

Sensory Engagement and the development of early cognition.

In the early stages of development sensory stimulation is critical to the wiring of the brain.

Early sensory experiences trigger the creation of neural pathways in the mind.

The more pathways created during this early stage of development the greater the potential for the brain in the future.



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

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.



The Sensory Projects

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Smell the roses



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Smell the roses

Scent is a very important sense when it comes to bonding and mental well being. Although we may feel ourselves to be very different to animals we still choose our partners partly dependent on their smell. Our personal scents carry information about our genetics and we will be more attracted to someone whose scent indicates biological compatibility. For those closest to us, especially children, our personal scent is naturally very comforting and smelling that scent helps us to form tight emotional bonds with one another.

By scent I do not mean we stink. There are two types of smells: volatile ones and pheromone ones. It is the volatile ones that we think of as being “smelly” pheromone ones are much subtler.

Smell is processed by the limbic brain, the emotional brain, so has a huge impact on mental well being. An engagement with your sense of smell is preventative of depression. This influence goes both ways, in that a person who is depressed will experience an impairment to their sense of smell.

Sharing scent

Sharing your own scent with someone who is not with you is relatively simple with a little preparation. Simply sleep with a natural fabric in your bed, this could be an item of clothing or a small cuddly toy—you could even make a smell noodle—for instructions see **Sensory-being for Sensory Beings** published by Routledge.

Through being in your bed the fabric will pick up your pheromone scents. You can then offer the item to your loved one for comfort. The smell will need to be topped up every so often.

Sharing scent in this way can be good for helping people to sleep, helping people deal with stressful situations, and reinforcing bonding during times when you have to be separated.

Playing with smells

Having fun smelling different things is a great way to support mental well being and foster an engagement with the olfactory world. For **Sensory Beings** (See guide Linguistic **Beings and Sensory Beings**) try smells with heavy base notes, for example camomile or bergamot, zingy smells, like peppermint or lemongrass and sickly sweet smells such as banana or vanilla.

Smelly ideas

Make some smelly playdough.

Play with fresh herbs, chopping and squishing them to release the smell.

Dab a little scent onto a cuddly toy as if it as wearing perfume.

Take time when shopping to smell different products.

Find things in the natural environment to smell.

Tips

It is easy to overwhelm people with smells, just do one or two at a time. Rather than have ten smells to play with at once, just take time out from your day as it progresses to stop and smell the roses...or the grass...or the dinner...or the soap....

