



# MULTI-DAY PHOTOGRAPHY JOURNEY WORKSHOP PLAN

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## INTRODUCTION AND FRAMEWORK

**This multi-day workshop** has been carefully designed to guide participants through an accessible, progressive exploration of photography and visual storytelling, using both historical and contemporary methods. The journey moves gently from tactile, sensory experiences with cyanotype printing, through digital and analogue photography, and concludes with the creation of personal collages and a group exhibition.

**Each session builds upon the previous**, reinforcing participants' confidence, curiosity, and capacity for creative self-expression. The workshops are designed to support adults with intellectual disabilities by offering hands-on, low-barrier activities that prioritize the process over the product, while honoring the participants' unique voices and creative choices.

**The methodology used** throughout the workshops is grounded in principles of inclusive, person-centered facilitation, as well as adaptive artistic mentoring. It draws from contemporary inclusive arts practices, participatory photography approaches, and the recognition that all individuals—regardless of ability—have valuable stories to tell and creative languages to express them.

## WORKSHOP TITLE

FROM LIGHT AND SHADOW  
TO PERSONAL STORIES

## DURATION

5 DAYS

## SESSION LENGTH

60–75 MINUTES EACH  
(PLUS OPTIONAL BREAKS  
EVERY 30 MINUTES)

## TARGET GROUP

ADULTS WITH INTELLECTUAL  
DISABILITIES

## MENTOR ROLE:

FACILITATE EXPLORATION WITH  
MINIMAL CORRECTION, OFFER  
HANDS-ON SUPPORT, AND ADAPT  
TO INDIVIDUAL ABILITIES AND  
SENSORY NEEDS.

## FLOW OF THE WORKSHOP SERIES

### OVER FIVE DAYS, PARTICIPANTS WILL ENGAGE WITH PHOTOGRAPHY THROUGH MULTIPLE APPROACHES:

**Day 1** introduces cyanotype printing, allowing participants to engage with light, shadow, and shapes through a historic, hands-on process.

**Day 2** transitions to digital photography, using accessible devices to capture personal observations and stories.

**Day 3** offers an observational session on analogue photography, giving participants an understanding of slower, reflective image-making processes.

**Day 4** encourages participants to synthesize their creations into collages or visual stories, combining cyanotypes, digital photos, and tactile elements.

**Day 5** culminates in a celebratory group exhibition, where participants present their work and reflect on their creative journey.

## GENERAL GUIDELINES AND MENTOR APPROACH

### SESSION DURATION:

Each session is structured for approximately 60 minutes, including introduction, main activity, and closure, with the flexibility to offer breaks every 30 minutes or adapt to the group's needs.

### Adaptability and Flexibility:

Mentors are encouraged to observe and respond to the group's rhythm, adjusting the pace, depth, and focus of activities as needed. Some participants may need more time to engage, others may revisit previous steps. Repetition and choice are key elements of inclusive facilitation.

### Preparation:

Mentors should always prepare materials in advance, ensuring that all tools, spaces, and activities are safe, accessible, and inviting. This includes testing devices, arranging calm workspaces, and preparing tactile materials.

### References and Good Practices:

The workshop is informed by inclusive arts education principles, adaptive art therapy practices, and participatory photography methods. It acknowledges the lack of representation of individuals with intellectual disabilities in the mainstream film and photography fields, while affirming the right to creative expression, authorship, and storytelling in accessible ways.



## CORE VALUES

**Process over product:** The journey of exploration, play, and discovery is more important than the final artwork.

**Participant-led creativity:** Activities are invitations, not instructions; participants decide how deeply they engage.

**Accessibility and respect:** All artistic expressions are valid; mentors create space for both verbal and non-verbal storytelling

**Celebration of individual and group identity:** The workshop concludes by honoring each participant's creative voice, fostering pride, and sharing their stories with the community.

# DAY 1: CYANOTYPE – EXPLORING LIGHT AND SHADOW

## INTRODUCTION AND WORKSHOP CONTEXT

**This first session** introduces participants to the basics of photographic expression using the cyanotype process—an early and accessible photographic printing technique that transforms objects and shadows into striking blue-toned images. The process is both magical and immediate: participants place objects on light-sensitive paper, expose them to sunlight or UV light, and then watch as their compositions develop into rich silhouettes through rinsing and drying.

