



YOUR
SENSORY
TOOLKIT



What is sensory processing and modulation?

Sensory processing refers to how the information from our skin (touch), ears (hearing), eyes (vision), head (balance), tongue (taste), joints (body / movement awareness) is registered and travels to the brain where it is processed, filtered, identified and prioritised. The brain cross references this sensory information with where we are and what we are doing to determine what, if any, action needs to be taken.

A big part of sensory processing is being able to discriminate one sensation from another e.g. A fly landing on our arm from a hand touching our arm as this informs what our next action should be.

At any one time we are processing a phenomenal amount of sensory information, most of which is filtered out before it even reaches our conscious awareness.

Modulation refers to how we respond to the sensory information we have received in terms of how quickly we respond and the manner in which we respond. For each of us, how we modulate / respond to sensory information is very different. Some of us are sensitive (“over responsive”) to touch and may find messy play or having food or mess on your hands difficult. This sensation is modulated by us wiping our hands or washing our hands at the next available opportunity.

However, for those who have difficulty with modulating these sensations it may feel more than just uncomfortable, it may feel painful or overwhelming and they will want this sensation to stop immediately. But if this person isn't able to use verbal language or communicate this effectively to another it may result in them using physical behaviour in an attempt to make this sensation stop.

Some of us do not always register when a sensation has occurred. This may be because:

- We have difficulty at that time in distinguishing this sensation from all the others we are experiencing, e.g. not hearing your name being called in a busy shop
- Our filtering system is not working as it should. It may filter out important information or not filter information so that you switch your attention to each new sensation as they come along e.g. turning your head to your name being called, then turning it to where you can hear a toy being played with, then to the child you can hear talking next to you

Filtering out important information, reduced filtering and difficulty with discriminating sensations can significantly impact on, and affect, our attention and learning. It can quickly lead to sensory overload where a person will shut down or become agitated, anxious and upset. Imagine having a radio on all the time and you can't turn it down or off; for some, this is what the world of sound is like when they can't ignore certain sounds. It becomes overwhelming and

exhausting and when our only way of expressing this is physically, it becomes challenging for both the person experiencing sensory overload and the adult supporting them.

Often the only key to what is happening within a person's sensory system is their behaviour.

Modulation is also affected by how we are feeling. For example, on a day where we are feeling tired or emotional, our tolerances are often lower so we may become more sensitive to touch or noise and react in a more extreme way than a day where we may feel rested and relaxed.

Sensory integration relates to how we take in all the information from all our senses at any one time, process it, make sense of it, put it all together and come up with a plan of how to react to this information.

Imagine, eating an orange. We can feel (touch) that it is round, we sense the weight of it to enable us to judge how much pressure we need to keep it held in our hands without squeezing it too much (body awareness / proprioception). We can see that it is round, we can see its texture and that it is orange in colour.

So it looks and feels very much like an orange. We know it's an orange because we have this information stored in our memory. We start to cut it up or peel the orange as we have done hundreds of times before because we remember the first time we worked out or copied how to eat an orange and have stored this in our procedural memory. We use our previous experiences in eating an orange as well as our touch and proprioceptive senses to guide our arm and hand towards our mouth. If someone accidentally knocks our arm we are able to detect (proprioception) where our arm is and bring it back to its path to the mouth. But as you open your mouth to receive the orange your sense of smell detects a rotten smell, this smell is cross referenced with your memory records of how an orange should smell and this alerts you that something is different. So your brain instructs your arm to stop its passage to your mouth so that you can visually inspect the orange where you see a rotten part of the orange that you had not seen.

This is sensory integration, it encompasses sensory processing and modulation, it happens in all of us all the time, and it directs all our actions.

Children and adults who have difficulties with sensory integration can find the world complex, confusing and / or overwhelming because they can experience the world, and make sense of it differently. Children and adults with sensory integration difficulties can have typical intelligence or be exceptionally bright as well as having other difficulties and differences that mark them as "different" to their peers.

Research has shown that high numbers of children and adults with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder have significant sensory processing and modulation difficulties.

What do behaviours tell us about a person's sensory processing and modulation ?

There are three main types of behaviours that we can observe in children with sensory processing and modulation difficulties, and they relate to all our senses:

1. **Over responsivity** – They are sensitive to sensations and often will react quickly and / or negatively towards them or engage in avoidant behaviour, become anxious or upset. They may dislike noisy /crowded environments, dislike messy play or getting dirty, be distracted by what they can see, dislike going on playground equipment such as swings, merry go rounds, climbing frames and may want to avoid or escape situations where these are present.
2. **Under responsivity** – They do not appear to register or respond to sounds, touch or visual sensations among others. This can lead to them appearing passive, withdrawn and with flat affect (little expression of emotions). They need strong, intense and often repetitive sensations for them to become more alert and animated.
3. **Seeking** – This is when a person craves a certain sensation such as running, crashing, bashing, jumping and chewing. These behaviours help to increase arousal level, registration, attention, postural tone, focus and pleasure. Often the need to have this sensation will hijack a person's attention until they feel that they have received enough of this sensation. Seeking behaviour can be due to:
 - Child not having enough information (being under responsive) which causes them to seek sensations. Children with this pattern of behaviour will often alternate between being passive and disengaged and then seeking sensations such as movement.
 - A child may be sensitive to what they can feel or see and hear and may engage in activities that provide them with lots of proprioceptive input which can help to calm our nervous systems



Please note:

- Children with formal diagnoses such as autism spectrum disorder may engage in seeking behaviours which may be part of this diagnosis as opposed to having a sensory basis e.g. engaging in repetitive behaviours or avoidant behaviours as a consequence of their rigidity and need for control and as opposed to it being a sensory sensitivity.
- There are many causes of behaviour, with sensory processing and modulation difficulties just being one of them

The tactile / touch sense



Over responsive behaviours:

They may find messy play, nappy changing, clothing labels or textures, face washing / wiping and social / accidental touch overwhelming or painful. This may cause them to flinch or withdraw from touch, withdraw or be avoidant of activities, become anxious, upset and / or aggressive. They may be selective or picky eaters, use their fingertips to pick up or manipulate objects.

Under responsive behaviours:

May not notice when their clothing is twisted, when others bump into them, when their face or hands are messy.

Seeking behaviours:

Chewing / mouthing of non-food objects (this can be an attempt to gain deep pressure to help calm if they are over responsive / sensitive to touch), touching people / objects frequently.

General strategies to manage:

• **Over responsivity:**

- ✓ Use deep pressure rather than light tickly touch
- ✓ Use massage / deep pressure before and after activities that involve touch (see calming strategies sheet)
- ✓ Use of joint compressions (see joint compression sheet)
- ✓ DO NOT force exposure to textures
- ✓ Let them have control over how much they touch, offer choices
- ✓ Make tactile activities fun, motivating and rewarding

• **Under responsivity**

- ✓ Create a “feely bag” full of different textures such as spikey / sponge ball, slinky, scarves, sponges, Lego bricks
- ✓ Hide toys in sensory play such as rice, sand, dry beans, lentils
- ✓ Draw in sand, rice, bath foam
- ✓ Massage hands and arms gently using different textures such as sponges, spikey balls, flannels, tinsel, foam ball, anything
- ✓ Engage in alerting activities and proprioceptive activities to wake the body up

• **Seeking behaviours:**

- ✓ Access to fidget toys these can be placed on key rings attached to belt or on a lanyard
- ✓ If a child is seeking tactile experiences a lot and this is affecting their access to the learning environment, use now & next board & sand timers to indicate when they can next have this experience
- ✓ Provide regular access to tactile activities and experiences

The movement sense (Vestibular)



The vestibular sense detects movements to enable us to respond when moving against gravity and within our environment. It's our sense of balance and helps us to move our body in a coordinated way. The receptors for movement are in our ears.

- **Over responsive behaviours:**
 - They may find the following challenging or overwhelming: rough and tumble activities, playground equipment such as swings / merry-go-rounds / slides, tilting their head back in bath or when having nappy / pad changed, having their feet off the ground.
 - They may suffer from motion sickness, and feel dizzy / disorientated if they turn around too quickly
- **Under responsive behaviours:**
 - May appear still, lethargic
 - Can fluctuate between being passive, still, lethargic to seeking movement
 - Maybe clumsy, have poor coordination and low muscle tone
 - Moving in and out of positions maybe challenging
- **Seeking behaviours:**
 - They maybe thrill seekers, jumping / climbing, spinning
 - May show little sign of becoming dizzy



Our movement sense (vestibular) and awareness of our body in space (proprioception) are very closely linked as movement provides proprioceptive input (from the muscles, joints and tendons). Children may seek movement as a consequence of their need to gain calming proprioceptive input because they are over responsive (sensitive to) certain sensations. Therefore being a thrill seeker may not indicate that a child has an under responsive movement sense, but needs to gain proprioceptive input.

