

The many uses for Sensory Stories

Beyond being a wonderful way to share stories in a sensory manner sensory stories can be used to support people and develop abilities in a vast array of ways.

Training days from the Sensory Project will teach you more about these opportunities.

For details visit <http://jo.element42.org> or email Sensorystory@gmail.com

Please note, although these different ways of using sensory stories have been grouped under different sub headings they do not exclusively belong under these headings, for example if a sensory story can support someone with dementia to create a memory they can, of course, also support someone who does not have dementia to create a memory.

This is by no means an exhaustive list:

Sensory stories can be used to support individuals with **Sensory Processing Disorder** to:

Introduce them to new experiences.

To build up tolerance to difficult experiences.

To learn direct or compensatory strategies to cope with experiences.

Sensory stories can be used to support individuals with **Autism** to:

Understand change at a basic level.

To engage in communication in a none stressful way.

To make connections with peers.

To prepare for an event or new experience.

To develop and discover strategies for coping with sensory related anxiety.

Sensory stories can be used to support individuals with **learning disabilities** by:

Supporting communication.

Developing concentration.

Supporting understanding.

Sensory stories can be used to support individuals with **Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder** by:

Helping them to concentrate for a prolonged period of time.

Helping them to practice concentrating.

Providing an environment for them to rehearse the underpinning skills needed for concentration.

Giving them access to narrative in a way that is not wholly reliant on language.

Sensory stories can be used to support babies and children in the **Early Years** by:

Supporting communication.

Supporting concentration.

Developing ideas surrounding the sequencing of narrative.

Supporting understanding.

Developing their sensory palettes.

Providing them with a rich range of sensory experiences necessary to the healthy development of cognitive function.

Sensory stories can be used to support individuals with **Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities** by:

Enabling you to share a narrative through sensory media.

Supporting postural care.

Developing confidence in the wider world.

Creating an environment of rich inclusion.

Supporting the communication of likes, dislikes, preferences, understanding and knowledge (these in turn can be used to support the personalisation of care)

Supporting cognitive development.

Supporting mental well being.

Supporting active engagement with the world.

Sensory stories can be used to support people with **communication difficulties** (this can include individuals with speech disorders and individuals for whom English is not their mother tongue- **EAL**):

By creating a format for expression that is not dependent on the mastery of language.

By providing a supported way of saying a word.

Through supporting understanding and communication with sensory media.

Sensory stories can be used to support people with **dementia**:

Sensory stimulation supports memory.

Sensory stories can be used to build a memory, and repeated to keep that memory alive for a short while.

Sensory stories can be created to connect individuals with their memories, understanding and experience.

Sensory stimuli can provide a way to share meaning that is not reliant on traditional forms of communication.

Sensory life stories can connect an individual to their personal stories beyond language.

Sensory stories can be used to calm individuals.

Sensory stories can provide opportunities for individuals to accomplish small tasks and feel a sense of satisfaction and achievement from having done so, e.g. doing up a button, unscrewing a nut, putting a coin in a slot.

Sensory stories can be used to connect individuals with others in their community.

Sensory stories can be used to support individuals in being focused, without having to be active: meditative.

Sensory stories can be used to support people with **mental health difficulties** to

Engage in the sensory world: engagement in the sensory world has been shown to be preventative of depression, anxiety and stress.

Express themselves: self expression is valuable to everyone, and especially pertinent to individuals experiencing mental health difficulties.

Furthermore, sensory stories can:

Be used to link learning experiences together, and support the understanding and recall of these experiences.

Be used to support people to feel calm, or to meditate.

Be used to build community, forming connections between the differently abled, young and old, etc.

Be used to facilitate creative writing.

Be used to form a comprehension task challenge for more able learners.

Be used to stimulate creativity.

Be used to convey meaning where words fail us.

Be used to enrich care settings, where access to sensory stimulation may be limited either by environment or physical restrictions.

Be used to support people who find eating a challenging sensory experience.

Be used to maintain healthy brains in later age.

Be used to teach new skills.

Be used to create an inclusive accessible tour of a particular building or place.

Be used to support individuals in remembering, exploring and getting the most out of a trip or activity.

Be used to help someone understand a difficult topic or situation.

Be used to help an individual develop an understanding of themselves and their identity.

Be used to connect an individual to shared cultural capital with peers.

Be used to include an individual in meetings, faith communities, society/community in general, in a particular topic or interest area.

Be used to foster rich inclusion, one where we not only include the individual we are seeking to help, but ourselves too, so that inclusion is not an act of charity, but an enrichment for everyone, where everyone benefits.

Best of all:

Sensory stories are a lot of fun!