

EXPERIENCES TO STRENGTHEN THE SELF

By Dr. Violet Oaklander

THE SENSES

Touching:

Putting objects in a bag and guessing what they are.

Describing the feel of various textures.

Finger painting; using wet clay; running ones hands through sand.

Listing words that describe some touching sensation, (as bumpy, fluffy, slippery, hard, soft, smooth, sticky, gooey, warm, cold, hot, freezing, rough, holey, prickly, tingly, feathery, rubbery, thin, spongy, mushy, silky, hairy)

Assigning colors to these words;

Drawing pictures to represent these words.

Listening:

Meditating on whatever sounds come into awareness

Painting while listening to music (finger painting is especially good.)

Making loud and soft sounds, higher and lower, with percussion instruments.

matching sounds.

Having a conversation with sounds.

Sound recognition game.

Comparing sounds with feelings.

Seeing:

Where's Waldo? books.

Looking at pictures with much detail.

Drawing, painting, or sketching flowers, fruit, trees.

Experimenting with touch with eyes closed and then eyes open.

Look at things through glass, water, cellophane, magnifiers, kaleidoscope.

Smelling:

Talk about favorite and not so favorite smells.

Pantomime smells of various things for the other person to guess.

Provide experiences with various kinds of smells as flowers, fruit, grass, sweet, spicy, etc.

Place distinctive aromas in opaque containers--perfume, mustard banana, apple, onion for example, and ask the client to guess the smell.

Talk about memories evoked by specific smells (or draw pictures of them.)

Taste:

Do the orange exercise.

Discuss favorite and not-so-favorite tastes.

Bring in samples of things to taste and compare taste and textures.

Pantomime eating various foods.

THE BODY—BREATH—VOICE

Experiment with different ways to breathe and how the breath affects the body.
Blow up balloons and keep them in the air with breath.
Blow cotton balls across a table in a race.
Play the harmonica.

Experiment with voice sounds together with percussion instruments.
Sing.
Role-play various voices (as pleading, angry, fearful, etc.)
Have a screaming contest.

Fall in creative ways onto pillows.
Pantomime various games and sports.
Have a Bataca fight. Have a Bataca fight as various characters (king and queen, two very old people, two babies, etc.)
Throw soft balls in various ways.
Use a very large ball (the kind you can sit or lie on).
Exaggerating various movements.
Show all the movements you can make with various parts of the body.
Play Twister.
Dance to various music tapes.
Show how you can exercise sitting down.
Pantomime situations, starting with fingers and so on, using different parts of the body.

SELF STATEMENTS/DEFINING THE SELF/OWNING PROJECTIONS

Rosebush exercise.
Linda Goodman's Sun Signs.
The Question Books.
Making lists: favorite things, likes, dislikes, wants, needs, people that make you angry, etc.
Focus on polarities: who I am and who I am not—using drawings, puppets, creative dramatics, clay. Happy/sad; weak/strong, etc.
Make an image of yourself out of clay -- realistic or abstract.
Throw a ball and make a self-statement with each throw.
Give projective tests and find out what fits and doesn't fit according to the client..
Do the projective toy experience.
Play games for stating an idea, thought, opinion, feeling as Ungame or Talking, Feeling, Doing Game.
Use metaphorical stories and folk tales. Make up the stories or use books.
Make up puppet shows.