



Therapeutic Horticulture Activity Olfactory Sensory Exploration

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Overview: Exploring plant related smells through essential oils.

Precautions:

1. Some people have a decreased sense of smell and may have difficulty with activity (ask before starting)
2. Some people have sensitivities to smells and participation may cause adverse reactions, such as a headache (ask before starting)

Completion Time: 30 - 60 minutes, varies with number of smells offered and engagement of participants in discussion.

Materials: (10 participants)

1. Collection of essential oils reflective of specific flower or plant related material (10+)
2. Small vials (film canisters, pill bottles, etc) (1 for each fragrance)
3. Cotton balls (1 for each fragrance/vial)
4. Labels for vials (small piece of tape) (2 for each vial, 1 on the side with number on it and 1 on bottom with fragrance on it)
5. List of all fragrances being used during the session. (10)
6. List of Olfactory Descriptive Words, see link at end of analysis (1-10)
7. White board or poster board (1)

8. Marker (white board or regular) (1)

Pre-Session Prep:

1. Collect materials.
2. Put cotton balls into each vial.
3. Put 3-5 drops of oil into each vial on the cotton ball.
4. Label the name of the fragrance on the bottom of each vial.
5. Number each vial on the side according to how many you have.
6. Create a list of all the fragrances being used.
7. On the poster or white board, place a list of numbers according to how many vials you will have; leaving enough space to write descriptive words after or below during activity.
8. Ask staff if any usual participants have issues with decreased smell or adverse reactions to smell and alert them that this may be a session they do not want to attend.

Step-By-Step Process/Instructions:

1. Discuss olfactory sense in garden and nature settings.
2. Introduce activity and ask if anybody has a decreased sense of smell or adverse reactions to fragrances.
 - For those individuals who stay for the session, you could ask them to write the list of words on the board which should be located across the room if it is somebody with adverse reactions.
 - or ask them to use the descriptive word list to encourage others with appropriate words of what they are smelling.
3. Pass out the list of olfactory descriptive words.
4. Pass out list of fragrances being used for this session.
5. Pass box containing vials for each participant to take 1.
6. Have them open the vials, either one by one or together.
7. Go around the group and ask for descriptive words associated with each smell; write those words onto board next to the appropriate number. Have them guess what fragrance they have either with or without referencing the list of all fragrances being used.
8. Talk about memories or likes/dislikes of the smell. Pass the specific vial around to the group members if they wish to

smell it also.

Tips:

1. Do one vial at a time with participants smelling and offering description and then passing to the next person. Then after all have smelled the vial ask for guesses on what it smells like.
2. Good task to do in the winter when there are less fresh flowers to smell.
3. Make a master list of essential oils you have and then highlight specifics for that session vs. creating a new list each time activity is done.

☰ Olfactory Descriptive Words.Final

☰ List of Essential Oils on Hand.Final

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