SNOEZELEN / SENSORY STIMULATION INFORMATION

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HEARING

TOUCH

TASTE

SMELL

SIGHT
What is Snoezelen?
It means “sniff and doze”. It was first developed at the Haarendael Institute in Holland as a method of stimulating primary senses: - sight, sound, smell and touch. It uses dimly lit rooms with relaxing music and various types of stimuli to create an atmosphere of warmth, confidence and pleasure. It aims to improve quality of life by using the senses as a means of communication, with individuals who are cognitively impaired, and who are unable to express their needs or feelings.

Initially Snoezelen was used primarily as a therapy for those with learning difficulties, but it is now also used within Paediatrics and studies have been completed to show benefits for people with a dementia.

Benefits of Sensory Stimulation
- Even without a Snoezelen room you can create a positive environment where elderly people can enjoy sensory experiences.
- Sensory stimulation can provide enjoyment, relaxation, encourage communication and help to improve quality of life.
- Stimulation of all the senses through the use of touch, sound, sight, smell and taste. Therapeutic use of self is also an essential part of the session, to encourage participation, particularly for older people who may be more cognitively impaired.
- Can help to improve carer’s relationship and allow new method of communication.
- Can reduce restless, agitated behaviour, but unfortunately there is no long lasting effects from therapy input.
- Useful to create your own evaluation sheet to record each group / individual session to monitor progress of sessions. Use support from your own supervisor.

Running A Group or One-to-One Contact

Group
- Important to have clear aims for your group.
- An environment where there will be limited distractions, and allow a homely feel to it.
- Important to have a beginning – middle – end to every session.
- Maximum of 2 older people to one therapist or co-therapist. Example – 4 clients and 2 therapists per group.
- Be well prepared prior to session, to create the most welcoming and pleasurable environment.
- Do not attempt to use too much stimuli at one time. Example: gentle hand massage may be all that is tolerated at one time.
- Do not clutter the environment with equipment. This may be perceived as aesthetically pleasing to you, but may be very frightening for the older person.
Individual
- Keep in mind that not everyone enjoys group sessions, or even being in an unfamiliar environment. One-to-one sessions in someone’s home or their hospital bedside maybe just as beneficial.

Practical Tips: What You Need
- Dim bright lights or use lamps instead.
- Use a warm comfortable environment.
- Draw blinds / curtains to minimize distractions.
- Play gentle / relaxing music – a selection is useful to have.
- Warm hot water bottles wrapped in towels can be soothing for backs, especially in winter months.
- Comfortable chairs for older people.
- Selection of pleasant smelling lotions for massage (be aware of Health Board’s policy re: aromatherapy due to potency of oils).
- Cushions/pillows for additional comfort.
- Paper towels/towels to protect clothing etc.
- Encourage choice, even at a basic level e.g. favourite lotion etc.
- Allow session to dictate it’s own pace – length can vary according to responses, mood and level of agitation / restlessness. Remember no pressure and no demands.

Designing A Room / Purchasing Equipment
- Completing the course offered by Richard Hirstwood offers the opportunity to try numerous pieces of equipment, and consider appropriate designs according to the needs of the client group.
- Equipment useful from my own experience includes:-
  - Bubble tube.
  - Fiber optics.
  - Mirror ball
  - Portable visual sensory toys.
- It is important to know how to use equipment appropriately and how to maintain it.
- Also worthwhile visiting other Health Boards which already have established sensory rooms to see them in practice and to discuss advantages / disadvantages.
- When thinking of colour for decorating a room. Remember many older people have visual impairments and so the typical ‘white room’ would not be useful. Colour offers more contrast and can be much more inviting.
- Be imaginative when naming your room. Rather than a sensory room, it would be called the ‘sunshine’ room etc.

Other Ideas
- Sensory box.
- Feely bags.
➢ Tactile board / textured cushions
➢ Tasting sessions.
➢ Objects for reminiscence.
➢ Snoezelen in a suitcase.
➢ Reminiscence smell box.
➢ A collection of different types of music.
➢ Using themes e.g. shells / sand for summer.
➢ Koosh balls.
➢ Soft toys.
➢ Glow in the dark stars for walls / ceilings.

Don’t be afraid to use your own imagination, sensory experiences are important to us all in everyday life.

Further Training – Hirstwood Training
➢ Specifically looks at equipment for Snoezelen rooms, as well as ways to cut costs and develop your own ideas. Informative and worthwhile – 2 day course.

Contact: Tel / Fax: 01524 426395 – Richard Hirstwood.

Useful Information

Library: A practical guide to the use of multi-sensory rooms by Richard Hirstwood and Mark Gray. Easy to follow with useful practical tips. Libraries can offer literature search service.

Catalogues: See enclosed list

Services: Dementia Services Development Centre, University of Stirling, Stirling, FK9 4LA.
The Soundbeam Project, Unit 3, Highbury Villas, St. Michael’s Hill, Bristol, BS2 8BY
Tel: 01603 507 788 Fax: 01603 5070877
Email: 100530.3530@CompuServe. Com

Mike Ayres Design, Unit 8 Shepherds Grove, Stanton, Suffolk, IP31 2AR
Tel: 01389 251 551 Fax: 01359 251707

Spacekraft Ltd, Crowgill House, Rosse Street, West Yorkshire, BD10 3SW
Tel: 01274 581 007 Fax: 01274 531 966

Rompa, Goyt Slide Road, chesterfield, Derbyshire, S40 2PH
Tel: 01246 211 777 Fax: 01246 221 802

Kirkton Litework, Unit 2 Woodgate Park, White Lund Industrial Estate, Moreambe, Lancashrie, LA3 3PS
Tel: 01524 844 808 Fax: 01534 846 078

Toys for the Handicapped, 76 Barracks Road, Sandy Lane Industrial Estate, Stourport of Severn, Worcestershire, DY14 9QB
Tel: 01299 827 820 Fax: 01299 827 035

Multi- Sensory Environments, The Business and Innovation Centre, Angel Way, Listerhills, Bradford, West Yorkshire BD7 1BX
Tel: 01274 841 318 Fax: 01274 841 319

Mike Ayres and Company Ltd, Unit 14 Vanguard Trading Estate, Britania Road, Chesterfield, Derbyshire S40 2TL
Tel: 01246 551 546 Fax: 01246 200 504

CAVE, Environmental Electrical Services, Manywells Industrial Estate, Cullingworth, Bradford, West Yorkshire BD13 5DX
Tel: 01274 541 327 Fax: 01535 273 965

Dawsons Music, Education Division, 65 Sankey Street, Warrington, Lancashire, WA2 2SU
Tel: 01925 632 591 Fax: 01925 417 812 (Midi Creator and Digital Delay)

Rosco Ltd, Blanchard Works, Kangley Bridge Road, London, SE26 5AW
Tel: 0181 659 2300 Fax: 0181 659 3153
(Rosco are an FX company for Theatre but have lots of useful products. (Roscoglow is the luminous paint). Ask for local dealer’s name).