General strategies to manage:

- **Over responsivity:**
 - ✓ When seated in class ensure that their feet are on the floor (use lever arch files filled with magazines and seal with gaffer tape to use as a foot stool)
 - ✓ Provide additional support and stability to increase confidence and provide assurance
 - ✓ Give the child the opportunity to explore and experience movement sensations in a safe and graded way



- ✓ Use calming activities before, during and after trialling new movement sensations or sensations that can be anxiety provoking
 - ✓ Let the child have control and dictate the pace
 - ✓ Use rewards and make activities fun
 - ✓ Start off with activities where the child has both feet on the floor, then move onto one foot being on the floor, then none
 - ✓ Gradually encourage them to move out of the centre of gravity in a reaching game
 - ✓ To encourage swinging the child can sit on a swing with feet on the floor – make a circle with chalk on the floor close to their feet – they have to jump their feet in and out of the circle quickly – continue to grade this activity by making the circle further and further away
 - ✓ You may need to start with the child not swinging initially and work up to this by asking them to reach and come forward to collect things as part of a game
 - ✓ Start with activities close to the ground and gradually work upwards
- **Under responsivity**
 - ✓ Provide child with lots of opportunities throughout their day to gain proprioceptive input to increase their body awareness (see proprioceptive activities sheets)
 - ✓ Provide lots of movement breaks throughout the day
 - ✓ Trial use of a “Move ‘n sit” cushion or gym ball chair to provide movement during lessons – this may help them to focus
 - **Seeking behaviours:**
 - ✓ See under responsivity section
 - ✓ Use swings, see-saws, slides, zip wires, dancing, somersaults, gymnastics, scooter board activities / games
 - ✓ The child may need support to help them reduce activity levels after a movement break – use organising and calming activities (see calming / organising activities section)

The body awareness sense (proprioception)



The proprioceptive sense tells us where our body is in space and how it is moving in relation to the rest of our body and our environment without the need to use our vision.

When we move signals / sensations are sent from our joints, muscles, tendons and ligaments up to our brain to provide information about how we are moving so that we can adapt or adjust our movement as needed. We use our proprioceptive sense all the time to grade our movements. It allows us to walk, run, dress and play all without needing to look at how our limbs / body is moving, so that we what focus on we are doing and what is up ahead.

Think about being on a bus, your stop is coming up and you need to make your way down the aisle to the door. When standing by the door you clench your leg, foot, arm, hand and finger muscles to hold onto the rail tightly and keep standing upright, as the bus applies the brakes and / or turns a corner. As the bus slows we release the tension in our muscles. We do all this without using our eyes, but using a proprioceptive sense.

We need proprioceptive feedback so we can plan how we need to move next (motor planning), to grade this movement as it happens and to produce smooth and coordinated movements.



The proprioceptive sense is also the sense that helps us to regulate our nervous system. Stretching and contracting our muscles (proprioceptive input) has an organising and calming effect on our body. We need, and will often crave this input unconsciously, to help us manage our emotions and activity levels.

- **Under responsive behaviours:**

- Be heavy handed and have difficulty with grading the force or direction of their movements e.g. over shooting when reaching, squeezing objects too hard, slamming doors, appearing to hit / hurt peers due to “not knowing their own strength”
- Lean on furniture / others for additional support
- Appear lethargic and passive, but become animated and alert when active.
- Have difficulty moving around when they cannot use their vision
- Maybe clumsy, have poor coordination and low muscle tone
- Moving in and out of positions may be challenging

The body awareness sense (proprioception)



(Cont.)

- **Seeking behaviours:**
 - Crave pulling / pushing / jumping / crashing / bashing / kicking activities
 - Seek movements such as rocking, banging parts of the body deliberately against hard surfaces / objects
 - Seek strong, intense and repetitive movement / proprioceptive sensations
 - Mouth non-food items, clothes and furniture

General strategies to manage:

- **Under responsivity**
 - ✓ Provide child with lots of opportunities throughout their day to gain proprioceptive input to increase their body awareness (see proprioceptive activities sheets).
 - ✓ Provide lots of movement breaks throughout the day
 - ✓ Trial use of a “Move ‘n sit” cushion or gym ball chair to provide movement during lessons – this may help them to focus
- **Seeking behaviours:**
 - ✓ Every 10 – 20 minutes during lessons, provide a 2 minute movement break to complete wall push ups, chair push ups, pushing hands together and other activities (see proprioceptive activities page)
 - ✓ Place theraband around feet of the chair so they can stretch their legs



The above strategy should be risk assessed as it may cause a potential tripping hazard

- ✓ Provide fidget toys e.g. squeeze balls, plastic paper clip chains, putty
- ✓ Trial weighted lap pad for no longer than 20 minutes at a time with a 40 minute break in between
- ✓ Deep pressure / joint compressions

The seeing sense (vision)



Over responsive behaviours:

- Shield their eyes from the light / windows / reflections
- They may be able to focus on every single piece of visual stimuli e.g every strand of hair on a person's head – this can lead to sensory overload in a visually busy environment
- Reduced eye contact as faces can be visually over whelming e.g. turning their heads away – this may mean that they miss visual cues and rely heavily on auditory ones
- Wish to have rooms / desks extremely organised to reduce visual clutter
- Lose their place when reading / looking at pictures / looking at the white board as there is too much information to filter in / out

Under responsive behaviours:

- May miss visual clues and be reliant on auditory ones
- Lose their place when reading / looking at pictures /looking at white board
- Spinning their bodies to gain increased visual feedback
- Look intently at objects that reflect light, light up, or spin / move.

Seeking behaviours:

- Spinning their bodies to gain increased visual feedback
- Look intently / closely at objects that reflect light, light up, or spin / move

General strategies to manage:

- **Over responsivity:**
 - ✓ Minimise visual clutter – provide them a space where there are no pictures on the wall, items hanging from the ceiling, bright carpets and away from windows and bright lights
 - ✓ Use natural lighting and avoid strip lighting where possible
 - ✓ Reduce clutter on desks, by having only what is needed for the current learning task on the desk
 - ✓ Encourage children to close their eyes for 60 seconds at regular intervals during the day
 - ✓ Wear a peaked cap / sun glasses to reduce glare
 - ✓ Photocopy material onto buff coloured paper to reduce glare
 - ✓ Use a writing slope for close work

The seeing sense (vision) (cont.)

- **Under responsivity**
 - ✓ Incorporate hand gestures, hand puppets, bright light, colour and movement when teaching
 - ✓ Provide child with lots of opportunities throughout their day to gain proprioceptive input to increase their body awareness (see proprioceptive activity sheets).
 - ✓ Use as many visual media as possible when teaching e.g. music, video, hand clapping, bright colours and lights
- **Seeking behaviours:**
 - ✓ Provide regular opportunities to gain visual sensations
 - ✓ Use a pop up / dark den where light up / spinning toys, projectors, torches etc can be looked at
 - ✓ Create a black box out of cardboard that can be closely looked into and place torch inside to create a projector

The hearing sense (auditory)



- **Over responsive behaviours:**
 - They may find environments that are noisy challenging or overwhelming, such as: dinner halls, assemblies, classrooms, playgrounds, swimming pools, hand driers, hoovers, flushing toilets and supermarkets.
 - They may become angry, upset, anxious at the thought of going to an environment that they find noisy and over whelming
 - Children may want to avoid or run away from these environments or act out so they are taken away from these environments by adults from this environment as a reprimand (which inadvertently reinforces these negative behaviours)
 - They may cover their ears, place their fingers in their ears, hum, engage in self-stimulating behaviours as a way of coping / blocking out noise / sounds
- **Under responsive behaviours:**
 - May not be able to distinguish and filter our / in one noise over another
 - May not respond to verbal commands
 - Difficulty responding to sounds that others would and may not be able to detect the direction / location of the sound
- **Seeking behaviours:**
 - Create noise through their own voice, or using objects
 - Seek very loud music

General strategies to manage:

- **Over responsivity:**
 - ✓ Give visual / verbal warnings prior to going into a noisy environment
 - ✓ Use MP3 player / ear defenders for short periods to block out noise of the environment



MP3 players and ear defenders should be used at specific times only. It is advisable that children should not allowed to have free access to these and they should not be used for prolonged periods. The more these are used, the more sensitive our hearing becomes. In addition, for children who may not be motivated by the social world (e.g. children with ASD) , MP3 players and ear defenders can be used as a way of blocking out the world. They should be used in conjunction with calming activities and strategies to help manage anxiety / stress levels.

- ✓ Big open spaces carry sound, think about the use of blinds. Carpets to minimise noise
- ✓ Provide a quiet space within the classroom / school
- ✓ Use a dark den or pop up tent with large cushions as a sanctuary after they have tolerated a noise environment where they can calm



- **Under responsivity:**
 - ✓ Give access to background music through head phones or use white noise CDs
 - ✓ Match auditory cues with visual ones such as lights, ringing a bell or clapping
 - ✓ Use different sounds which may be novel so that they be discriminated more
 - ✓ To aid auditory processing:
 - Use MP3 player / ear defenders to block out other noise and aid focus
 - Try and minimise visual and auditory clutter
 - Allow extra time for processing verbal information

- **Seeking behaviours:**
 - ✓ Provide dedicated times where they can access music
 - ✓ Use traffic lights / sand timers to communicate the time allocated to this
 - ✓ Use a noise-o-meter as a way of children letting you know what level they wish the sound / music to be at

The smell sense (Olfactory)



Our sense of smell is very closely linked with the limbic system in our brain. The limbic system is responsible for controlling our emotions and behaviour. Smell can invoke strong memories, both positive and negative, which can directly affect our behaviour.

