

Using our Senses to Manage Stress and Stay Calm

Special thanks to Cheryl Riley-Doucet PHD, RN

- ▶ What you see, hear, smell, taste, and touch – as well as movement – can help to calm you.
- ▶ Identify sensory experiences that are pleasant and work for you...

Everyone can use sensory experiences to rapidly reduce stress, but not everyone will respond to the same sensory experiences.

Identify sensory experiences that work for you

The sensory experience should:

- ▶ Both relax and energize you
- ▶ Have an instant impact on your stress
- ▶ Be enjoyable and make you feel good
- ▶ Consistently work for you
- ▶ Be always available or easily accessible

Using the sense of Sight

- ▶ Look at a cherished photo or a favorite memento.
- ▶ Bring the outside indoors; buy a plant or some flowers to enliven your space.
- ▶ Close your eyes and picture a situation or place that feels peaceful and rejuvenating.
- ▶ Wear something that has your favorite color on it or is pretty to look at.



Using the sense of Sound

- ▶ Sing or hum a favorite tune. Listen to uplifting music.
- ▶ Tune in to the soundtrack of nature-crashing waves, the wind rustling the trees, birds singing.
- ▶ Hang wind chimes near an open window.



Using the sense of Smell

- ▶ Keep flowers around to smell the fragrance.
- ▶ Spritz on your favorite perfume or spray on a cloth and carry it in your pocket.
- ▶ Put on stimulating scented hand cream or body lotion.
- ▶ Bring a bread maker in and make bread.



Using the sense of taste

- ▶ Chew a piece of sugarless gum.
- ▶ Indulge in a small piece of dark chocolate.
- ▶ Sip a steaming cup of coffee or tea or a refreshing cold drink.
- ▶ Keep fruit around and eat it during your day.
- ▶ Enjoy a healthy, crunchy snack (celery, carrots, or trail mix.)
- ▶ Eat the bread you baked.



Using the sense of touch

- ▶ Wear clothing that feels soft against your skin.
- ▶ Hold something soft, or comforting, e.g. rabbit foot, smooth piece of glass or rock.
- ▶ Let warm water run over your hands.
- ▶ Use self massage techniques to sooth body muscles.



Using the sensation of movement

- ▶ Run in place or jump up and down.
- ▶ Stretch or roll your head in circles.
- ▶ Go for a short walk.
- ▶ Squeeze a rubbery stress ball.

