

Te Whatu Ora Health New Zealand Hauora a Toi Bay of Plenty	SENSORY MODULATION PROGRAMME	Protocol CPM.M5.3
CLINICAL PRACTICE MANUAL		

PURPOSE

The sensory modulation room offers a nurturing, person-centred sensory supportive environment and interdisciplinary treatment space for tāngata whaiora / service users. It is used to facilitate emotional regulation, present awareness (mindfulness) and exploration of calming techniques in a suitable environment.

OBJECTIVES

To support staff to implement sensory modulation with tāngata whaiora / service users to develop non-pharmaceutical strategies for emotional regulation and explore sensory preferences to promote empowerment.

To develop guidelines for the use of the sensory modulation room and activities / equipment.

These guidelines will provide and ensure a safe environment, an orderly room and the maintenance of supplies for the multidisciplinary treatment programme.

STAFFING

Te Whatu Ora staff who have completed appropriate training by trainers approved by Te Whatu Ora – Health New Zealand Hauora a Toi Bay of Plenty Mental Health & Addiction Services (MH&AS) are approved for delivery of sensory modulation training: Professional groups may include:

- Occupational Therapists (OT) and Occupational Therapist assistances under the delegation of a registered OT.
- Registered Nurses (RNs)
- Healthcare Assistants (HCA's) under the delegation of a RN
- Allied Health professionals
- Medical Practitioners

EQUIPMENT

Items generally stored and used in this room include:

- Bean bag chairs, rocking chair, lazyboy chair
- Assorted items for each of the sensory areas
- Reading materials – therapeutic books and magazines, educational literature
- Relaxation and exercise videos / DVD's
- Computer and projector
- Music – therapeutic listening equipment, music equipment, CD's, cassette tapes
- Movement- therapy balls, scarves, thera-band, weighted balls
- Weighted items – weighted blankets, lap pads, arm/wrist weights, vests
- Objects for mindfulness and distress tolerance activities
- Aroma Therapy tools – dispenser, scents, oils
- Other assorted sensory modalities

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PRECAUTIONS – Clinical Presentation

- Allergies
- Trauma History
- Medication changes or side effects
- Environmental (e.g. lighting, background noise, polemics, tone of voice)
- Seizure History
- Cardiac precautions
- Diagnostic considerations
- Respiratory precautions

STANDARDS TO BE MET

1. The sensory modulation room is available for small groups and individual sessions. The room must be left in a clean and orderly condition.
2. Staff must supervise any tāngata whaiora / service user use of this room. When the room is not in use the door must remain locked.
3. The OT and Sensory Modulation Facilitators have a priority in using the space for group and individual treatment sessions, although is considered an inter-disciplinary treatment space.
4. Use of the sensory room should generally not exceed 45 minutes per session.
5. Items in the cabinet are for use by the Sensory Modulation Facilitators only and it should remain locked unless in use. Items required for this cabinet may be obtained by the OT staff.
6. The “Open Sensory Room” – a daily group which allows for the supervised use of the sensory room, to explore the various modalities and / or to use the space, may be run by any unit staff who have completed the sensory modulation training for the unit.
7. Items in the sensory room cabinet should not be taken out of the room. A sensory equipment trolley with useful sensory modulation equipment is for use outside the room in other ward areas e.g. IPC / LSA.
8. When sensory equipment is issued out to tāngata whaiora / service users on the ward the sign in / out process must be documented on the equipment board in the Sensory Room. Refer to unsafe items protocol for any concerns regarding unsupervised items that a tāngata whaiora / service users may use.
9. Staff can locate educational and related information by referring to the Sensory Room Resource Manual and various sensory-related educational resources. These are located in the Sensory Modulation Room.
10. Staff must clean activity equipment between tāngata whaiora / service users where there has been direct body contact.
11. Staff aware of any damaged equipment should follow the hospital wide guidelines for the immediate initiation of repairs.

PROCEDURE

1. The use of sensory modulation for tāngata whaiora / service users should be reflected in the treatment plan for the individual.
2. Review the tāngata whaiora / service user’s comprehensive assessment, risk assessment, treatment plan and relapse prevention plan.
3. Identify the level of arousal of the tāngata whaiora / service user—on the Sensory Preferences form.
4. Full standardised sensory profile assessments are available via referral to an OT.
5. Discuss what is helpful to tāngata whaiora / service users with them directly. The information documented on the Sensory Preferences form and Sensory Evaluation form

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offers additional information regarding what items or activities may be helpful to the tāngata whaiora / service user. This information is enclosed in the tāngata whaiora / service user's health record.

6. Upon completion of the activities encourage tāngata whaiora / service users to reflect on what was useful using the Sensory Evaluation form.
7. Prior to vacating the Sensory Room after use, the "visitor's book" must be signed so that an accurate record of utilisation is recorded.
8. Following each session document in the tāngata whaiora / service user's health record and complete the Sensory Evaluation form. This should include what items were used and the observed / reported effect.
9. Update treatment plan / risk assessment as required.

REFERENCES

- Champagne T and Stromberg N. Sensory Approaches in Inpatient Psychiatric Settings: Innovative Alternatives to Seclusion & Restraint. Journal of Psychosocial Nursing, Vol. 42, No. 9 Sept 2004.
- Te Pou o te Whakaaro Nui (2008) Action Plan: Developing alternatives to the use of seclusion and restraint in New Zealand mental health inpatient settings seclusion: time for change. Auckland. Te Pou o te Whakaaro Nui.
- Te Pou o te Whakaaro Nui (2010) Impact of Sensory Modulation in mental health acute wards on reducing the use of seclusion. Auckland. Te Pou o te Whakaaro Nui.

REFERENCES

- [Ngā Paerewa Health and Disability Services Standard. NZS 8134:2021](#)

ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- [Te Whatu Ora Hauora a Toi Bay of Plenty Clinical Practice Manual protocol CPM.M5.30 Treatment Plan](#)
- [Te Whatu Ora Hauora a Toi Bay of Plenty Relapse Prevention Plan form](#)
- [Te Whatu Ora Hauora a Toi Bay of Plenty Comprehensive Assessment Form](#)
- [Te Whatu Ora Hauora a Toi Bay of Plenty Risk Assessment form](#)
- [Te Whatu Ora Hauora a Toi Bay of Plenty In-Patient Treatment Plan](#)
- Te Whatu Ora Hauora a Toi Bay of Plenty Sensory Preferences Form
- Te Whatu Ora Hauora a Toi Bay of Plenty Sensory Evaluation form

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