- **Over responsive behaviours:**
 - They may find many environments over whelming such as gardens, dining halls, toilets and general smells
 - Some children may gag or vomit in response to certain smell
 - Can significantly impact on food acceptance
 - Maybe detect smells that others have not
- **Under responsive behaviours:**
 - May want to smell others / things (this may not always be socially appropriate)
- **Seeking behaviours:**
 - Seek food / objects with strong odours e.g. perfumes, faeces, urine
 - May seek food which have a strong and spicy taste

General strategies to manage:

- **Over responsivity:**
 - ✓ Try to reduce exposure to smells
 - ✓ Use of smell pots (using a favoured smell) / smelly play doh to try and desensitise them to smells
 - ✓ Complete calming activities (see enclosed sheets)
 - ✓ Use calming aromatherapy smells (check with GP / Paediatrician if needed)
 - ✓ Perfumes, hand creams and deodorants that adults wear may be over whelming – this could be something to bear in mind
- **Under responsivity and Seeking behaviours:**
 - ✓ Smell pots
 - ✓ Use material, cotton wool balls, vaporiser with a couple of drops of essential oil or favoured smells
 - ✓ Use of Scratch 'n sniff stickers
 - ✓ Wrist sweat bands with fragrances on

The taste sense (gustatory)



- **Over responsive behaviours:**
 - Some children may gag or vomit in response to the sight or smell of food
 - May restrict their diet to certain textures, tastes, temperatures, colours
 - May find meal times distressing and may wish to try and control these times as a way of managing their anxiety
 - Tooth brushing may also be difficult due to the taste of the toothpaste
- **Under responsive behaviours:**
 - Mouth non-food objects
 - Cram their mouth full of food as they have difficulty detecting when their mouth is full, or their need stronger sensations by stretching their mouths
 - It maybe difficult for them to register a taste if it is not strong tasting
 - Low oral muscle tone resulting in excessive drooling
- **Seeking behaviours:**
 - Eat foods with strong tastes, textures such as crunchy and spicy foods
 - Lick, smell, taste items (food and non-food)

General strategies to manage:

- **Over responsivity:**
 - ✓ Grown ups should try and remain calm during meal times
 - ✓ Encourage the child to put things into her mouth, giving them control and pace it in accordance with their tolerances e.g. chewy toy, vibrating tooth brush
 - ✓ Try “warm up” mouth exercises prior to mealtimes to provide calming proprioceptive input
 - ✓ Complete calming exercises prior and after meal times to help manage anxiety levels
 - ✓ Provide deep touch, weighted shoulder pad during mealtime as this may help them to reduce anxiety levels
 - ✓ Food carousels – have different foods on separate plates in the middle of a table at snack time – model trying each one saying “yummy I like this one” –
 - ✓ Use visual supports such as smiley face / ok face / yucky face to categorise different foods and encourage children to use this rating...

The taste sense (gustatory) (Cont.)



- ...system, placing photos / symbols on the three different piles to present good / ok / disgusting
- ✓ See food play sheet
- ✓ Give as much control and choice to children as possible but consistently give them opportunities to explore and experience in a relaxed and fun way
- ✓ Encourage small group work including children who will eat different food and model giving them rewards for trying new foods
- ✓ If a child is very over responsive present one food at a time if needed and clear away one food before presenting another (see restricted eating sheets)
- ✓ Gives lots of praise and rewards
- **Under responsivity**
 - ✓ Use exercises to warm the mouth up and oral motor activities including blowing and whistling games and vibrating toys
 - ✓ Crunchy foods such as carrot sticks, pretzels, crackers, bread sticks provide stronger input
 - ✓ Use chewy toys as an alternative to chewy non-food items that are not designed for chewing
- **Seeking behaviours:**
 - ✓ Crunchy foods such as carrot sticks, pretzels, crackers, bread sticks provide stronger input
 - ✓ Use chewy toys as an alternative to chewy non-food items that are not designed for chewing
 - ✓ Use vibration toys around the mouth
 - ✓ Engage in calming proprioceptive activities (see enclosed)



The learning environment



Think

- Is there a “safe space” within class that has blank walls, reduced visual clutter away from windows and strip lighting, that can be used as a calming zone where a pop tent or dark den can be set up with cushions, light toys and vibrating snake / cushion, weighted lap pad
- A calming zone needs to be separate from time out zones / spaces as one has a positive connection whilst the other may have a negative association.
- If a child starts to engage in negative behaviour to access the calm / safe space, timetable in regular times throughout their day that they can access this space using visual time tables and now and next boards. In addition use time boundaries such as sand timers
- When a child experiences overload – think what is happening with the environment – is the lighting too bright ? the noise levels too much? Have they had lots of demands placed on them ? have their been lots of touch experiences ? have there been lots of changes to routine?
- Be a detective and don't be afraid to try new things – see what happens when the lights are turned down / off, or the child is taken to a quieter space, or a weighted lap pad is placed on them, or they can access a calm and safe space
- Don't forget how important our own communication is (both non-verbal and verbal) when working with children who have sensory processing and modulation difficulties
- We can be the great therapeutic tool

- Adapt your behaviour to suit the child's needs – an agitated / anxious child needs a calming and relaxing voice, and visual signs of support such as smiling and nurturing facial expressions and gestures whilst respecting the child's boundaries and needs

- When a child is in overload words may be confusing and can add to their overload, whereas gentle low level humming may be soothing and perceived as non-demanding



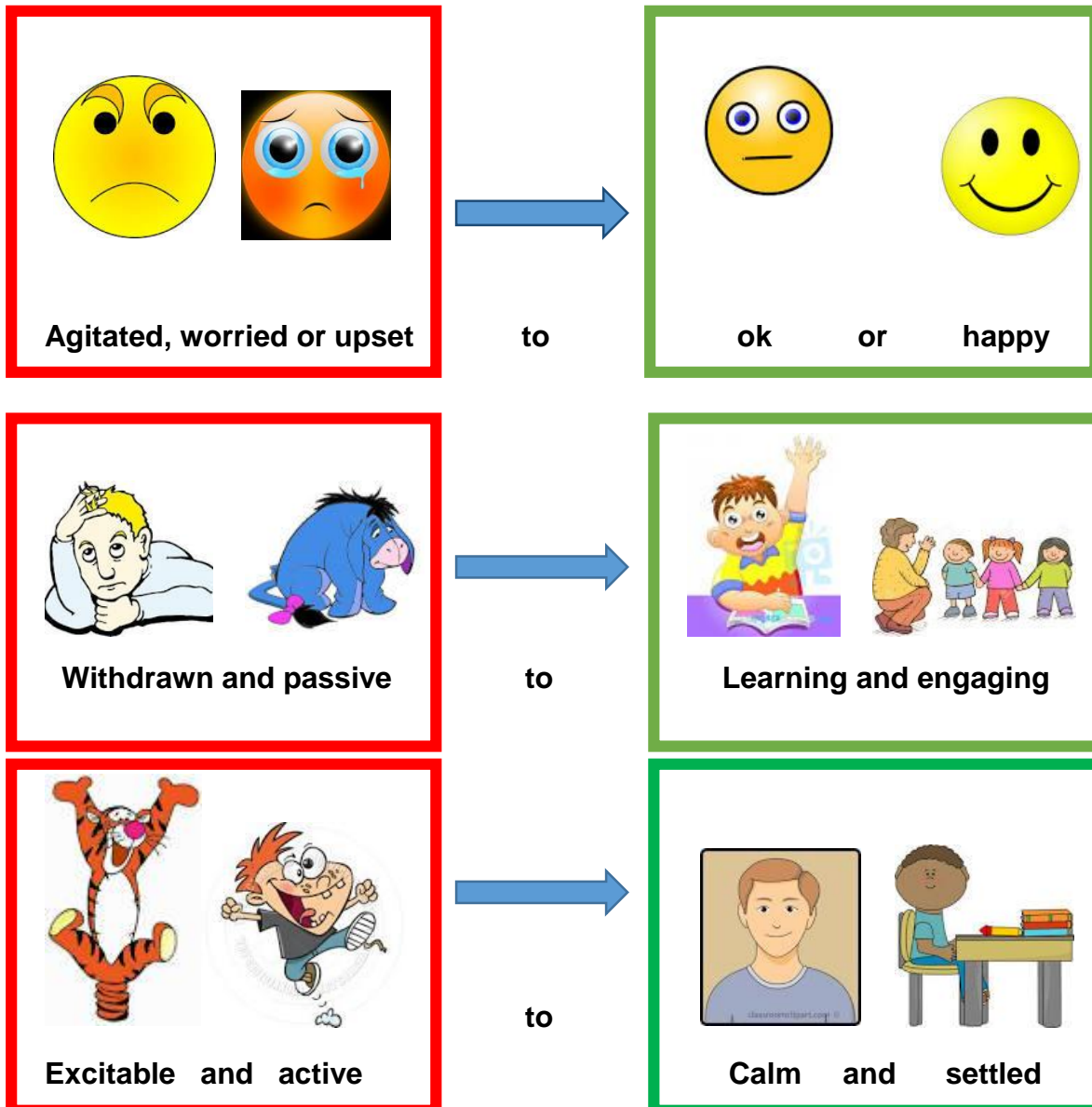
The "just right place"



To enable us to focus and learn we need to be in a "just right place". This is a place where we are not anxious, worried, upset or excitable and very active. We need to be in the middle, like a seesaw that is neither way up high nor way down below. This enables a "learning ready" state of mind to support students on their learning journey.

Sensory behaviours need to be viewed as either sensory seeking behaviours or defensive / avoiding behaviours. If a child is seeking sensations and appears passive and withdrawn prior to the seeking behaviours it is likely they are doing this to raise their alertness levels to move the seesaw from the ground up higher. However if they appear agitated or upset or anxious then they may be seeking strong and intense sensations to help calm their nervous system.

We need to support our students by feeding their sensory systems with the sensations they need to help to go from:





The “just right place” (cont.)



Children who are agitated, worried or upset may need



CALMING ACTIVITIES

Children who are passive or withdrawn may need



ALERTING ACTIVITIES

Children who are excitable and active may need



ORGANISING + CALMING
ACTIVITIES

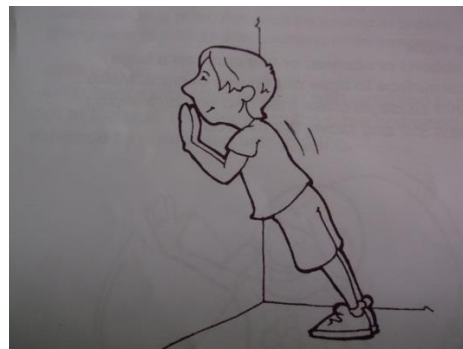


Sensory strategies - Calming activities

Hold small **weights** (tins or water bottles filled with water or sand) above your head with arms extended for as long as you can.



