

## “Stimulating our Senses”

### **Purpose:**

“Stimulating our Senses” is a group-based program developed for Shoreham Village residents, as a means of providing sensory stimulation, socializing opportunities, and exploration/movement.

### **Rationale:**

Based out of a sensorimotor frame of reference, this group aims to provide social opportunities and encourage participation in sensory stimulation and exploration. Typically, our everyday lives are filled with sensory experiences. While we walk to the store, we feel the wind on our skin, hear birds singing, and smell and observe beautiful flowers along the way. For many individuals who have physical and/or cognitive disabilities and live in long term care settings, everyday opportunities for sensory experiences are limited. This group is designed to bring sensory rich experiences to each individual, and allow opportunities for residents of all ability levels to participate.

### **Group Goals:**

- Triggering past memories, alertness, and stimulating other cognitive processes
- Promoting relaxation
- Providing opportunities for inclusion and social interactions
- Improving quality of life
- Identifying sensory stimulation tools that are pleasurable for individual residents

### **Outcome Criteria:**

Following each session, the facilitator will document all residents who were included in the group, which will then be integrated into the monthly Recreation Department attendance chart. Notes regarding individual responses to the group will be written (e.g., “Resident was observed to smile when presented with the Lavender scent”) to assist in evaluating the benefits of the group.

### **Group Size:**

Group size may vary, depending on the number of facilitators, number of residents on a particular unit, and functional level of the participants. Typical group sizes will range from 4-10 residents.

### **Method:**

- 1.) Groups will be facilitated by a minimum of one recreation staff member, and at least one volunteer. Encourage staff on the unit to participate as able. OT is available for consultation, as needed.
- 2.) All known allergies, sensitivities, and dietary concerns must be considered for each participant prior to participating in group activities. If foods or drink is being used during the group exercise, the facilitator must obtain permission from the DON or RN on duty for each individual who will be ingesting these items.
- 3.) Facilitator will use a box/cart to transport sensory items to each individual unit. Participants will be gathered in the common area of the unit, if possible. If a particular resident is required to stay in bed, facilitators are encouraged to spend a brief 1:1 session in their room whenever possible.
- 4.) Each session will be based on a theme, and numerous sensory stimulation tools will be used which appeal to a variety of senses. Each unit will have the opportunity to experience each themed session, as groups will be rotated across units.

5.) Items will be presented momentarily, one at a time to individuals, and cleaned after each individual for infection control. Higher functioning individuals may be able to explore items without supervision, while other residents will require supervision (e.g., if at risk for placing items in their mouths) or assistance to explore an item (e.g., hand-over hand). Residents should be encouraged to talk or think about what the sensory item reminds them of, and how it makes them feel. Suggested questions are listed in the Session Outlines; however, please allow the group conversations to flow depending on the participant's interests, cognitive levels, and participation.

6.) Facilitators will document each session

**Place and Time of Meeting:**

1.) Groups will occur primarily on each individual unit - Facilitators will transport the sensory tools onto the units, saving time by eliminating the need to transport residents to common areas. This also increases the likelihood of facilitators reaching residents who may not have been able to leave their beds on the day of the session.

2.) Length of the sessions will be approximately 30 minutes on each unit

3.) Groups will rotate between each of the five units and will occur once per month on each unit

4.) Time of group sessions to be determined, as per Recreation and volunteer schedule.

If you have any questions, please feel free to consult Amy Richard, Occupational Therapist (NS., Reg).

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Sample Session A (**November**): **Walk to the store**

Time: Approximately 30 minutes, per unit

Supplies:

- Disinfectant
- Box/cart for transporting items
- Suggested sensory items, including: flowers, a fan, flower scented spray, and bird sound cd

Format, including potential conversation items:

*1 minute:* Introductions - Facilitator introduces themselves, and explains “We have come here today to use our senses: seeing, smelling, hearing, and touch, to look at items we may enjoy, and think and share memories from our past. This is also a group for exercising our minds”

*1 minute:* Warm up – “Today, we are going to imagine that we are going on a stroll to the store. Can you think of the types of things that you heard, smelled, saw, the last time you walked to the store? Imagine you are walking along the sidewalk, what do you see?”

