

Sensory Engagement- Low 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.



Tactile stimulation

Gently but firmly rub your hand, a rubber tactile toy, brush, material (of learner's preference) along their arm and through their palm. Be careful as some individuals might be too sensitive to his sort of touch.



Therapy ball exercises

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



Listen to music

Put on the learner's favourite music. Allow them time to the music and relax.



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



Vibration



Chewing a crunchy snack



Lights



Tactile exploration

Carefully support the learner to explore tactile toys, wet foams, sand, paint, any messy and exciting textures. Use hand over hand support to guide their hand through the tactile stimulation.



Sensory Story's

What is a sensory story?

Sensory stories use touch, smell, sight, taste and sound experiences in conjunction with short chunks of text to stimulate the senses and tell stories. For example, using sound and light, aromatherapy, music and tactile resources (sound of a tiger roaring, torch for twinkling lights).

Who can be involved in a sensory story?

Learners may be able to take an active role in interactive story telling- for example using a switch or putting their hands through a container of rice to produce a sound effect. Support the learner to touch, taste, smell and hear a range of senses.

How can sensory stories effective?

The stories are simple but age appropriate. Poetry, song and music are used as these can be experienced and enjoyed by everyone, regardless of language understanding or sensory impairment,. They are told interactively through actions and emotions rather than words and pictures, so they are perfect for anyone with severe learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties and autism spectrum disorder. **Prior to completing the story ensure your learner is in the "Just Right" zone and ready to engage.**

Why use sensory stories?

They can be used to promote relaxation, sensory integration, turn taking and interaction and understanding of cause and effect.

Please refer to the following files for further support on sensory stories:

- Sensory Story Guidelines
- Elephant Dance Sensory Story
- Four seasons in a day sensory story
- Mr. Johnson home living sensory story