Wall pushes - do 20 push ups against the wall making sure that the elbows bend and straighten rather than the body. You can try this with two students pushing against each other's hands or feet.



Press ups with knees on the floor, ensuring that the elbows are bending and straightening.



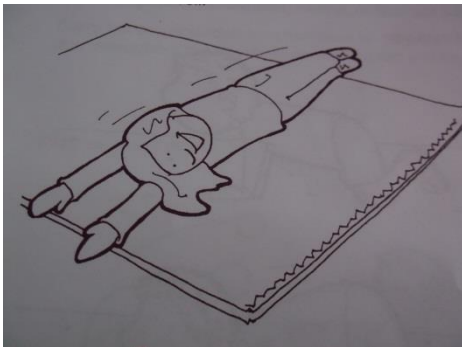
Ball squash – Students lie on their tummies while an adult rolls a large gym ball slowly up and down them.



Sensory strategies – organising activities

(These can be used when a child is over or under responsive as it facilitates focus and attention)

Lie on the floor and roll across a mat while trying to keep the body in a straight line. advance by extending arms above the head, or extending the distance of the roll.



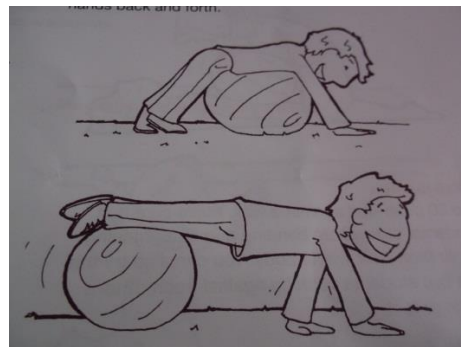
March on the spot, touching elbow to opposite leg as high as possible. Start with eyes open then try with eyes closed. March on the spot and then try to turn in a circle.



Lazy eight – use ribbon or scarves, or chalk on a large vertical surface to draw out figures of eight. Make sure that students cross their mid-line by keeping their hips still and facing forwards



Lie on the stomach over a **peanut ball** and walk hands back and forth



Sensory strategies - Activities that provide proprioceptive input

Lie under **blankets** of cushions ensuring that the student can move freely and their heads are not covered at any time – seek advice from the SI-OT for use of weighted blankets / items.



Steam roller – with students lying down, a large ball up and down their bodies. keep pressure firm.



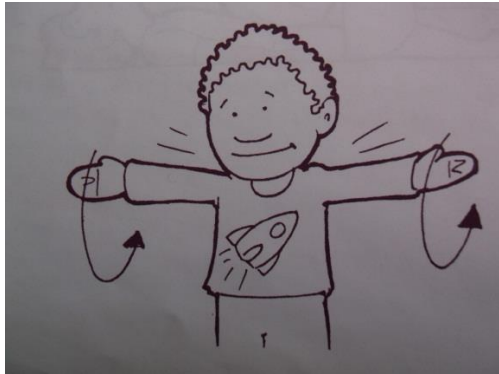
Weights – hold a small weight with arms (baked bean cans or water bottles) Extended above the head. Lift the arms Above the head and down to the shouldlers 15 times.



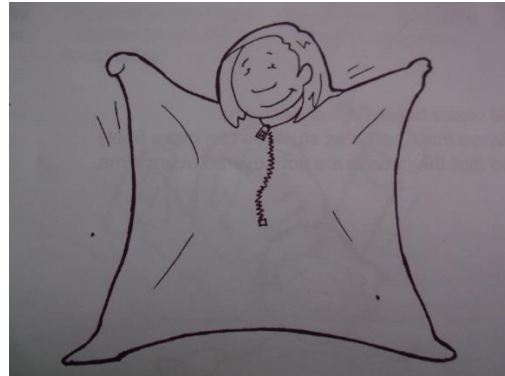
Trampoline



Arm circles – keeping the arms straight move them in circles forwards and backwards ten times



Body Sox – Whilst in the body sox do relay races, star jumps, crawling etc



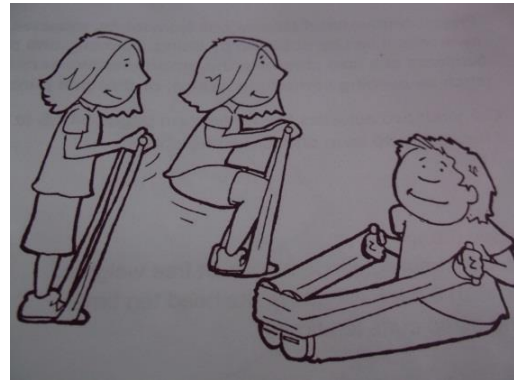
Gym ball – Bounce up and down, and around an obstacle course, lie over the ball and play a game.



Wheelbarrow walks



Theraband activities - Complete each exercise 10 times



Blowing activities such as:
bubbles, whistles, blowing through straws to move ping pong balls, feathers, cotton wool



Crawling under blankets, through tunnels and under bean bags.
Try crawling on stomachs, on all fours, or like a crab.



Manipulating putty – hide objects in the putty, or twist and pull it around.



Sensory strategies - Activities that provide proprioceptive input (advanced)

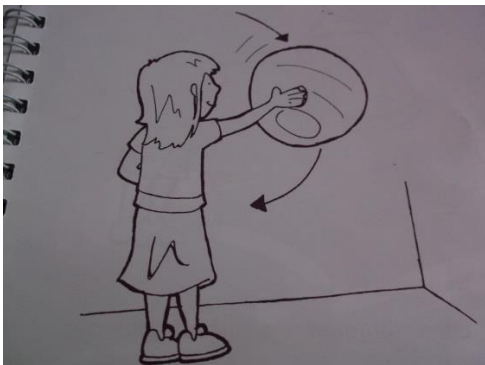
Heavy lifting – Without straining, students can lift free weights starting with 0.5kg the head ten times so the bicep curls ten times.



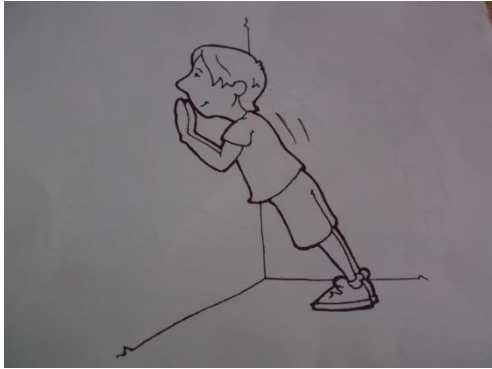
Push ups and stabilisation – Do ten push ups. Carry out four point kneeling over the ball if it is too difficult without it. Try doing ten opposite leg / arms lifts.



Push a gym ball up and down the wall – Carry out with each arm and then with the back. Don't let the ball drop! Move the ball up and down the wall five times.



Wall pushes – Do ten pushes keeping the feet flat



Chair push ups – Do ten push-ups while seated on a chair.



Hit punch bag



Stretch pulls – Pull in a controlled manner 10 times



(These activities are taken from “Sensory strategies: Practical ways to help children and young people with autism learn and achieve” By Corinna Laurie 2013, National Autistic society).

Sensory strategies: Joint Compressions (to help Calm)

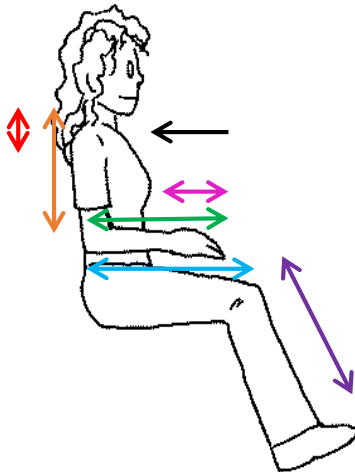


This technique is designed to reduce sensory defensiveness / over responsivity throughout the day as it provides deep tactile pressure and proprioceptive input which has a calming effect on the body.



DO not complete with children who are hypermobile without liaising with the physiotherapy / OT team

- | | | |
|-----|--|-------------------|
| 1 = | | Hand to elbow |
| 2 = | | Elbow to shoulder |
| 3 = | | Hip to knee |
| 4 = | | Knee to foot |
| 5 = | | Fingers to elbow |
| 6 = | | Shoulders |
| 7 = | | Chest |



Numbers 1 – 6 are done on both sides of the body.

1. Hand to elbow: Elbow – hold hand in hand shake position, stabilise elbow and quickly press the hand back into the direction of the elbow
2. Elbow to shoulder: Shoulder – stabilise elbow and quickly press down at shoulder
3. Hips and knees: Hips – preferably in seated position, press knees back into hips
4. Knee to foot: Knees – press down on the knees through the ankles and onto the floor
5. Fingers to elbow: Fingers – stabilise palm and quickly pull out and in on fingers
6. Shoulders: Press down on both shoulders 10 times

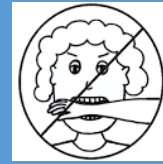
Sensory strategies: Alerting activities

- ✓ Bouncing on ball / tampline / trampete
- ✓ Fast swinging
- ✓ Seesaws
- ✓ Zip wires
- ✓ Fast paced music
- ✓ Skipping
- ✓ "Crash landing" – jump from trampete onto large crash mat with bean bags
- ✓ "Space race" – jumping around a course of cones on a space hopper
- ✓ "Bouncing sphere" – Bounce on ball with feet on the floor, try and bounce and move all the way around the ball
- ✓ Jogging on the spot
- ✓ Jumping jacks
- ✓ Jumping up / down bench / step

Sensory behaviours: Biting / teeth grinding, mouthing



chewing



A child may bite or grind their teeth to communicate, to interact with someone or because they are seeking sensations around the mouth due to not having enough tactile information. It also may be used as a calming strategy as it provides calming deep tactile pressure.