*7 minutes:* Presentation of visual item – **Flowers** “Do you know what kind of flower this is? Did you have gardens near your home? What is your favourite type of flower? What does the flower feel like?”

*7 minutes:* Presentation of tactile item, **Fan**. “Do you feel the wind? Do you feel cold or warm? Do you remember any time or place when it was very windy?”

*7 minutes:* Presentation of olfactory item - **Flower scent** (e.g., lavender) “What smell is this? Do you enjoy this smell? Where might you have smelled this before?”

*7 minutes:* Presentation of auditory item – **Bird sound** (e.g., this can often be found on a relaxation cd) “Can you hear the birds singing? Do you enjoy listening to birds? What times of birds do you like to listen to?”

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Sample Session B (December): **Winter**

Time: Approximately 30 minutes, per unit

Supplies:

- Disinfectant
- Box/cart for transporting items
- Suggested sensory items, including: sparkling snow flake ornament, photos of snow, ice pack or small snow ball, pine tree scented air freshener, Christmas carol’s (sang or played on a cd)

Format, including potential conversation items:

*1 minute:* Introduction – Facilitator introduces themselves, and explains “We have come here today to use our senses: seeing, smelling, hearing, and touch, to look at items we may enjoy, and think and share memories from our past. This is also a group for exercising our minds”

*1 minute:* Warm-up – “Winter is here. What do you think of, when you hear of winter? What do you expect to see outside?”

*7 minutes:* Presentation of visual item, **sparkling snow flake ornament, photos of snow** – “Do you know what this is? They come in many shapes and sizes, and people say that no two of them are the same. What time of the year would you see these? What happens normally when you touch them? What can you make using a lot of these”

*7 minutes:* Presentation of tactile item, **ice pack or small snow ball** – “What does this feel like? Where would you find this? When lakes are frozen, what do you see people doing on them? Have you ever gone skating?”

*7 minutes:* Presentation of olfactory item, **pine tree scented air freshener** – “What holiday do you think of when you smell this? What smell is this?”

*7 minutes:* Presentation of auditory item, **Christmas carol’s** (sang or played on a tape) – “What type of music do you often hear in December? Do you remember what song this is, can you sing along?”

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Sample Session C (January): **Beauty Shop**

Time: Approximately 30 minutes, per unit

Supplies:

- Disinfectant
- Box/cart for transporting items
- Suggested sensory items, including: hair brush, sponge, nail file, hand-held mirror, cologne/perfume, hair dryer

Format, including potential conversation items:

*1 minute:* Introduction – Facilitator introduces themselves, and explains “We have come here today to use our senses: seeing, smelling, hearing, and touch, to look at items we may enjoy, and think and share memories from our past. This is also a group for exercising our minds.”

*1 minute:* Warm-up – “Today let’s imagine that we are all taking a trip to the Beauty Salon. What might we see there?”

*7 minutes:* Presentation of tactile item, **hair brush, sponge, nail file** “What are these used for? What do they feel like? Are they soft, or rough?”

*7 minutes:* Presentation of visual item, **handheld mirror** – “When do you use this mirror at the Beauty Salon? A new hairdo is always fun to look at.”

*7 minutes:* Presentation of olfactory item, **cologne/perfume** – “What smell is this? What do you think of when you smell this? Is it a pleasant smell?”

*7 minutes:* Presentation of auditory item, **hair dryer** – “Do you enjoy the sound of a hairdryer, or do you find it too loud? You can also feel this when you’re hair is being dried, what does that feel like?”

