Multi-Sensory Environments for Calming and Relaxation
Began in Holland in the 80’s. Since then its use has grown around the world to serve multiple different users in a variety of facilities with a diversity of applications

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For Calming and Relaxation
The Word SNOEZELLEN

Snuffelen – to search and explore
Doezelen – to relax and be calm
Although concept grew due to anecdotal evidence – much research and many studies from around the world exist today.
Reference List: Multi-sensory Environments


ROMPA® and FLAGHOUSE do not endorse and have not critiqued the articles referenced herein for credibility or validity. This is provided as a resource list to aid those seeking information in the sensory field of practice.
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Multisensory environments (MSE) are safe, comfortable, non-threatening settings, each uniquely designed.
MSEs offer clients an array of sensory products which offer interesting, absorbing and controllable sensory activities.
In a setting that provides:

- exciting visuals
- comfortable seating options
- soothing sounds
- intriguing aromas
- choice of sensations
- meaningful activities and objects
- opportunities for interaction and engagement
While meeting the needs of our basic senses:

**Vision**

**Smell**

**Hearing**

**Touch**

**Taste**

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While meeting the needs of our basic senses:

Vestibular

Proprioception

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While meeting the needs of our basic senses:

And let’s not forget the spiritual side and those important feelings:

Self worth
Emotional well being
Relationships
Acceptance
Sharing
Security
Confidence

An environment where we experience pleasure

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MSEs help people better manage their physical environments, their own sensory worlds and their relationships with the people around them.
Also helps those with severe sensory impairments, or who have shut down, to participate in and connect to the world and people around them.
To understand why this is important, and how Snoezelen works, we must consider the lives of individuals with dementia and other challenging conditions.
Sensory loss may arise from:

- impaired cognitive skills
- limited focus and memory
- reduced opportunity for personal interaction
- restricted movement and physical frailty
- vision and hearing impairments
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May find the world confusing, frightening, noisy, over- or under-stimulating

Often they cannot understand or control the sensory bombardment around them or articulate their needs

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Sensory processing patterns are based on how our brains react to sensory stimulation and how one responds to that input.

**Nervous system thresholds** – thresholds for responding to stimulation based on sensory preference

**Self regulation strategies** - what we do to actively manage that sensory input
Patterns of Sensory processing assessed by the Sensory Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Threshold/reactivity</th>
<th>Passive</th>
<th>Active</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>High threshold with low reactivity</strong></td>
<td>Low registration (Bystander)</td>
<td>Sensory Seeking (Seeker)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does not notice sensory events or is slow to respond</td>
<td>Looks for Sensory experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low threshold with high reactivity</strong></td>
<td>Sensory sensitivity (Sensor)</td>
<td>Sensory avoider (Avoider)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Readily notices sensory stimuli, may be distracted by them</td>
<td>Deliberately acts to reduce or prevent exposure to sensory stimuli</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Individuals may respond to the challenges of their environment with different types of behavior including:

- self abuse
- restlessness/wandering
- withdrawal or shutdown
- memory loss
- poor concentration
- depression
- anxiety
- disorientation
- anger
- aggression/violent outbursts
- shouting out
- difficulty following simple instructions
The **challenge** is to avoid these unacceptable responsive behaviors and prevent self-harm to the individual and risk to those around them.
The desired outcome is to help individuals find new abilities, build tolerance of sensory input, regain control of their lives and find an inner sense of calm.
Snoezelen manipulates brain chemistry through the senses, to set the tone for motivation and functional attention… … It lowers the stress chemistry and increases the relaxation chemistry. The key is finding the right combination”

-Linda Messbauer
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RESEARCH HAS SHOWN THAT SNOEZELEN:-

• Stimulates the senses
• Provides an alternative to medications and isolation
• Increases functionality, awareness, attention
• Improves appetite, memory, cognition, speech
• Increases happiness
• Encourages movement, range of motion, posture
• Improves relationships
• Decreases aggression, abuse anxiety, wandering
Snoezelen can be used for:

- **Relaxtion**: Snoezelen: Multi-Sensory products and environments can be used to calm and reduce agitation through the use of gentle light, soothing sound, relaxing smell and touch.

- **Stimulation**: Snoezelen Multi-Sensory products and environments can be used to stimulate users by providing exciting visuals, music and sounds, invigorating smells and textures to explore.

- **Development**: Snoezelen can be used as a learning and developmental tool, used for colour matching, understanding cause and effect, creating themed environments to teach and reminisce.

- **Therapy**: Snoezelen provides the tool(s) and resources to therapists and health professionals from portable solutions to custom Multi-Sensory environments to better understand the sensory impairments and needs of their clients.
Philosophy of Snoezelen

• ‘Pure’ Snoezelen has no purpose other than enjoyment.
• Sessions are best if client led in a safe, comfortable atmosphere with an air of enjoyment, motivation.
• Freedom from pressure to achieve with no expected outcomes.
• Client makes choices.

• A new approach offering an enhanced quality of life.
SNOEZELEN FRAMEWORK

- Snoezelen is a patient-centered approach
- Promotes individual understanding of clients
- Encourages a care-giving relationship
- Provides range of calming to stimulating activities in a safe environment
- Helps understand and cope with responsive behaviours
- Reduces care-giver stress and consequent burnout
- Use can ranges from an appropriate activity to an entirely new 24 hour care model
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DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

- Accessibility
- Safety/Electrical
- Seating/Comfort
- Light control
- Noise control
- Choice/Interaction
- Range of opportunity
- Decorative detail
- Thematic effects
There are many different types of Snoezelen multisensory environments.
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snoezelen® EQUIPMENT

For Calming and Relaxation
Interactive Bubble Tubes

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Fiber optic sprays and Carpets

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Wall projections
Wall projections

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Virtual reality

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Interactive panels
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Tactile panels
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Tactile experiences

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Swings, seats, rockers

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Aromatherapy

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Music and Sounds

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and now...
the new generation of multisensory environments - Sensory Magic interactive, harmonized themes
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PROSPECTIVE OUTCOMES

- Improved rapport/relationships
- Improved client/caregiver communications
- Understanding of sensory impairments, responses
- Better engagement
- Changes in responsive behavior, learning, ability
- Improved sense of well-being
- Expanded opportunities outside SNOEZELEN
- Improved skill acquisition, motivation, social interaction and quality of life experiences
Today Snoezelen continues to grow and expand to help thousands of people around the world enjoy a better quality of life.
for more information about Snoezelen®,
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