



McCormick Dementia Services

Advancing community
outreach and support

Sensory Activities

Sensory Activities Related to Grooming

To create a calming environment, consider:

- warm lighting, cozy blankets, essential oils diffusing, quiet/soft/calming music, minimizing loud noises and distractions, offering coffee/tea/hot chocolate

It's true that if you look good, you feel good (or at least better). People often will comment on one's fresh hair style, makeup and provide compliments. Who doesn't love to be pampered?



Activity Suggestions

- Hair brushing, styling
- Facials – warm, wet face cloth, moisturizer (scented if able), makeup
- Shaving, trimming facial hair
- Hand massages and manicures
- Foot soak and pedicures
- Paraffin wax spas for hands and/or feet
- Choosing outfits, adding scarves, hats, jewelry to outfits
- Sorting through a jewelry box



Sensory Activities Related to Food and Baking

While cooking or baking a complete meal or item might involve too many steps, there are many sensory components to consider. Who has ever walked in to a room and not loved the smell of bread, cookies, pie or muffins baking?

Ways to be involved in the process:

- Looking through recipe books
- Reading the recipe (and reading online reviews)
- Re-writing the recipe
- Measuring/counting ingredients
- Helping to mix, stir, beat, mash, grate, peel
- Helping to scoop, pour, garnish
- Helping with dishes (wash or dry)
- Taste testing (finished product or sample ingredients ie. peanut butter, chocolate chips, honey, sliced apples)
- Smelling ingredients (cinnamon, vanilla extract, peanut butter)



Sensory Activities Related to Tasks and Chores

Many activities around the house are automatic routines that remain familiar with clients. People enjoy having a role (or perception of a role) to maintain a sense of purpose, translating to quality of life and self-worth. You may have to adapt or accept that the outcome of these tasks may not be considered satisfactory, but it's the engagement in the process that's important

Examples: the person may not fold laundry as you would prefer (you may have to redo it yourself later without them seeing you re-do it)

Activities

- Preparing a meal (or portions such as peeling potatoes)
- Setting the table (break down for simplicity if necessary)
- Pouring water, watering plants, caring for pets
- Wiping the tables, counters, surfaces
- Washing dishes
- Sweeping, vacuuming, dusting
- Doing laundry - folding hand towels, dish cloths, matching and folding socks or baby clothes
- Shining shoes or polishing furniture/objects
- Some people really enjoy organizing (tidying book shelves, junk drawers, utensil drawers)
- Refilling bird feeders, stringing cheerios on yard/twine to feed birds



Sensory Activities Related to the Seasons

Think about what everyone enjoys about the seasons. The sights, the sounds, the smells, the tastes.

How can you help someone enjoy the seasons?

- Think about bringing things from the environment inside to touch, taste, smell ie. leaves, apples, maple syrup, snow...
- Enjoy pictures, magazines, recipes of the seasons together
- Reminisce about favourite (or least favourite) things about the season – ie. getting snowed in, canning fruit
- Go for a walk, bike or stroll



Photos, Videos & Virtual Tours

-Photo albums and books

- look at digital and printed collections
- Create an “All About Me” Book

-Old family videos, Skype or Facetime chats with family and friends

- Google Earth (Street View) is a great way to explore anywhere in the world. Try looking up your childhood address or a famous landmark. It can be a trip down memory lane and remarkable to see what has changed. Or find McCormick Dementia Services on the map 😊

Find Us on the Web



For more information, resources and helpful videos visit the McCormick Care Group [“Caregiver’s Corner”](#) website

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