Sensory Strategy to manage these behaviours

- ✓ Try a vibrating toy such as a vibrating light up toy, “Viperating snake”, electric toothbrush
- ✓ Give firm massage around the cheeks and lips using their fingertips (where possible using hand over hand guidance)
- ✓ Encourage tactile exploration with the hands using squeezing and stretching toys, a bag with lots of different textures to feel
- ✓ Provide crunchy snacks (if appropriate) throughout the day such as carrots, bread sticks, crackers, biscuits
- ✓ Engage in sucking and blowing games e.g. using straws to suck up and hold a ping pong ball and place it in a container, blow through a straw to move cornflakes, rice, wrapped up bits of paper, coloured water, whistles, bubbles. These will provide strong oral input which may provide a positive alternative to biting and teeth grinding
- ✓ Trial use of heavy duty chewy toys
- ✓ Provide regular and consistent opportunities to have these experiences throughout their day, providing them with these after a biting incident may further reinforce this behaviour.

Sensory behaviour: hitting, slapping, pinching,



squeezing, grabbing, pulling



A child may engage in these behaviours to express an emotion, to gain someone's attention, or because they like the sensation as it is another way to gain calming deep tactile pressure.



Sensory Strategy to manage these behaviours

- ✓ Try a vibrating toy such as a vibrating light up toy, "Viperating snake", electric toothbrush, vibrating duck that can be placed in the hand to provide strong, deep tactile pressure and proprioceptive input
- ✓ Give a firm hand massage
- ✓ Encourage tactile exploration with the hands using squeezing and stretching toys, a bag with lots of different textures to feel e.g. spiky ball, stress / squidgy ball
- ✓ Encourage play with theraputty / firm play doh - this can be scented with calming lavender – permission needs to be sought from parents to use essential oils.
- ✓ Use joint compressions using the hands (see enclosed joint compressions sheet)
- ✓ Give the child the opportunity to engage on regular calming / proprioceptive activities throughout their day (see enclosed calming activities sheet)
- ✓ Try using hair extensions (such as the ones that can be bought in pound shops and Claire's accessories) as an alternative to pulling hair, or sew different textured ropes, long pieces of cut up ribbon / felt / thread onto a cloth


Sensory behaviour: playing with saliva



This is a type of tactile play that gives tactile sensations to the fingers, hands and mouth which could indicate that they are under responsive to tactile sensations.



Sensory Strategies to manage these behaviours

- ✓ Provide them with of opportunities to tactile play and exploration
- ✓ Trial use of gloop, messy play such as bath foam, yoghurt, “fart putty” , water play
- ✓ Provide stimulation around the mouth such as vibrating toys, massage, blowing toys

Sensory behaviours: Smelling



This behaviour may be due to a child not receiving enough information through their sense of smell (olfactory (smell) causing them to seek strong and frequent odours and smells. Some children may recognise food through smell and may use this sense to verify whether or not the food is what they expect.



Sensory strategies to manage these behaviours

- ✓ Create smelly pots, lidded plastic pots which can be sealed which have small holes in the top with different smells placed inside e.g. herbs, coffee, lemon, curry powder, bubble bath, hot chocolate powder
- ✓ Alternatively soak bits of material in scents and dry
- ✓ Place scents in small fabric squares so that the scent is sewn in e.g. dried rosemary, lavender
- ✓ Create a “smell garden” within class or using the outside space and use herbs and flowers with strong smells
- ✓ Different smells can be used to either calm our nervous system or alert it
- ✓ Alerting smells are: lemon, orange, coffee, peppermint, anise
- ✓ Calming smells are: lavender, vanilla and banana

Sensory behaviours: mouthing / eating non-food items

(pica)



Pica is thought to be due to a child seeking oral stimulation, attention, or a way of communicating their wish to have an item. Pica can potentially be very harmful and life threatening therefore should be addressed as soon as possible.

- ✓ When the child is seeking oral stimulation, research says it is important to observe the types of material they mouth / eat.
- ✓ This can then help in finding an alternative that mirrors this as much as possible, as this has been shown to be an effective treatment in reducing the incidence of pica.
- ✓ For example, is the item soft or hard? Smooth or textured? What shape is it? Does it have a flavour?
- ✓ Try and replicate what they like to mouth / eat
- ✓ If they eat a variety of things, see if there is an aspect that connects them e.g. are they all hard ?
- ✓ Try using vibration (toothbrush, cushion, snake)
- ✓ Try toys designed specifically for chewing, place these around the class / play area and give them free access to these if they engage in pica a lot of the time
- ✓ Try facial massage
- ✓ Sit opposite the child or in front of a mirror and play games to stimulate the mouth such as: blowing raspberries, puckering lips whilst making a silly noise, make your lips into a small "O" then open your mouth whilst keeping this shape to make an oval shape, purse your lips and tap your hand against them to make a Red Indian cry, move your tongue from side to side (slowly then rapidly), up and down and around...

Sensory behaviours: mouthing / eating non-

food items (pica)



(Cont.)

...the lips. Make sounds and funny faces as you do this to increase the fun and engagement

- ✓ Look at when they are engaging in pica – is it when they are having free time e.g. not receiving adult attention?
- ✓ Behavioural strategies can be effective with some children who have pica, however this is labour intensive and may not be meeting any underlying sensory need
- ✓ If the child seeks hard items, give them hard crunchy foods during snacks e.g. bread sticks, carrots, pretzels, crisps



Restricted eating – strategies



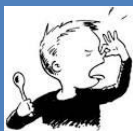
Restricted eating patterns can be due to a variety of different reasons such as: sensitivity to certain food textures / tastes / smells, reflux (where stomach acid leaks out of the stomach causing pain and discomfort), medical condition, poor oral motor skills (difficulty coordinating the lips, tongue and cheek to drink, chew and move food around the mouth), poor postural control, rigid behaviours e.g. the need to have only certain foods such as beige foods.

Prior to attempting any of the strategies below complete calming activities.

If you have concerns regarding oral motor skill liaise with a Speech and Language Therapist and / or an Occupational Therapist.

When addressing restricted eating that may be sensory or behavioural in nature it is important to remember that:

- Children should be in a stable seated position with their feet flat on the floor, and their bottoms back in the chair (dycem (non-slip matting) on the base of the seat can prevent a child from moving their bottoms forward in the chair)
- A child should never be forced to smell, hold, lick or taste a food
- The child must have control of what they will expose themselves to and dictate the pace of the intervention
- Remain calm and relaxed and try and make these activities playful and fun
- Use other children and adults as role models
- Learn about food in a way that does not involve eating the food and is outside of meal and snack times
- Children who will only eat certain foods should not be given a separate meal or snack to their peers / family members - those present at the table should all have the opportunity to eat the same foods
- Children should be seated at the table for snack / meals – if this is an issue look at their seating – does it provide enough support? If we feel unstable our focus will be on this and not the eating experience. If the child seeks movement, try a Move 'n Sit cushion or gym ball chair to enable them to gain the movement they seek
- Children may need repeated positive experiences at any of the below stages before they are ready to move onto the next stage
- It is common for children to go up and down the stages so that one day they may be able to smell foods, where as another they may not – respect any changes in their tolerances



Restricted eating – strategies



The developmental sensory stages for eating are:

1.



ACCEPTANCE – Being in the same room as the new food, having the food on the table, having the food next to them, having the food on their plate.



- ✓ **Colour in** drawings of different types of food using real food items as models e.g. have a tomato on the work top on the other side of the room / table so that it can still be seen, and ask the child to point to a colour or say what colour it is. A plastic food can be used if the real thing is too anxiety provoking.
- ✓ **Hot potato** – Sit on the floor with 3-4 people, play music that can be stopped and started again repeatedly. Place a food item in a bowl and pass it around the circle until the music stops, then the person holding the bowl says or points to what colour it is and chooses another food to be put in the bowl and so on



- ✓ **Cooking magazines** – Using old magazines, support the child to rip out or cut out pictures of food or a recipe they would like to make e.g. coco pop cakes or cornflake cakes. Identify what ingredients they need and let them watch you / direct you in how to make it – the goal is not for them to be actively involved in making the cake unless they choose to do so, but that they are being around food and building up trust in the adult that they won't then force a food experience on them.
- ✓ **Food shopping** – the child can come with you on a trip to the supermarket / shop to buy the ingredients needed using photos or symbols that have been placed on a laminated list that they can hold. Encourage them to look for the items needed, push the trolley, hand over the money etc.



Restricted eating strategies



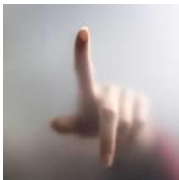
- ✓ **Growing food** – let them choose what vegetable they may want to grow e.g. Cress, tomato and let them be as active as possible in the process of choosing, planting and watering the plant



The child should not move into the next stage until they have reduced anxiety being around new foods.



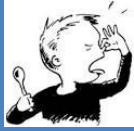
2.



TOUCH – Using any part of the body to touch a new food.

This can be messy so use aprons / old clothes where possible or let parents know they may get messy

- ✓ **Mystery box** – Place an item of food in a box and let the child put their hand in the box to feel for it – ask them to name or point to a picture of what they think might be in the box. You could put a few items in the box one of which can be a food item and the others toys as long as they are pictures so that the child can see what they might be feeling
- ✓ **Hot potato** - Sit on the floor with 3-4 people, play music that can be stopped and started again repeatedly. Place a food item in a bowl and pass it around the circle until the music stops, then the person holding the bowl picks up the food and says what it is and / or places it next to a photograph of the food. They then select another food item to put in the bowl and pass around again.



