



## **Sensory modalities to support regulation and participation**

The resource list below are suggestions for a box of items that may be taken into interviews with clients to support their participation, engagement and sense of safety.

It is important to be aware that responses to these modalities is completely individual, and all items can be arousing, alerting or calming. However, there are some very broad principles.

- The best approach is usually to make items available to the young person, who will usually gravitate to what they need.
- It is nearly always useful to reflect upon the experience with the young person as they are using it, but too much may disrupt the flow of the experience.
- Generally, proprioception and deep touch experiences are calming.
  - This includes weighted modalities and anything involving muscle effort.
- Linear movement (such as rocking back and forth) is generally calming, while spinning tends to be arousing.
- Young people who have difficulty with intimacy, or experience a high level of interpersonal anxiety or fear will sometimes find connection easier if they can engage in an activity with some space between them and the therapist, such as throwing a ball.
  - Important in such a case to be mindful that a fearful state will often impact motor planning and clumsiness may result in shame which will impact functioning and trigger distress.
- For young people who have difficulty managing aggression, a lot of movement can facilitate aggressive behaviour.

Items recommended for inclusion in a resource box include:

- wobble board
- theraputty
- medicine ball
- paper and felt pens
- body sock
- theraband
- weighted lap & shoulder pads
- fidget toys
- ball
- therapressure brush
- vibrating toys or cushion
- small bean bags (to self-tap on limbs).

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