

REFLECTING WITHOUT WRITING

Sensory Prompts

Notice through touch and senses

A practical guide with no written answers required.

START HERE

A way to reflect that fits you

A texture, sound, temperature or other sensory detail can help you notice preference, comfort, discomfort or a need for change. Sensory reflection is personal. The same sensation may feel soothing to one person and difficult to another.

What this approach can offer

This method can bring attention to the present moment through the environment rather than through written questions. You do not have to close your eyes, touch anything, or focus on a sensation that feels too strong.

Set it up gently

Choose one comfortable sensory detail: a fabric you already like, a familiar sound, the feeling of your feet supported, or a view with a few colours. Keep options available so you can stop or switch. Avoid substances, temperatures or textures that could cause harm or discomfort.

When it may be useful

Sensory details can help you notice environmental preferences, especially when it is hard to identify what is making a situation uncomfortable. A neutral response is as useful as a strong one.

A few reminders

- There is no right answer or correct way to take part.
- You can use a word, gesture, choice, image, AAC, pause or silence.
- You can skip, change or stop the activity at any point.

You are the person who decides what your response means.

TRY IT

A short guided practice

Move through these steps at your own pace. You can do one step and stop, or ask someone you trust to read each step aloud.

1. Choose a small focus

Think of one moment, feeling, preference or decision from today. Keep the focus small enough to approach without explaining everything.

2. Try the method

- Step 1. Choose one sense and one ordinary detail. You can observe without touching or listening closely.
- Step 2. Notice your response in simple terms: more comfortable, less comfortable, neutral, familiar, surprising or unsure.
- Step 3. If you wish, compare it with a different safe option. Notice which one you would choose again and whether the choice changes.
- Step 4. Ask what the preference might tell you about what supports you right now: more quiet, less light, a different texture, distance or company.
- Step 5. Stop, look away, remove the item or change the environment whenever you choose.

3. Let a question guide you

- What sensory detail would I choose to have more or less of?
- Does this feel familiar, new, comfortable, uncomfortable or neutral?
- What change would make this moment easier to stay with?

A short example

You compare two familiar fabrics and choose the softer one. You then notice that a scratchy sleeve has been distracting you. The reflection points to a practical adjustment, not a judgement about being fussy.

4. Choose how to finish

Notice whether you want to continue, pause, ask for support, take one practical step or leave the reflection unfinished. No written record is needed.

MAKE IT YOURS

Adapt the activity to your needs

The method should fit the person, not the other way around. Keep what helps and change anything that adds pressure.

Ways to adapt

- Use a visual choice, a verbal description or an imagined texture if touch or sound is not accessible or welcome.
- Keep the room quiet, reduce competing sensations, or use a familiar object rather than introducing something new.
- A support person can offer two choices and wait. You can communicate "stop" with a word, gesture, switch or other reliable signal.

Keep it workable

Keep the choice small and familiar. Compare two sounds, places to sit or levels of light. Ask whether you want more, less, the same or a change. You do not need to stay with discomfort to learn.

When to pause

Do not use a sensory prompt that causes pain, overwhelm, an allergic response or distress. The aim is choice and noticing, never endurance.

Take something with you

Your preference is enough. You do not need to explain or justify why one sensation works better for you.

A gentle reminder

Reflection can be spoken, shown, felt, chosen, moved through or shared. You do not have to turn an experience into writing for it to matter.

For more support, you can speak with someone you trust or a qualified professional. Space to Breathe Therapy can be contacted to ask whether its support may be right for you.