Restricted eating: Strategies (Cont.)



- ✓ **Food painting** – Use sauces such as ketchup, salad dressing, apple sauce, yoghurt to act as the paint. Paint brushes can be carrot / cucumber sticks, celery, bread sticks, broccoli spears, pretzel sticks. Give each child a bowl of “paints” and food items to paint with and ask them to make some artwork on large sugar paper.
- ✓ **Show and tell** – Child chooses one preferred food and one new food and has to say one thing about each, this could be about their size, shape, colour, smell.



- ✓ **Rainbow foods** – Choose foods with lots of different colours and ask them to make a food rainbow on a large piece of sugar paper (the paper can have lines marked out for the rainbow)



Only move onto this stage if the child is able to touch new foods without anxiety



- 3. SMELL** - Try and reduce extraneous smells within the environment before trying these strategies and do not place smells directly under the nose. Smells can have a significant impact on our emotions and behaviour, waft the smell in front of the child but at a distance if needed.

- ✓ **Calming foods** – use foods which have a calming scent such as apple, cinnamon, vanilla and lavender.



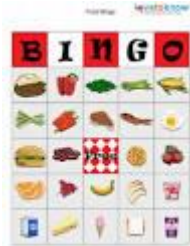
Restricted eating: Strategies (Cont.)



- ✓ **Food jewellery** – Cut food such as an apple into small pieces and put small holes in them. Place a thread or string through them to make a necklace / bracelet. This can be placed on the child if they are accepting of this (give them the choice “shall I wear it or you wear it?”) or on the adult working with them, teddy bear, or on the table or their chair



- ✓ **Smelly art** – Make art using smelly / scented markers, scented rubbers, scented glue, scented stickers
- ✓ **Guess the smell** - Place a food item into a small container with a lid and make 3-5 small holes in the lid. Place the food item into the container and put the lid on. Ask the child to guess the food, photos can be used as a cue.



- ✓ **Food bingo** – Make a bingo card using 16 or less squares and glue pictures of food into the squares. Write the name of each food (or use a photo / picture) on paper / card and place these into a bag. The bingo caller picks out the first food and shows this to the children who then have a look to see if they have this food on their bingo card and mark the card if they have.



The child needs to be able to smell food without experiencing anxiety before moving onto the next stage.



Restricted eating: Strategies



4. TASTE – It is finally in this stage that the child will be asked to taste new foods which incorporates licking, holding a small bite on the tongue and chewing a small portion of food.

- These activities should be presented as fun and the child should engage in them of their own will and should not be made to try a new food or have food placed in their mouth without their consent and acceptance.
- The child should have a spit bowl next to them and they should be allowed to spit food out if they need to. This bucket can be customised by the child using paints / crayons, paper. Rules should be in place related to when they can use the spit bucket.
- Use familiar tastes and combine these with new ones e.g. dip new food into a favoured sauce such as tomato ketchup.
- Small changes to preferred foods will make introducing new foods easier e.g. oven chips to potato smiley faces.
- Have a glass of water or ice ready to cleanse the mouth after tasting
- ✓ **Compare and contrast** – have different versions of a food e.g. raw vs cooked carrot, and cooked chicken breast vs cooked chicken nugget, frozen strawberries vs fresh strawberries. Ask the child to compare the two versions with regard to the taste, smell, texture, colour and rate them using pictures of words, perhaps having a “yuck” and a “yum” pile. The child can use the spit bucket as needed during this activity
- ✓ **Hide and seek** – Sing, hum or play “hokey cokey” as you place a food item on the tip of the tongue and hide the food item in the mouth and bring it out again in tune with the lyrics “you put the pea in, you put the pea out, in out in out shake it all about”.



- ✓ **Bite art** - Collect 3-5 pieces of food such as apples, carrots, cucumber, cheese, slice of ham (you can have a spit bucket nearby). Each child chooses a food, the adult models biting into the food to make some “art”. Each child can create their own bite art and show it or take photos of it.



Restricted eating: Strategies



- ✓ **Boobin'** – Just like apple bobbing, put some water in a tray or bucket. Ask the child to choose a food item to put into the tray, the child then is encouraged to use their mouths only to pick up the food item



Eating new foods

- This stage will be ongoing for their whole life
- Provide children with control over what they place in their mouth
- **Provide them with calming activities prior and after these activities / stages and make it fun!**
- Just like adults, a child is allowed a day where they may need to restrict their diet which may be due to external or internal factors. This is ok.
- Model bringing the food to your lips saying “ I am going to kiss this three times” and encourage the child to do so also. If they bring it part of the way – reinforce this positively and provide praise
- Regularly place small (1-2 mouthfuls) amounts of the new food onto their plate
- Celebrate every success and record this
- Use small group work and perhaps make it a whole class activity to try at new foods
- Provide as much choice as possible e.g. asking the child to point or choose a new food that they are willing to try – this maybe a food very similar to their preferred foods, this is OK as this is a start.



Remember: This is a long journey with lots of twists and turns, these activities aren't quick fixes, but using these consistently they can effect change and can make a difference.



(Taken from “Just take a bite” By Lori Ernspenger & Tonia Stegen-Hanson)



Messy play



Some children can be sensitive (over responsive) to the smell, texture, taste and the feel (touch) of food which can cause them to have restricted diets. Using food during play can help them to desensitise themselves to these sensations in a fun way that they have control over.



Never force a child to have a sensory experience. Hand over hand guidance can be used as a guide but if resistance is felt from the child their hand should be released immediately. A child needs to have the inner drive to explore and be inquisitive enough to try something new as opposed to feeling “forced” to do it. We need to provide them with that motivation and interest. Provide them with lots of opportunities to access sensory play in a low key way. Use calming activities before, during and after sensory experiences that they may find overwhelming or novel. Give them as much choice and control as possible, use motivating activities / motivators and provide rewards so that previous negative experiences can gradually be replaced by increasingly more positive experiences. Providing children with lots of low key opportunities to have sensory experience is the key.

- ✓ For children who are over responsive to touch the first step is to offer dry messy play experiences.
- ✓ Spoons, bread sticks, lolly pop sticks, straws etc can be used initially if the child cannot tolerate handling or touching the material.
- ✓ If at first they do not wish to engage in this play, items can be placed on a favoured toy so that they have to take this off. This should not be done all the time as this may lead to frustration; however it is a way of the child experiencing a texture.
- ✓ If you feel this maybe too overwhelming for the child, the texture can be placed near the toy / play area to enable them to become familiar with it.
- ✓ Modelling and using enticing play repeatedly can often lead to a child tentatively starting to go out of their comfort zone

Messy play: Food play



✓ Dry pasta or rice play

Put some pasta or rice onto a table or into a tray for children to explore. Add toys to the pasta to add to their enjoyment and learning opportunities, such as various shapes and sizes of containers, mega blocks or animals. Use this as a lucky dip or as a way of finding pieces to complete a jigsaw puzzle. Once children are happy to explore the dry food, wet their hands so pieces stick to them.



✓ Custard, yoghurt or squirty cream

Empty tins of custard (yoghurt and cream are good alternatives) into water tray and smaller messy play trays. Allow the children to make a mess exploring the texture, taste and smell of the custard. Add toys for them to play with. Use your fingers to draw shapes, handprints and footprints.



✓ Corn flour "gloop"

Make gloop by mixing cornflour and water together. Put the gloop in large trays or onto a table and encourage students to play with it. They will enjoy just touching it, picking it up, moving it around, and letting it drizzle through their fingers. Gloop goes hard when you roll it into a ball and turns back to liquid once you keep it still.

Messy play: Food play (Cont.)

Enjoy making patterns in the gloop and just watching them disappear. Add some food colouring for a different experience. Add sand for texture or scented oils. This is also great for practising letter formation.



✓ Mousse play

Make up the mousse in a bowl, according to the instructions on the packet. Once the mousse has set, tip it onto a table or into messy tray. Place toys in the mousse such as tea sets, mega blocks or plastic animals. Allow children to explore the mousse using these items and their senses of touch, smell and taste. You could also use it as a lucky dip, or do handprints or footprints on large pieces of paper.



✓ Tactile path

Place different textured food in large trays, for example wet pasta or spaghetti, dry pasta, rice or jelly. Have students walk barefoot or on their hands and knees through the trays.

Messy play: Food play (Cont.)



✓ Cooked pasta play

Make large quantities of cooked spaghetti or other types of pasta, adding colouring to the cooking water if you wish. Add small creatures to the cooked pasta – try making blue spaghetti, putting it in a paddling pool and adding sea creatures. Alternatively pre-packed rice noodles can be used with small amount of food colouring also.

Offer some kitchen tools and saucepans for pretend play. Try using strainers, tongs, spoons, tweezers and pasta tongs. Dip the cooked pasta in paint and trail it across the page, or walk in trays of cooked pasta.



✓ Cream or shaving foam

Chose allergen-free shaving foams and check that students are not dairy intolerant before using products such as instant or whipped cream. Place the substance on tables or upright surfaces such as mirrors, walls or windows. Draw shapes with fingers, or use the cream to decorate biscuits.

Alternatively, place foam in deeper trays and create a treasure hunt for children by hiding buttons, pebbles, coins, big beads, small figures and so on in the tray. Add texture by using glitter, pasta, lentils, sand or beads. Add colours (paint or food colouring) to explore colour mixing and colour changing.

Pour some foam into the palm of the hand, then clap your hands together to make a foam shower. For children who are very sensitive to touch do this away from them but not so far that they cannot see. Most children love this, even if they do not want to touch it.