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### Sample Session D (**February**): **Valentines**

Time: Approximately 30 minutes, per unit

Supplies:

- Disinfectant
- Box/cart for transporting items
- Suggested sensory items, including: cinnamon, chocolate, sparkly heart ornaments, wrapping paper

Format, including potential conversation items:

*1 minute:* Introduction – Facilitator introduces themselves, and explains “We have come here today to use our senses: seeing, smelling, hearing, and touch, to look at items we may enjoy, and think and share memories from our past. This is also a group for exercising our minds”

*1 minute:* Warm-up – “Since this month is February, today’s theme will be Valentine’s Day. What do you think of when you hear the word, Valentines?”

*7 minutes:* Presentation of visual item, **sparkly heart ornaments** – “What shape is this decoration in? Where might you see a heart on Valentines Day? What color is this?”

*7 minutes:* Presentation of olfactory item, **cinnamon** – “What smell is this? Do you enjoy this smell?”

*7 minutes:* Presentation of taste item, if appropriate, **chocolate** – “What does chocolate taste like? What is your favourite type of chocolate? Why might chocolate remind someone of Valentine’s day?”

*7 minutes:* Presentation of auditory item, **wrapping paper** – Have the residents play with the wrapping paper, to create noise. Try to obtain bright, shiny paper for added visual stimulation. “What do you use this for? Who might you wrap a gift for on Valentines day? Can you remember any special gifts that you gave or received on Valentines day?”

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### Sample Session E (March): Trip to the Coffee Shop

Time: Approximately 30 minutes, per unit

Supplies:

- Disinfectant
- Box/cart for transporting items
- Suggested sensory items, including: cups (facilitator “clicks” cups together), tea bags/ground coffee, coffee filters, baked goods/coffee/tea

Format, including potential conversation items:

*1 minute:* Introduction – Facilitator introduces themselves, and explains “We have come here today to use our senses: seeing, smelling, hearing, and touch, to look at items we may enjoy, and think and share memories from our past. This is also a group for exercising our minds”

*1 minute:* Warm-up – “Many people love to go to the coffee shop. What is it about the coffee shop that people enjoy? What do you remember from your favourite coffee shop?”

*7 minutes:* Presentation of visual item, **coffee filters** – “What is this used for? Have you ever made coffee? Do you remember how to make coffee?”

*7 minutes:* Presentation of olfactory item, **tea bags/ground coffee** – “What smell is this? Do you like tea? Do you prefer coffee?”

*7 minutes:* Presentation of taste item, if appropriate, **coffee/tea/sweets** – “What does this taste like? What was your favourite food or drink to order at a coffee shop?”

*7 minutes:* Presentation of auditory item, **cups clicking** – “What other sounds do you hear in a coffee shop? Were there a lot of people talking in the shop?”

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### Sample Session F (April): **Spring**

Time: Approximately 30 minutes, per unit

Supplies:

- Disinfectant
- Box/cart for transporting items
- Suggested sensory items, including: water, flower air freshener, bouquet of flowers, rain maker

Format, including potential conversation items:

*1 minute:* Introduction – Facilitator introduces themselves, and explains “We have come here today to use our senses: seeing, smelling, hearing, and touch, to look at items we may enjoy, and think and share memories from our past. This is also a group for exercising our minds”

*1 minute:* Warm-up – “Spring is in the air. What reminds you of spring? What is your favourite season of the year?”

*7 minutes:* Presentation of tactile item, **bowl of water** – “Why might water remind you of spring? Why is rain sometimes a good thing?”

*7 minutes:* Presentation of olfactory item, **flower air freshener** – “What smell is this? Why might this smell remind you of spring? What is your favourite type of flower?”

*7 minutes:* Presentation of visual item, **bouquet of flowers** – “Do you know what kind of flowers these are? What do they feel like? What colors are they?”

*7 minutes:* Presentation of auditory item, **rain maker** – “What sound is this? Do you like the sound of rain?”



