

# Stress Management Through the Senses

## Vision

### Calming

Soft pastel colors  
Natural or dim lighting  
Serene paintings (Monet)  
Pleasant scenery  
Flickering candle or campfire  
Movement of fish swimming in an aquarium  
Observations of something beautiful (rose)  
Bubble lamps, lava lamps  
Lack of clutter and simplified furnishings

### Alerting

Bright colors  
Artificial or bright lighting  
Modern art (Picasso)  
Complex visual images  
Rapidly changing patterns of light  
Video games  
Movement of a frisky puppy  
Strobe or flashy lights  
Messy & cluttered rooms

## Hearing

### Calming

Soft, slow, rhythmic music  
Classical, New Age, Soft Jazz  
Familiar background noise (fan)  
Humming & singing quietly  
Simple, melodic music  
Repetitive sounds (ocean waves)  
Indoor fountains, bubbling sounds  
Relaxation & meditation CDs

### Alerting

Offbeat, loud, quick paced music  
Rock music  
Unfamiliar background noise (hammering, alarm clock)  
Whistling  
Singing loudly  
Changing sounds (city streets)  
Hand held instruments

## Taste

### Calming

Sweet hard candy or lollipops  
Tea (Sleep Time, mint, or chamomile)  
Sweet & mildly flavored warm drinks  
Oatmeal & brown sugar  
Apple juice  
Sweet fruits like cherries and grapes  
Chocolate

### Alerting

Strong, spicy, sour or bitter food  
Lemon drops  
Strong peppermints or cinnamon candies  
Chili and spicy foods  
Lemonade  
Pickles  
Atomic Fire Balls

## Oral Motor Sense

### Calming - Sucking

Hard candy  
Thick liquid through a straw  
Sweet orange slices  
Lollipop

### Organizing - Chewy

Gum  
Bagel  
Gummy Bears  
Licorice  
Dried Fruits

### Alerting - Crunchy

Yawning  
Popcorn & Pretzels  
Raw vegetables  
Crunchy cereal  
Crushed ice

### Breath Support - Blowing

Blowing pinwheel  
Whistling  
Playing a kazoo  
Blowing bubbles  
Abdominal breathing

## **Tactile Sense**

### **Calming - Deep Touch**

Strong hugs, back rubs, or slow stroking on the back  
Firm touch on the shoulder  
Heavy quilt, coverlet, or weighted blanket  
Deep massage, self massage, hand massage  
Something heavy on the lap (sleeping cat, weighted lap)  
Stress ball or clay squeezed in the hand  
Foot or hand roller  
Blanket wraps  
Spandex fabric wrapped snugly around the shoulders  
Smooth stones rubbed on the hand  
Beanbag tapping  
Beanbag chair  
Lightly weighted pack over the eyes

### **Alerting - Light Touch**

Tickling  
Light stroking  
Feeling something prickly or squishy  
Being touched by something unfamiliar or unexpected  
Feeling the movement of a frisky puppy  
Fiddling with a koosh ball  
Cool room  
Walking on grass  
Snapping a rubber band on the wrist  
Using fidgets  
Holding an ice filled bag  
Taking a cool shower  
Wearing uncomfortable, scratchy, or itchy clothing

## **Proprioceptive Sense**

### **Calming**

Chewing gum  
Joint compression and slow stretches  
Slow rhythmic movements and dances  
Heavy, sustained resistance exercises  
Walking and hiking  
Weight lifting  
Toga / Tai chi / Pilates  
Pushing hands together or against a wall  
Chair push ups or shifting weight in a chair  
Lifting, carrying, pushing  
Kneel-stands (one knee on chair, other on floor)

### **Alerting**

Quick, jarring, or jerky movements  
Fast changes from one activity to another  
Fast dancing  
Jogging  
Stepper machines  
Aerobic exercise  
Kick boxing  
Jumping, hopping, skipping  
Stamping feet or loudly clapping hands  
Juggling or using a hacky sac

## **Vestibular Sense**

### **Calming**

Rocking/Rocking chair/Glider  
Riding in a car  
Slow dancing  
Swinging gently  
Stationary activities - Chess  
Walking and strolling  
Slow head rolls  
Sitting on something sturdy and motionless  
Bouncing lightly & rhythmically on therapy ball  
Using secure footing and railings

### **Alerting**

Squirming  
Fast dancing  
Spinning quickly  
Rapid movement activities  
Jogging  
Rapid movement of head  
Rolling and moving on therapy ball  
Vigorous swinging  
Fast carnival rides  
Walking on uneven surfaces