

Sensory Engagement- High Level

During isolation, it is likely that individuals will not have access to their normal activities, outdoor space and routine causing them anxiety which may lead to an increase in sensory and/or challenging behaviour. Sensory activities may help individuals to burn some energy whilst giving them the sensory feedback they require to feel safe, calm and ready to engage in their daily routines. This resource has been put together to help you manage your young adult's sensory and/or health and well-being needs during this period of home schooling/isolation.

How can we help?

- Ensure we clearly communicate what is expected and what the task is at hand and supporting the individual as required.
- Recognizing the individual's triggers and observed changes in presentation and support them to return to a calm, alert and just right state at this time.
- If the individual identifies that they are under or over aroused, presenting as amber within their just right profile, offer them activities manage their arousal levels.
- Focus on activities that use muscles and get the person moving. Day to day tasks that can be regulating include hoovering or carrying the laundry. Leisure activities might include stretching or yoga.

Sensory Strategies – Just Right Thermometer Explained

Below is the general Just Right Class Chart which categorizes the different sensory activities and strategies as alerting, maintaining, calming or giving time out. There are lots of ideas here. It is recommended that the supporting adult starts by picking three strategies for each category which they think will be suitable for our young adults.

Red- Very High

Amber- High

Green- Just Right

Blue- Low

<p>Very high I need time out...</p>	<p>Individuals may appear: unable to engage in activities as too overwhelmed, upset, angry, unable to cooperate, frozen, needing space.</p> <p>Strategies: quiet safe space, time alone, minimise verbal communication, ear defenders, fidgets</p>
<p>High I need help calming...</p>	<p>Individuals may appear: to be losing concentration, poor attention, fidgety, constantly on the go, excited, emotionally on edge, bouncing, flapping, hanging or climbing on people, hyper, over-excited.</p> <p>Strategies: static activities (avoiding too much movement). Involve traction, push, pull, carry, hang (e.g. wall press ups, chair press ups, chewy foods, rolling over peanut ball, vibrating cushion, weighted blanket, theraband)</p>
<p>Just Right I'm ready to learn or play...</p>	<p>Sensory strategies to keep me Just Right</p> <p>Individuals may appear: calm, alert, ready to learn or play, settled, concentrating, good sitting, organised, and focused. Easy to get on with others and have fun.</p> <p>Strategies: activities within the classroom which maintain the individual's Just Right state (functional movement breaks e.g. wiping tables, shredding, watering plants, digging, move n sit cushion, drink/snack)</p>
<p>Low I need help alerting...</p>	<p>Individuals may appear: tired, bored, sedate, floppy, fidgety, easily upset, angry, sluggish, spacey, sleepy, sad, upset</p> <p>Strategies: movement based activities (e.g. trampoline, bounce on ball, dance to music, crunchy foods- adhering to SALT guidelines, ball games, drink)</p>

Calming Strategies

Dim the light

Creating a calm and quiet environment will help support the individual to be ready to learn.



Squeeze a stress ball

This will help the individual exert any physical and mental energy from inside.



Therapy ball exercises

1. Have the individual lay over the ball on their tummy and rock forwards and backwards, pushing with their hands and feet.



2. Have the individual lay on their tummy whilst someone gently rolls the ball over their back.



Listen to music

Have the individual wear earphones and listen to their favourite music.



Breathing Exercises

Assist the individual to follow their fingers around their hand whilst they breath in and out. Use the following image as a guide to support the individual through calm and controlled breathing.

Hand Breathing



Deep pressure activities

By applying deep pressure to an individual it allows them to release hormones which make them relax and become more centered within themselves. This can be achieved through:

1. A self-hug

hug



2. Squeezing hands together



3. Massage



Alerting Strategies

These strategies allow the individual to wake up their body and re-energize so they are ready to learn. Alerting strategies are all about stimulating the brain and body through proprioceptive (knowing where your body is in space) and vestibular (movement) input.

Music and Dancing



Trampoline



Ball games



Fidget toys



Eating a crunchy snack



Movement break

Movement Exercise Program



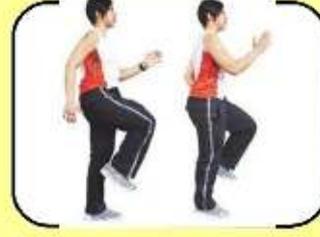
Seated leg raises



Sit to stand



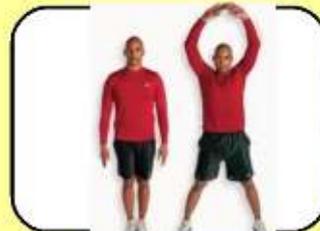
Arm lifts



Marching



Wall push up



Star Jumps

Organising Strategies

Organising activities require the individual to coordinate their body movements and sensory processes to complete a multi-step task. Activities like these allow the individual to increase focus, attention span and performance prior to engaging in learning. Ensure the learner is in the 'Just Right' zone to complete the below strategies.

Sorting buttons and beads (sort into shapes and colours)



Listen to rhythmical music and copy the tune



Colouring in



Sensory Circuit FUN!