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### Sample Session G (May): Trip to the grocery store

Time: Approximately 30 minutes, per unit

Supplies:

- Disinfectant
- Box/cart for transporting items
- Suggested sensory items, including: rough cucumber, fresh bread, florescent light, different flavours or yogurt

Format, including potential conversation items:

*1 minute:* Introduction – Facilitator introduces themselves, and explains “We have come here today to use our senses: seeing, smelling, hearing, and touch, to look at items we may enjoy, and think and share memories from our past. This is also a group for exercising our minds”

*1 minute:* Warm-up – “Today we are going to image we are going on a trip to the grocery store? Who did most of the shopping in your house? What store did you go to?”

*7 minutes:* Presentation of olfactory item, **fresh bread** – “What do you smell? What section of the store would you smell this? Do you like this smell?”

*7 minutes:* Presentation of tactile item, **rough cucumber** - “What section of the store would you find this? What vegetable is this? What does it feel like?”

*7 minutes:* Presentation of visual item, **florescent light** – “Can you tell me what this is? Do you remember how bright the grocery store is?”

*7 minutes:* Presentation of taste item, **different flavours of yogurt** – “Do you remember when the grocery store gave you samples to try? What flavours are these?”

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### Sample Session H (June): **Bubbles**

Time: Approximately 30 minutes, per unit

Supplies:

- Disinfectant
- Box/cart for transporting items
- Suggested sensory items, including: bubble wrap, blowing bubbles or soap and water in a clear container, bubble bath, clear or shiny ball

Format, including potential conversation items:

*1 minute:* Introduction – Facilitator introduces themselves, and explains “We have come here today to use our senses: seeing, smelling, hearing, and touch, to look at items we may enjoy, and think and share memories from our past. This is also a group for exercising our minds”

*1 minute:* Warm-up – “The theme for today’s group is Bubbles. Bubbles come in so many shapes and places. Where do you usually see bubbles?”

*7 minutes:* Presentation of tactile item, **clear or shiny ball** – “What shape is this? What does it look like?”

*7 minutes:* Presentation of visual item, **blowing bubbles, or soap and water shaken in a clear container** – Blow bubbles and encourage the residents be involved, watching them and trying to pop them. “What happens when you touch the bubbles? What do you do to make bubbles?” Or – “What do you think is in this container? What do you see after you shake the container? What would you use soap for?”

*7 minutes:* Presentation of olfactory item, **bubble bath** – “What smell is this? When would you use this? Do you enjoy baths? What did the water feel like when you were taking a bath?”

*7 minutes:* Presentation of auditory item, **bubble wrap** – Encourage the residents to try to pop the bubble wrap; this is also a tactile item. “What sound is that? What does it feel like? What do you use this for? What types of things would you wrap this in?”

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Sample Session I (July): **Summer**

Time: Approximately 30 minutes, per unit

Supplies:

- Disinfectant
- Box/cart for transporting items
- Suggested sensory items, including: cd of beach sounds, container with sand and seashells, photo's of the beach, salt

Format, including potential conversation items:

*1 minute:* Introduction – Facilitator introduces themselves, and explains “We have come here today to use our senses: seeing, smelling, hearing, and touch, to look at items we may enjoy, and think and share memories from our past. This is also a group for exercising our minds”

*1 minute:* Warm-up – “Summer is here! What reminds you of summer? Where might you go in the summer?”

*7 minutes:* Presentation of tactile item, **container with sand, photos of the beach** – “What is this? Where might you find sand? What does it feel like?”

*7 minutes:* Presentation of taste item, **salt** – “What flavour is this? Do you like this flavour? Where at the beach might you taste this?”

*7 minutes:* Presentation of auditory item, **cd of beach sounds** – “Do you enjoy those sounds? Where do you think these sounds are from?”

*7 minutes:* Presentation of visual item, **various seashells placed in sand** – “What are these? What colors are they?”

