Allen, 2009)
- Uncertainty (Stone & Jones, 2009)

### Participatory Arts Engagement

- Effects on physical health, mood, communication, social interaction (Burgener et al., 2015)

### Relational Maintenance

- Actions to sustain a desired relationship state (Canary & Stafford, 2003)
- Five core strategies (Canary & Stafford, 2003)

## Research Questions

**RQ1:** What relational maintenance behaviors do people with AD and their care partners use while participating in arts engagement?

**RQ2:** How do care partners' arts engagement experiences influence their relationship with the person with AD?

## Method

### Data Collection

Mixed methods approach

April  
2017

3 Dyads

Observe 4  
Classes

4 Follow  
Up Calls

Sept.  
2018

2 Dyads

Observe 4  
Classes

3 Follow  
Up Calls

### Data Analysis

Grounded Theory analysis  
through open, axial, and  
selective coding

## Contact Information

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## Open Coding Results

### 5 Relational Maintenance Strategies

(Canary et al., 1993; Canary & Stafford, 2003)

**Positivity:** *"You're pretty good with that brush!" "Good for you!"*

**Openness:** *"Remember when..."*

**Assurances:** *"We can hang this at home. It will look nice."*

**Networks:** *Sending photos to kids*

**Tasks:** *"Tell me if you need help."*

## Discussion

1. Arts engagement can facilitate relational maintenance
2. People with AD and care partners engage in relational maintenance