The sensory activities mentioned above can be implemented using a sensory circuit. Sensory circuits are a short and snappy sensory motor skills programme that is carried out to help set individuals up for a productive day. Individuals participate in a 15 minute session of activities designed to improve brain processing efficiency, and they generally find that the circuit is a fun way to start the day. The circuit also encourages the development of an individual's sensory processing skills.

When to complete a sensory circuit?

The circuit should be an active, physical and fun activity that the individual enjoys. Ideally, it should be run first thing in the morning, and after lunch if at all possible. The sensory circuit provides a sequence of activities done repeatedly to provide the young adult with the right type of sensory input in order to **CALM** and **ORGANISE** them for the day ahead ready for learning to occur. The idea is to start with something alerting, move to an organisation stage and then finally to a calming phase.

Guidance:

4. If possible, remove shoes and socks, as the circuit is best done bare foot when inside.
5. Music: Music is optional to play whilst the young adult completes the circuit. Choose music that is fast (140-160 beats per minute – if you put this into google suggested music will appear). Only play this music for the first two sections; alerting and organising. At the end, during the calm down period, turn off or put some relaxing music on.
6. Before starting the circuits, ensure you risk assess the environment and remove any hazards, ensure plenty of space. Where possible use soft mats.
7. All activities should be supervised by an adult at all times. Support the individual by using a calm voice and give clear instructions to help regulate the young adult.
8. Ensure the individual is given enough time to complete alerting and calming activities. The use of timers, count downs and visuals may help the young adult transition between activities.
9. Activities should always be individual led, therefore always offer the young adult a choice of activity within each section.
10. Observe the individual's behaviour, before, during and activity the activities. If you notice the young adult becoming distressed/uncomfortable with any of the activities at any time, please stop immediately.
11. **Please note the tactile system is highly sensitive and may trigger/activate some young adults to go into fight/flight/freeze state. Therefore, please be mindful of this when supporting the individual.**

Suggested equipment

- Outdoor equipment (swing, climbing frame, bike, etc.)
- Trampette
- Skipping rope
- Balance board or coloured tape
- Gym ball/peanut
- Chair/table
- Blankets, cushions
- Cones or tins of beans
- Wall space
- Lycra/Theraband
- Soft mat / yoga mat/ carpet
- Selection of balls and / or beanbags
- Parachute/blankets/bed sheet
- Fine motor activities – please see appendix for ideas
- Duvets/cushions
- Bat and ball



How to carry out a sensory circuit

It is important that the activities are carried out in the **correct order**. The right order results in a well-regulated, happy individual. The wrong order may well result in a dysregulated, upset or irritable individual.

1. Alerting
2. Organising
3. Calming

Please see sections for appropriate activity suggestions. Visuals can be found at the end of the resource to help you structure your circuit.

1. Alerting



The aim of this section is to provide vestibular (movement) and proprioceptive (knowing where your body joints are in space) stimulation within a controlled setting. This prepares the brain for learning.

Activity ideas:

- Bouncing 10 times on a mini trampoline or space hopper
- Spinning a hoop
- Star jumps x10
- Therapy ball for rolling over and bouncing on
- Skipping
- Lycra/ Theraband exercises
- Chair push ups
- Wall push ups against the wall
- Running on the spot – slow, jog, sprint
- Dancing - make up your own, take it in turn to copy each other or learn a new dance
- Stretching , yoga type moves
- Following exercise videos (see attached for some ideas – there are many available
- Running, jumping, stomping.



2. Organising



This section includes activities that require motor sensory processing, balance and timing. The individual needs to organise their body, plan their approach and do more than one thing at a time in a sequential order. These are skills that may increase an individual's focus, attention span and performance within the classroom.

Activity ideas:

- Balancing on a beam or line of yellow tape (forward - toe to heel or backwards - heel to toe).
- Obstacle course.
- Treasure hunt.
- Hopping into targets/hopscotch.



- Sensory walk for individual to walk on bare foot (fill different containers with textures sand, lentils, leaves, bubble wrap, rough uneven textures).
- Egg and spoon.
- Obstacle course crawling through a tunnel or under duvet.
- Skittles – you can use empty bottles to knock over.
- Log rolling.
- Throwing bean bags or small cuddly toys onto a target.
- Blowing bubbles or blowing a paper ball to a target – bubbles can be made with fairy up liquid and water.
- Wobble boards for balance work.
- Throwing and catching games.
- Balloon volleyball.
- Fine motor/visual perception games i.e. fishing magnetic game.
- Rolling over peanut ball on tummy and completing fine motor games.



3. Calming



The calming activities are very important as they provide input to ensure that individual leaves the circuit feeling calm, centred and ready for the day ahead.

Activities include **proprioceptive** (knowing where your body joints are in space) or **deep pressure** activities such as:

- Placing feet or hands in weighted bean bags
- Lying under weighted blankets or you can use duvets/pillows/blankets/cushions (weight should not exceed 5% of individual's body weight).
- Roll peanut or gym ball over the individual's back slowly checking in with them that pressure is okay.
- Wall press ups x 10



- Chair press ups x 10
- Parachute – you can use a bed sheet or blanket to create this.
- Fine motor activities i.e. colouring in.
- Safe place –tent or make a den with blankets and cushions over furniture.



Circuit Examples