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Sample Session J (**August**): **Carnival/Festival**

Time: Approximately 30 minutes, per unit

Supplies:

- Disinfectant
- Box/cart for transporting items
- Suggested sensory items, including: various colors/shaped balloons, bean bags, popcorn smell, tape of carnival music

Format, including potential conversation items:

*1 minute:* Introduction – Facilitator introduces themselves, and explains “We have come here today to use our senses: seeing, smelling, hearing, and touch, to look at items we may enjoy, and think and share memories from our past. This is also a group for exercising our minds”

*1 minute:* Warm-up – “Have you ever been to a festival? Let’s imagine today, what it would be like to spend the day at one.”

*7 minutes:* Presentation of visual item, **various colored/shaped balloons** – “What colors are these? Can you tell me what they are? Who might you buy a balloon for at a carnival or festival?”

*7 minutes:* Presentation of tactile item, **bean bags** – “Do you know what these are? Have you ever played carnival games before? These are often used to try to knock down cups to win a prize”. Depending on the abilities of your group, you could set up a simple carnival game with these (i.e., stack cups on a nearby table and encourage the resident to try to knock these over).

*7 minutes:* Presentation of olfactory items, **e.g., popcorn smell, candy apple smell** – “What smell is this? What have you eaten at a festival or carnival?”

*7 minutes:* Presentation of auditory item, **tape of carnival music** – “What do you think of when you heard this type of music? Do you picture a clown walking by?”

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Sample Session K (September): Housekeeping

Time: Approximately 30 minutes, per unit

Supplies:

- Disinfectant
- Box/cart for transporting items
- Suggested sensory items, including: feather duster, handheld broom, scented dish soap, colourful dish towels, handheld vacuum

Format, including potential conversation items:

*1 minute:* Introduction – Facilitator introduces themselves, and explains “We have come here today to use our senses: seeing, smelling, hearing, and touch, to look at items we may enjoy, and think and share memories from our past. This is also a group for exercising our minds”

*1 minute:* Warm-up – “Can you remember who did the cleaning in your home? What types of tools do you need to clean your house? Can you remember what they were?”

*7 minutes:* Presentation of visual item, **colourful dish towels** – “What colors are these? Where might you find these?”

*7 minutes:* Presentation of tactile item, **feather duster** – “What does this feel like? What could you use this for?”

*7 minutes:* Presentation of olfactory item, **scented dish soap** – “What smell is this? What would this be used for cleaning? What area of your house would you find this?”

*7 minutes:* Presentation of auditory item, **handheld vacuum** – “What cleaning tool is this? What types of places would you use this? How would you describe the sound?”

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### Sample Session L (October): **Fall**

Time: Approximately 30 minutes, per unit

Supplies:

- Disinfectant
- Box/cart for transporting items
- Suggested sensory items, including: triangles of orange, red, yellow construction paper, small rough pumpkin, bowl of dried leaves, pumpkin flavoured treat

Format, including potential conversation items:

*1 minute:* Introduction to the group: Facilitator introduces themselves, and explains “We have come here today to use our senses: seeing, smelling, hearing, and touch, to look at items we may enjoy, and think and share memories from our past. This is also a group for exercising our minds”

*1 minute:* Warm up – “The fall season is here. What reminds you of fall? Do you know what months fall comes in?”

*7 minutes:* Presentation of visual item, **triangles of orange, red, yellow construction paper** – What colors are these? Why might these colors make someone think of the fall season?

*7 minutes:* Presentation of tactile item, **small, rough pumpkin** – Feel the pumpkin, does it remind you of any fall holidays? Have you ever carved a pumpkin? What does the inside of a pumpkin feel like, can you remember?

*7 minutes:* Presentation of auditory item, **bowl of dried leaves** – “Do you remember all the leaves that had to be raked in the fall? What noise does it make when you pick up or step on a pile of dried leaves?” You can also encourage the participants to smell the leaves, and observe the many colors, for additional sensory experiences. “What do the leaves smell like? Can you remember the unique smell of fall in the air? What colors are the leaves?”

*7 minutes:* Presentation of taste item, if appropriate – **Pumpkin flavoured treat** (e.g., pumpkin pie, pumpkin cookie) – “What flavour is this? Do you like this flavour?”