Messy play: Food play (Cont.)



- ✓ **Fruit and vegetable faces** Using a variety of fruits and vegetables (the more interesting shapes the better) carve, cut, slice and dice your way to making interesting faces, animals and other everyday items. Dip into paint to make pictures with the shapes. Dip into melted chocolate to add a different flavour.
- ✓ Dried pasta: tubes, shells, shapes and cheerios can be threaded onto pipe cleaners, string etc
- ✓ Cereals such as coco pops, corn flakes, porridge oats etc can be used during play with vehicles, teddies etc coco pops and crushed cornflakes can be hail stones / rain
- ✓ Crumbled shredded wheat can make straw, and crushed weetabix can be sand / mud for animals and toys to drudge through.
- ✓ Sucking through straws can be used to pick up cornflakes, or blowing through straws can blow cornflakes along a track in a race.
- ✓ Varying the amount of water added to Instant mash potato can provide swamp like material that can be made into caves, hills, roads
- ✓ Make collages out of cereals, marshmallows, dragees (silver cake balls), feathers, twigs, leaves etc
- ✓ Adding glitter and food colouring can make some of the above more interesting and fun

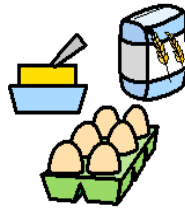
Messy play – play dough recipes



Play dough is a great resource, as it is a half way house between dry and wet messy play as it has a slightly sticky consistency. It can be used in a variety of different ways, and can be used to stimulate the touch and olfactory (smell) senses, and to calm and alert when using different scents. .



Basic play dough recipe



Ingredients:

- 2 cups plain flour



- 2 tablespoons (tbs) vegetable oil



- ½ cup salt



- 2 tbs cream of tartar (found in home baking aisle)

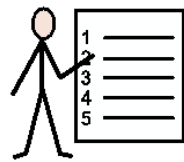


Messy play: Play dough recipes (cont.)

- Up to 2 cups boiling water



- Few drops of glycerine



Method

1. **Mix flour, salt, cream of tartar and oil in a large mixing bowl**
2. Add boiling water
3. Stir continuously until it becomes a sticky, combined dough
4. Add food glycerine to make it shiny (optional)
5. Allow it to cool down then take it out of the bowl and knead it quickly until all of the stickiness has gone



Chocolate dough –

Add 1 cup of cocoa to the rest of the dry ingredients and mix well. You can also add chocolate chips. Real chocolate can be added (kneaded in) once the dough has cooled.

Messy play: Play dough recipes (cont.)



Cinnamon dough –

Add 1 tbs of dried cinnamon to the dry ingredients and mix well. Nutmeg can also be used.



Flower petal dough –

3-4 cups of flower petals and / or food colouring can be slowly kneaded into the dough once it has cooled



Lavender dough –

2 tbs dried / fresh lavender (optional extras – 2 drops lavender oil / purple food colouring). Mix the dry lavender in with all the other dry ingredients. Add the lavender oil & food colouring with the water and stir well. For added texture you can knead the lavender flowers in once the dough has been formed



Herb dough –

Large bunch of fresh herbs – shred the herbs with your hands and then add to the cool dough, knead until they are all mixed in.

Messy play: Play dough recipes (cont.)



Fruit dough –

Add 1 sachet of powdered fruit flavouring with the flour.



Jelly dough –

Add packet of jelly crystals with the flour.



Sparkle dough –

Add 1 cup of glitter to the dough when it has cooled, kneading it in to mix it thoroughly.



Sand dough –

Add 1 cup of sand to the kneaded dough when it has cooled

Messy play: Play dough recipes (cont.)



Beetroot play dough – Chop up one medium sized beetroot and put in pan with a cup of water. Bring to the boil then gently simmer on a stove for ten minutes. Once cooled pour into a sieve. Follow basic dough recipe and replace 1 cup of boiling water with beetroot liquid



Raspberry dough –

Put a handful of raspberries (12 approx) and a cup of water into a pan. Bring to the boil gently then simmer on the stove for 20 minutes (until liquid has reduced to about half). Once cooled pour through a sieve then follow the playdough recipe adding raspberry liquid at stage 2 with 1 cup of boiling water



Tree bark dough –

Put handful of tree bark in a pan with a cup of water (it's best not to take it directly from the tree – but look to see what you can find on the ground). Bring to the boil then gently simmer on the stove for 20-30 minutes (until liquid is about half) then pour through a sieve. Follow the basic play dough recipe replacing 1 cup of boiling water with 1 cup of bark liquid

Messy play: Play dough recipes (cont.)



Salt dough –

1 cup flour, 1 cup salt, ½ cup water. Mix all the ingredients together. Knead the dough on a flat surface until it becomes workable. Dough can be hardened by cooking it on a baking sheet in the oven at 100 °c / 200° f for 2-3 hours.



Porridge dough –

2 cups plain flour, 1 cup porridge oats, 2 tbs vegetable oil, 1 tbs honey, ½ cup salt, 2 tbs cream of tartar, up to 2 cups of boiling water, few drops glycerine. Mix flour, salt, porridge oats, cream of tartar and oil in a large mixing bowl. Add the boiling water and honey. Stir continuously until it becomes a sticky combined dough. Add the food glycerine to make it shiny. Allow it to cool down then take it out of the bowl and knead it quickly until all of the stickiness has gone.



Marshmallow play dough -

4-5 cups marshmallows, 2 tbs water, 2 tbs cooking oil, 4-5 cups of cornflour. Melt the marshmallows and the water in a pan over a medium heat. Remove from heat and add the oil. Stir in 4-5 cups of cornflour slowly. Keep stirring until you get a pliable mixture.

If it's too sticky, add more cornflour.

Messy play: Play dough recipes (cont.)



Sand mousse –

Play sand, washing up liquid, water. Make a well in the middle of the sand. Slowly pour in the water. Add a squirt of washing up liquid. The quantities depend on how much mousse you want. Half of the fun is adding different amounts of the ingredients as you go along to get the desired effect.



Bread dough –

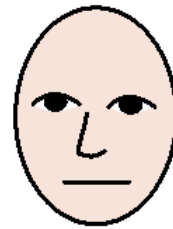
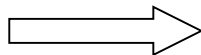
450g strong bread flour, 1 tbs salt, 2 tsp dried easy blend yeast, 300ml water (that has been boiled), 2 tbs oil. Sift the flour and salt into a bowl then add yeast. Slowly stir in the warm water and oil with a wooden spoon to make a dough. Put the dough onto a clean surface and knead thoroughly for about ten minutes.

(Taken from “Getting ready to write” by Alistair Bryce-Clegg)

Relaxation: Deep muscle relaxation

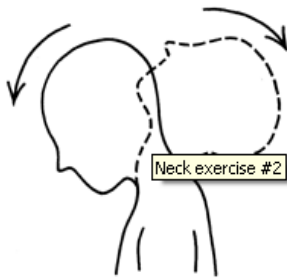


- ✓ This technique takes around 20 minutes. It stretches different muscles in turn and then relaxes them, to release tension from the body and relax your mind.
- ✓ Find a warm, quiet place with no distractions. Get completely comfortable, either sitting or lying down. Close your eyes and begin by focusing on your breathing; breathing slowly and deeply, as described above.
- ✓ If you have pain in certain muscles, or if there are muscles that you find it difficult to focus on, spend more time on relaxing other parts.
- ✓ You may want to play some soothing music to help relaxation. As with all relaxation techniques, deep muscle relaxation will require a bit of practice before you start feeling its benefits.
- ✓ For each exercise, hold the stretch for a few seconds, then relax. Repeat it a couple of times. It's useful to keep to the same order as you work through the muscle groups:
- ✓ **Face:** push the eyebrows together, as though frowning, then release.

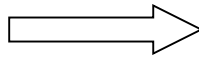
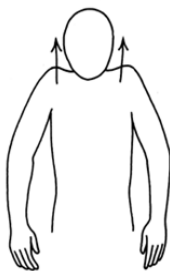


Relaxation: Deep muscle relaxation (cont.)

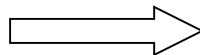
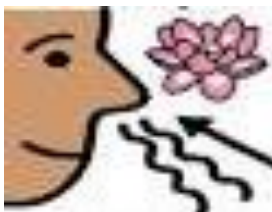
✓ **Neck:** gently tilt the head forwards, pushing chin down towards chest, then slowly lift again.



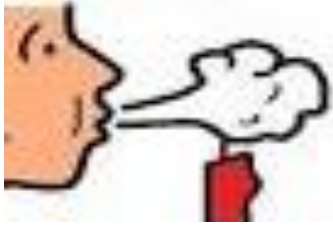
✓ **Shoulders:** pull them up towards the ears (shrug) for the count of 5, then relax them down towards the feet.



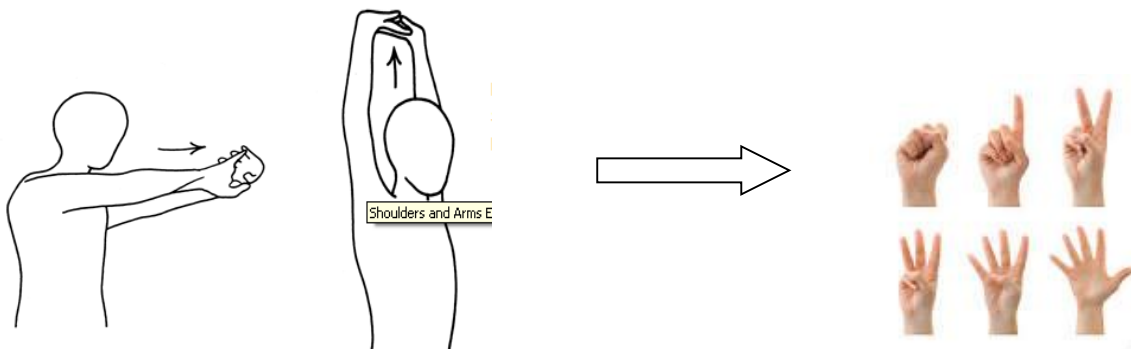
✓ **Chest:** breathe slowly and deeply into the diaphragm (below your bottom rib) for the count of 5 so that you're using the whole of the lungs. Then breathe slowly out for the count of 5, allowing the belly to deflate as all the air is exhaled.