**Cyanotype** removes the technical barriers of cameras and complex equipment, allowing participants to engage directly with the core concepts of photography—light, contrast, composition, and time. The process is tactile, visual, and playful, making it particularly suited for adults with intellectual disabilities who benefit from hands-on, sensory-rich activities.

**Mentors should be mindful** of the participants' varying attention spans, sensory sensitivities, and physical abilities throughout the activity. Cyanotype involves handling wet paper, working with light sources, and waiting for the print to develop, which requires the environment to be calm, safe, and engaging.

## MENTOR CONSIDERATIONS AND SPACE SETUP



- Create a welcoming, organized space where participants feel safe to explore and experiment without fear of making mistakes.
- Use simple, descriptive language, focusing on the wonder of light and shapes rather than photographic jargon.
- Set up the space with a central table covered with protective plastic or cloth, trays of pre-coated cyanotype paper (kept in darkness until use), and an assortment of safe, lightweight objects such as leaves, lace, cut-outs, and flat household items.
- Prepare a nearby rinsing station with clean water trays and a drying area using towels or clips.
- If outdoors, ensure the area is shaded and ventilated to avoid discomfort during exposure to sunlight. Always assist participants carefully when handling wet paper or accessing the UV light area.

# STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE FOR MENTORS AND PARTICIPANTS

## Step 1: Introduce the Cyanotype Process

Explain that cyanotype is a historic photographic method that uses the power of light to create images. Show a sample print to spark curiosity. Invite participants to handle the objects provided and imagine how their shapes will appear as silhouettes on the blue paper.

## Step 2: Distribute Materials

Provide each participant with one sheet of pre-coated cyanotype paper. Instruct them to keep the sensitive side down until they are ready to arrange their objects. Hand out a variety of flat, safe objects for exploration.

## Step 3: Arrange the Objects

Invite participants to place their chosen objects carefully on the paper. Offer encouragement but avoid directing the arrangement—support personal choices and creativity.

**Safety Note:** Support participants with limited mobility or vision to arrange objects safely. Avoid using small, sharp, or heavy items that could pose handling challenges.

## Step 4: Exposure to Light

Once the compositions are ready, assist participants in carefully carrying and placing their papers under sunlight or a UV lamp for approximately 5 to 10 minutes. Use this waiting time as an opportunity for observation, conversation, or quiet reflection.

**Safety Note:** Ensure participants do not look directly into UV lamps and avoid prolonged direct sun exposure. Provide shaded breaks as needed.

## Step 5: Rinse the Print

Guide participants to gently remove their objects and place the exposed paper into the water tray for rinsing. Support them in gently moving the paper in the water to reveal the final image.

**Safety Note:** Closely supervise the rinsing station to prevent spills, slipping, or damage to the fragile wet paper.

## Step 6: Drying the Prints

Lay the prints flat on towels or hang them with clips in the drying area. Encourage participants to observe how the rich blue tones develop as the prints dry.

## Step 7: Group Reflection and Sharing

Once the prints are mostly dry, invite participants to place them together on a table or display wall. Facilitate an inclusive, descriptive reflection circle:

“What shapes did you see in your print?”

“Did the process surprise you in any way?”

“Would you like to try it again using different objects?”



**Respect all forms of sharing**—verbal, pointing, observing quietly—and close the session by previewing that tomorrow’s session will introduce cameras and the idea of capturing images with devices, continuing the exploration of light, shadows, and storytelling.

## DAY 2: DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY – CAPTURING LIGHT AND STORY

### INTRODUCTION AND WORKSHOP CONTEXT

**Building on the sensory exploration** of cyanotype, today's session introduces participants to the practice of digital photography using smartphones, tablets, or simple point-and-shoot cameras. Digital photography allows participants to immediately see and interact with the images they create, offering a sense of instant feedback and accomplishment.

**This session shifts** from working directly with light and objects to using a device as a creative tool, supporting participants in observing, framing, and capturing the world around them. The focus is on personal storytelling, curiosity, and playfulness, rather than technical perfection. The experience should feel accessible, fun, and free from the pressure of getting it "right."

