40 Sensory Activities

Tick each activity as you try it. Note which ones each resident enjoyed.

Touch

- ☐ 1. Fabric swatch book
- ☐ 2. Hand massage
- ☐ 3. Warm towel folding
- ☐ 4. Pairing socks
- ☐ 5. Fidget apron or activity blanket
- ☐ 6. Animal visit
- ☐ 7. Kneading bread dough
- ☐ 8. Hand basin and washcloths

Smell

- ☐ 9. Scent jars
- ☐ 10. Baking day
- ☐ 11. Flower arranging
- ☐ 12. Herb potting
- ☐ 13. Seasonal scent basket
- ☐ 14. Coffee grinding
- ☐ 15. Aromatherapy (with care)

Sound

- ☐ 16. Sing-along to familiar songs
- ☐ 17. Personal playlists
- ☐ 18. Name that sound
- ☐ 19. Rhythm band
- ☐ 20. Nature sounds
- ☐ 21. Poetry read-aloud
- ☐ 22. Hymn or spiritual sing

Sight

- ☐ 23. Bird feeder watching
- ☐ 24. Picture books and photo cards
- ☐ 25. Aquarium or bubble tube
- ☐ 26. Color sorting
- ☐ 27. Slideshow on the TV
- ☐ 28. Star projector

Taste

- ☐ 29. Sweet, sour and salty tasting
- ☐ 30. Ice cream social
- ☐ 31. Fruit tasting
- ☐ 32. Afternoon tea
- ☐ 33. Lemonade or smoothie making
- ☐ 34. Holiday tasting

Movement and multisensory

- ☐ 35. Themed sensory box
- ☐ 36. Seated ball toss
- ☐ 37. Scarf dancing
- ☐ 38. Glider or rocking chair time
- ☐ 39. Garden sit
- ☐ 40. Quiet sensory corner

Sensory Boxes and Safety

5 themed sensory boxes

Garden box

Silk flowers, clean flower pots, gardening gloves, a seed catalog, a watering can (empty) and a large pinecone

Sewing box

Large spools of thread, fabric scraps, a measuring tape, an empty pincushion, a ball of yarn with a finished knitted swatch and a pattern book

Workshop box

A wooden block, a large nut and bolt screwed together, a paint brush, a tape measure, sandpaper and a carpenter’s pencil

Beach box

Large seashells, a beach towel, sunglasses, a sun hat, a postcard of the ocean and a sandwich-size bag of sand, zipped and taped shut

Kitchen box

Wooden spoons, a whisk, measuring cups, a rolling pin, a recipe card in large print and a clean dish towel

Safety checklist

- [ ] Every item is too large to fit in the mouth, with no loose small parts.
- [ ] Tastes match each resident’s diet order and food texture.
- [ ] Allergies checked (foods, scents, latex, animals).
- [ ] Water, towels and drinks are warm, not hot.
- [ ] No undiluted essential oils on skin; bottles locked away.
- [ ] Shared items are cleaned between residents.
- [ ] Watch for signs of overstimulation and stop if the person seems upset.