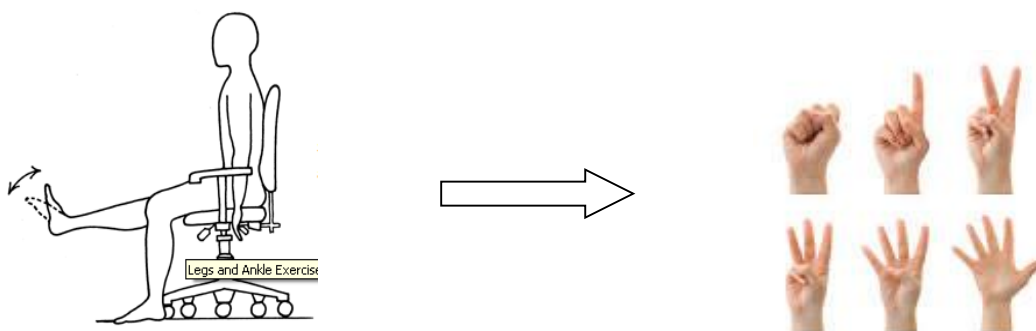
Relaxation: Deep muscle relaxation (cont.)



✓ **Arms:** stretch the arms away from the body, reach for the count of 5, then relax.

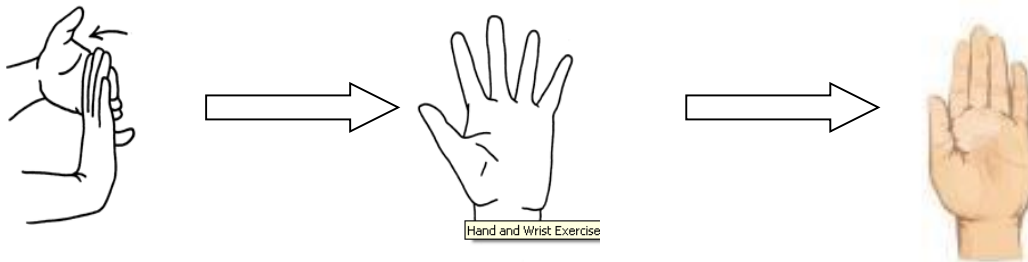


✓ **Legs:** push the toes away from the body for the count of 5, then pull them towards body for the count of 5, then relax.



Relaxation: Deep muscle relaxation (cont.)

Wrists and hands: stretch the wrist by pulling the hand up towards you, and stretch out the fingers and thumbs, then relax.

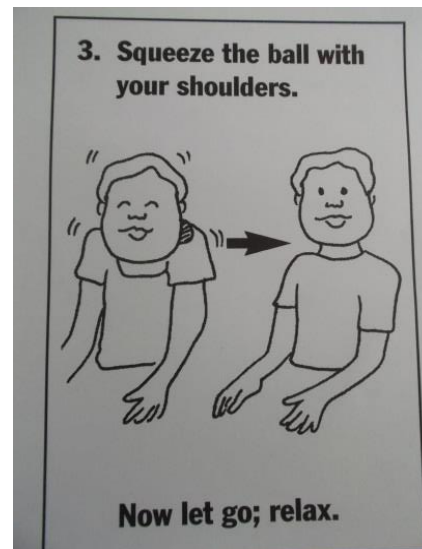
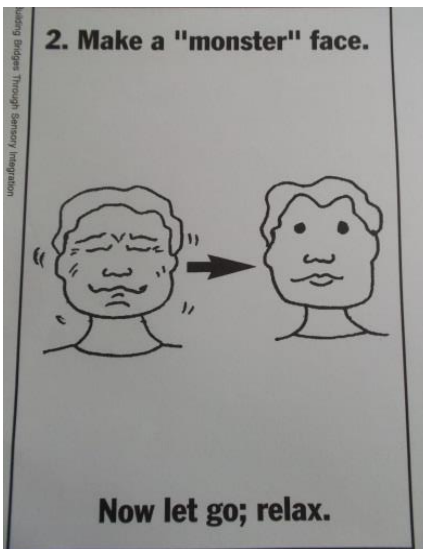
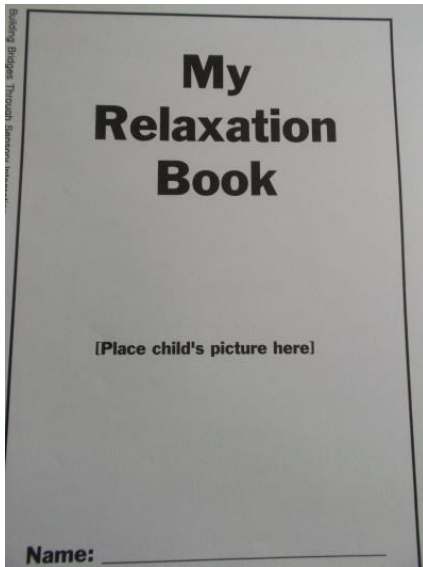


✓ Spend some time lying quietly after your relaxation with your eyes closed. When you feel ready, stretch and get up slowly.

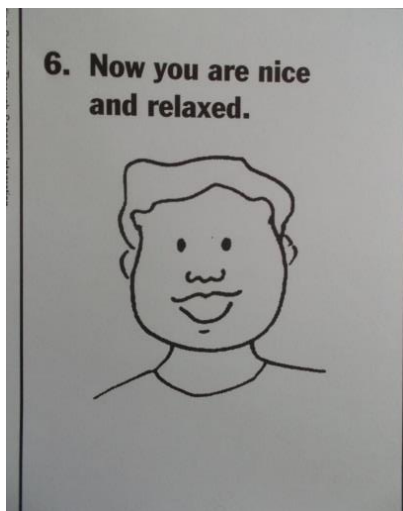
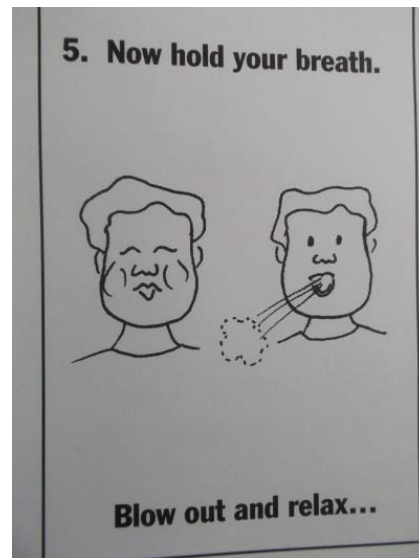
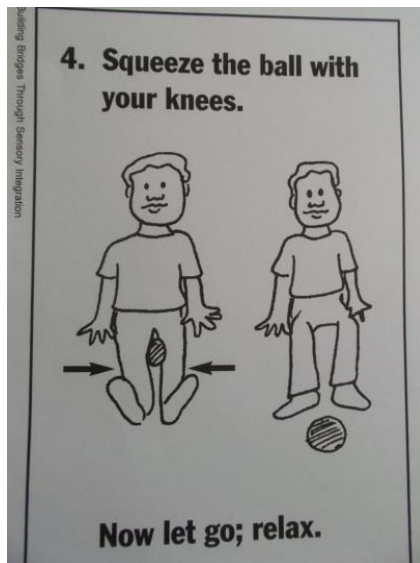


(Taken from <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/pages/ways-relieve-stress.aspx>)

Relaxation: Deep muscle relaxation (cont.)



Relaxation: Deep muscle relaxation (cont.)

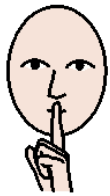


(Taken from "Building Bridges Through Sensory Integration" By Ellen Yack, Paula Aquilla, Shirley Sutton (2002). Future Horizons.)

Relaxation: Deep breathing



- ✓ Practice deep breathing at a regular time and in a quiet place where you won't be disturbed.



- ✓ Loosen or remove any tight clothes you have on, such as shoes or jackets. Make yourself feel completely comfortable.

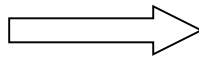


- ✓ Sit in a comfy chair which supports your head or lie on the floor or a bed. Place your arms on the chair arms, or flat on the floor or bed, a little bit away from the side of your body with the palms up. If you're lying down, stretch out your legs, keeping them hip-width apart or slightly wider. If you're sitting in a chair, don't cross your legs.

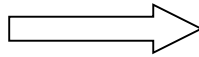
Good relaxation always starts with focusing on your breathing. The way to do it is to breathe in and out slowly and in a regular rhythm as this will help you to calm down.

Relaxation: Deep breathing (cont.)

- ✓ Fill up the whole of your lungs with air, without forcing. Imagine you're filling up a bottle, so that your lungs fill from the bottom.
- ✓ Breathe in through your nose for the count of 5, then out through your mouth.



- ✓ Breathe in slowly and regularly counting from one to five (don't worry if you can't reach five at first).
- ✓ Then let the breath escape slowly, counting from one to five.



- ✓ Keep doing this until you feel calm. Breathe without pausing or holding your breath.

Practice this relaxed breathing for three to five minutes, two to three times a day (or whenever you feel stressed). (Taken from <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/pages/ways-relieve-stress.aspx>)