**Mentors should** prepare all devices beforehand, ensuring they are simple to operate and adjusted to basic modes. Participants will be encouraged to take photos of things that interest them, focusing on textures, colors, shadows, and familiar objects.

### MENTOR CONSIDERATIONS AND SPACE SETUP



- Keep explanations minimal—allow participants to discover through doing.
- Ensure devices are pre-set to camera mode and require minimal handling.
- Offer a calm, organized environment where participants can move safely or, if movement is limited, create a stationary photo-taking station.
- Encourage personal choice in what to photograph—avoid assigning specific subjects unless needed to spark ideas.
- Be aware that some participants may feel uncertain or overwhelmed by devices; support them without taking control.
- Always maintain safe, supervised walking paths if the group moves around the space.



# STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE FOR MENTORS AND PARTICIPANTS

## Step 1: Introduction and Demonstration (10 min)

Begin by showing a few sample digital photographs—keep them simple, focusing on everyday subjects.

Explain that, unlike cyanotype, digital cameras capture images instantly, allowing us to collect moments and stories from our surroundings.

Demonstrate taking a photo using the device, showing how the image appears on the screen.

## Step 2: Distribute Devices and Explore Themes (5 min)

Give each participant a device, ensuring it is ready to use.

Suggest simple, sensory-focused themes, such as:

- “Find an interesting shadow.”
- “Photograph something you like to touch.”
- “Look for something with a strong color.”

## Step 3: Guided Photo Walk or Table Session (25 min)

If space allows, guide the participants on a calm, short photo walk indoors or outdoors.

If movement is limited, set up an engaging photo station where participants can photograph arranged objects, textures, or still lifes.

Safety Note: Always supervise carefully during any movement; ensure safe, accessible routes and spaces.

## Step 4: Review Photos Together (10 min)

Gather participants and view their photos together on the device screens.

Celebrate each participant’s work using descriptive prompts, avoiding critique:

- “What do you like about this photo?”
- “How did it feel to capture this image?”
- “What would you like to photograph next?”

## Step 5: Optional Printing and Display (5 min)

If resources allow, print some of the photos immediately and display them as a mini-exhibition.

This physical reinforcement connects yesterday’s cyanotype prints with today’s instant digital images.

## Closure Suggestions (5 min)

Conclude the session by reflecting on the difference between creating images with light and objects (cyanotype) and capturing images using a device (digital photography).

Encourage participants to think about what kinds of images they might want to capture tomorrow when they explore analogue photography through observation, experiencing the slower, more mysterious process of film.

## DAY 3: ANALOGUE PHOTOGRAPHY – OBSERVING THE FILM PROCESS

### INTRODUCTION AND WORKSHOP CONTEXT

**Today's session** introduces participants to the world of analogue photography, offering them a chance to experience the slower, more tactile process of film photography through guided observation and exploration of film cameras and developed prints.

**This is not a hands-on developing session** due to the complexity and safety requirements of the darkroom process. Instead, participants will observe the process through mentor demonstration or video, handle simple film cameras (without film), and explore negatives and printed photographs.

**The goal is** to demystify the film process, helping participants understand that photography is not always instant, like digital photography or cyanotype, but can also be a slow, reflective process that requires patience and curiosity. By engaging with the physicality of film cameras and observing the transformation from negatives to prints, participants deepen their understanding of storytelling through images.

### MENTOR CONSIDERATIONS AND SPACE SETUP

- Ensure the mentor is experienced with film photography and can safely demonstrate the developing process (or use a clear, accessible video demonstration if darkroom access is not possible).
- Prepare pre-developed negatives and black-and-white prints for tactile, visual inspection.
- Keep the space calm, organized, and well-lit; avoid exposing participants to darkroom chemicals or complex equipment directly.
- Use simplified explanations—avoid technical jargon unless participants show interest.
- Pace the demonstration slowly, pausing for questions and reflections.
- Always supervise closely when participants handle cameras and prints.

# STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE FOR MENTORS AND PARTICIPANTS

## Step 1: Introduction to Film Cameras (10 min)

Begin by showing a simple film camera (point-and-shoot or SLR).

Explain that, unlike digital cameras, film cameras use rolls of film inside the camera, which are developed later in a darkroom using special processes.

