

## Sensory Stories

Sensory stimulation is vital for everyone's physical and mental well being.

Sensory stories partner concise text with rich sensory experience to convey a narrative

Sensory stories have been used with individuals with profound and multiple learning disabilities, dementia, autism and sensory processing difficulties,. They have been used with babies and children in the early years, and with adults in their later years, they have been used in schools, care settings, heritage settings and homes, by specialist practitioners and by absolute beginners. They truly are for everyone.



Simple sensory resources are easy to find.

### Guides

Guides like this one, on a range of topics, are available to download for free from [www.TheSensoryProjects.co.uk](http://www.TheSensoryProjects.co.uk) follow links to the Sensory Story page and scroll to the bottom for the guides.

**The Sensory Projects** run on the principle that with the right knowledge and a little creativity inexpensive items can become effective tools for sensory inclusion.

Through the work of all the Projects founder **Joanna Grace** is seeking to contribute to a future where people are understood in spite of their differences.

To learn more about the projects, and to access free resources and information about bespoke sensory training visit

[www.TheSensoryProjects.co.uk](http://www.TheSensoryProjects.co.uk)

Joanna's books: **Sensory Stories for Children and Teens** and **Sensory-being for Sensory Beings** are available on amazon, with more titles due for publication in 2018.



Joanna Grace

[www.TheSensoryProjects.co.uk](http://www.TheSensoryProjects.co.uk)

# What to look for when sharing a sensory story.



@Jo3Grace

Publication dated/updated 15/10/17



# What to look for when sharing a sensory story

When we share a story with a friend we know if they are interested and enjoying the story from their responses, we know if they have remembered or learned something from the story by their questions. Individuals experiencing sensory stories will respond with interest and enjoyment and will learn and be curious, but they may express these things in different ways. Do not feel disheartened if you do not get an obvious response. These are some subtler responses which are just as meaningful and important.

## Encountering

Story experiencers will encounter different sensory experiences. They do not need to respond in any way. Simply encountering the experiences is the first step to preparing the brain for more enjoyment and learning.

## Awareness

Story experiencers will show some awareness of the stimuli they encounter, this can be expressed in any way that is appropriate to them, so it could be a brief look, a movement of a muscle or a relaxation of a muscle. The expression of awareness will depend on the individual.

## Reacting and Responding

Story experiencers may react to some stimuli, this could be a reflex, for example jumping at a loud noise. More purposeful responses could come in the form of reaching, sound making or focusing.

## Consistent responses

Over time you may notice your story experiencer

is responding in the same way to particular stimuli each time you tell the story. This is their way of expressing opinion.

## Anticipation

A story experiencer will demonstrate their anticipation of the story by showing that they expect something to happen next. This could be as simple as demonstrating that they expect to be told a story when you bring out the box containing your sensory story, or it could be a more specific response to a particular section of the story. Repeating the story will support your story experiencer in developing their ability to anticipate aspects of the story. You can watch this little film to find out more: <http://youtu.be/reBMHoODr2s>

## Cooperation

Story experiencers will cooperate to the best of their abilities to join in with experiencing the story, for example by partially lifting their arm as someone lifts it for them so they can touch a particular stimuli, or by opening their mouth to receive a taste experience.

## Concentration

Story experiencers will concentrate for a short time on a particular stimulus, activity, or section of the story. This could be following a visual stimulus with their eyes, or holding onto an object for a prolonged period of time.

## Communication

This can include: gestures, signs, verbalising, sound

making, symbol communication, pointing, using a communication device, expressing a preference through action. Any response intended to convey meaning to you counts as communication. Remember: their ability to communicate is not dependent on them mastering traditional forms of communication, it is dependent on your listening skills.

Do not just listen with your ears:  
**Listen with all your senses and all of your self.**

## Increasing participation

If you tell a sensory story on more than one occasion you may be able to spot an increase in participation from your story experiencer. Research has shown that typically participation increases over multiple tellings of a story with the magic number being somewhere around 8 tellings.

## Increasing tolerance

Over time your story experiencer may demonstrate an improved ability to cope with or interact with particular sensory stimuli, for example something that they were initially alarmed by may become something they enjoy experiencing.

## Idiosyncratic individual responses

A response that is unique to the story experiencer, purely them and just as valuable as any listed here.

**Note: Rejection** Story experiencers need to know they are taking part freely in the story sharing experience. Some story experiencers will discover their freedom through their ability to reject experience. Allowing story experiencers multiple opportunities to engage enables them the time to discover their freedom and take part fully.