Allow participants to handle an unloaded camera—feel the buttons, look through the viewfinder, hear the click of the shutter.

**Safety Note:** Ensure no film is loaded to prevent accidental exposure.

## Step 2: Demonstration of the Film Process (15 min)

Using prepared materials or a video demonstration, show how the film is developed step by step:

- The film is placed in the darkroom.
- Chemicals are used to reveal the images.
- The photos appear as negatives first, then as printed photos.
- Lay out negatives and prints for participants to observe closely.
- Use a lightbox or place negatives against a window to show how they work.

## Step 3: Sensory Exploration and Storytelling (15 min)

Provide pre-printed black-and-white photos for participants to handle.

Prompt reflections using simple, open-ended questions:

- “How is this different from the photos you took yesterday?”
- “What do you notice about the colors, the shadows, the waiting?”

Encourage participants to create a short story around one of the prints if they wish, supporting both verbal and non-verbal storytelling.

## Step 4: Handling Cameras Safely (10 min)

Allow participants to hold and explore the camera again, inviting them to imagine what photos they would take if it were loaded.

Support those who need assistance in looking through the viewfinder or safely handling the device.

**Safety Note:** Always supervise camera handling closely to avoid damage or accidents.

## Closure Suggestions (5 min)

Close the session by reflecting on the feelings of slowness, patience, and mystery that film photography brings compared to the immediate results of digital and cyanotype methods. Encourage participants to think about how photography can be both quick and slow, immediate and thoughtful.

Preview that tomorrow they will bring together all their work—cyanotypes, digital photos, and inspiration from today—into a personal collage or visual diary, creating their own unique photographic story.



## DAY 4: COLLAGE AND PHOTO STORYTELLING – COMBINING EXPERIENCES

### INTRODUCTION AND WORKSHOP CONTEXT

**In this session, participants** will bring together all the experiences and creations from the previous days—cyanotype prints, digital photographs, and their reflections on analogue photography—into a personal or group collage or visual diary page. This process allows them to explore how images, textures, and objects can be layered and combined to create stories, memories, or simply beautiful abstract compositions.

**Collage is an inclusive** and open-ended art form that requires no technical skills and invites participants to explore freely, combining images in whatever way feels right to them. It encourages sensory exploration, storytelling, and decision-making while reinforcing that art can be non-linear, playful, and deeply personal.

**Mentors should create a calm,** inspiring space where participants feel supported to experiment and where all forms of outcomes—abstract, narrative, chaotic, or minimal—are equally celebrated.

### MENTOR CONSIDERATIONS AND SPACE SETUP



- Arrange the workspace with a variety of materials: participants' cyanotype prints, printed digital photos, sample black-and-white prints, colored papers, fabrics, glue, scissors, markers, stickers, and magazines for cutting.
- Ensure tools are safe, easy to use, and accessible to all participants.
- Avoid imposing narrative structures—some participants might create stories, others might prefer abstract compositions.
- Be ready to support participants who may need assistance with gluing, cutting, or arranging materials, while respecting their creative choices.
- Offer quiet support and observe the energy of the group, providing encouragement without directing.

# STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE FOR MENTORS AND PARTICIPANTS

## Step 1: Introduction to Collage (10 min)

Introduce collage by showing simple examples that mix photographs, colors, textures, and words. Explain that today's activity is about combining images and materials to tell a story, create an image, or simply arrange things that feel good together. Invite participants to explore the materials on the table, touching, looking, and imagining how they might use them.

## Step 2: Distribute Materials and Prepare Workstations (5 min)

Provide each participant with: A large sheet of paper or cardboard base Their cyanotype prints, digital photos, and sample black-and-white prints. A variety of materials for collage-making

**Safety Note:** Assist participants who need help with scissors or handling small objects, ensuring all tools are safe and comfortable to use.

## Step 3: Creative Collage Making (30 min)

Encourage participants to arrange their images and materials however they wish.

Use gentle, open prompts to support creativity:

“What would you like to show in your collage today?”

“Would you like to mix your photos with colors or textures?”

“Does this remind you of a story or a place?”

Support those who need help but allow autonomy and freedom in choices. Mentors can offer suggestions if asked but should avoid correcting or altering participants' creative decisions.

## Step 4: Finishing Touches and Story Sharing (10 min)

Once participants feel their collage is complete, offer them the option to add a title, words, or decorative elements using markers or cut-outs. Facilitate an open sharing circle where participants can present their collage or simply display it. Support non-verbal sharing through gestures, pointing, or observing silently.

## Closure Suggestions (5 min)

Create a simple group gallery by placing all collages together on a wall or table.

Lead the group through the display, offering reflective prompts:

- “What do you see in your collage today?”
- “How does it feel to see your cyanotypes and photos together?”
- “Would you like to add anything next time?”

Celebrate the diversity of outcomes and acknowledge the creative journey participants have taken, from light and shadow to capturing images and now assembling them into their own visual stories. Preview that tomorrow will be a celebration day, where they will present their work in a group exhibition.



## DAY 5: GROUP EXHIBITION AND CELEBRATION – SHARING THE JOURNEY

### INTRODUCTION AND WORKSHOP CONTEXT

**The final session is dedicated to** celebrating the participants' creative journey through photography, film-inspired processes, and collage. This day is about reflection, pride, and recognition of each participant's artistic voice. Participants will present their cyanotype prints, digital photographs, and collages in a group exhibition format, supported by mentors and peers.

**This exhibition is not** about technical perfection or polished presentation—it is about honoring the process, the effort, and the discoveries made during the workshops. The environment should be inclusive, welcoming, and celebratory, where all participants feel valued and their creative work is seen and appreciated.

**Mentors play a key role** in setting the tone of the exhibition: encouraging openness, highlighting the unique qualities of each participant's work, and fostering a non-judgmental, joyful space where both verbal and non-verbal sharing are embraced.

### MENTOR CONSIDERATIONS AND SPACE SETUP



- Prepare the exhibition space in advance—tables, walls, or display areas should be clear, accessible, and calming.
- Allow participants to assist in setting up their work if they wish; this reinforces ownership and pride.
- Avoid formal or structured presentations; let the exhibition feel relaxed, playful, and participant-centered.
- Support participants in sharing their work in whatever way they are comfortable—through words, gestures, pointing, or simply standing by their work.
- Always provide positive, encouraging reflections, focusing on the journey, discoveries, and the personal meaning behind the creations.

# STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE FOR MENTORS AND PARTICIPANTS

## Step 1: Preparing the Exhibition Space (15 min)

Mentors and participants work together to set up the exhibition space.

Display all cyanotypes, digital prints, and collages on tables, walls, or display boards. Provide labels or cards for names and titles (optional, based on participant preference). Ensure the space is arranged to be accessible for all mobility levels, with clear pathways and resting areas. Safety

Note: Ensure all materials are secured safely to avoid slipping hazards or clutter.

## Step 2: Opening the Group Walk (10 min)

Begin the exhibition with a relaxed group walk around the displays. Mentors can model positive reflections by highlighting elements in the works (“Look at all the textures you explored here,” “I can see a beautiful story in this collage”). Invite participants to guide the group to their piece if they feel comfortable doing so.

## Step 3: Participant Sharing (15 min)

Facilitate an open sharing circle where participants can talk about their work, point to it, or simply have it displayed for others to see.

### Offer guiding prompts to support storytelling:

- “What part of your work makes you feel happy or proud?”
- “What did you enjoy most during our journey together?”
- “Would you like to try this again or explore something new next time?”
- Be sensitive and flexible—allow non-verbal participation and encourage all expressions of pride.

## Step 4: Group Reflection Circle (10 min)

Gather the group in a circle, seated or standing, for a final reflection.

Prompt reflections on the creative journey from cyanotype to digital photography to collage storytelling.

### Ask open-ended reflections like:

- “What did you learn about photography and telling stories?”
- “Did you discover something new about yourself?”
- “What would you like to do more of in future workshops?”
- Allow space for silence, smiles, gestures, or laughter—celebrate all forms of expression.

## Step 5: Closing the Workshop (5 min)

Thank each participant personally for their creativity, courage, and contribution.

Offer simple certificates of participation (optional) to honor their journey.

Invite participants to take home their favorite works or choose to leave them in the space for a longer group exhibition if they wish.



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