

# Sensory Store

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Dementia is a blanket term for loss of cognitive functioning. It affects 1 in 3 people over the age of 65 and is becoming a larger concern as the age of the general population increases. There are currently 800,000 people with dementia in the UK, with numbers predicted to rise to over 1,000,000 by 2021. It is believed that sensory therapies may help to reduce and possibly delay the effects of dementia. There is no cure but delaying the effects by just 5 years could halve the number of deaths caused by dementia each year.



The objectives of this project were:

-To create a 'sensory store', a collection of objects and materials that excite or soothe the senses.

-To gather a body of knowledge on sensory stimulation and its use within dementia care as well as information on what people with dementia respond to.

-To create a blog documenting the process.

Objects were chosen to be part of the collection if they elicited a response from the person interacting with them. Both negative and positive responses were seen as useful at this stage in the process. Literature pertaining to research was collected from a variety of sources including nursing journals, scientific papers, books, websites and videos.



The sensory store is currently composed of 108 different types of objects and materials, with scope to expand this number. Various shapes, sizes, colours, textures, uses and sounds can be found in the collection. It is believed that any person could find at least one object that they are curious about.

In conjunction with this, there is a blog up and running on wordpress.com documenting the Sensory Store process, including research found and decisions made by the team.

The gathered literature describes various empirical research projects where it was found that sensory stimulation might indeed help to improve wellbeing and possibly cognition in those with dementia. With increasing knowledge in alternative therapies, their positive effects are becoming more apparent. Kitwood states that "One of the most significant of the recent additions to this array is the development of methods for providing human contact and pleasurable stimulation to the senses, bypassing cognition almost entirely; these include massage, relaxation and aromatherapy." However it is also apparent that sensory stimulation alone is unlikely to slow the rate of dementia worsening and as Simard makes clear "People with advanced dementia deserve to have someone continue to communicate with them even if it is just making eye contact and speaking through their hearts" demonstrating that communication is shown to be a key aspect of care; Many of those with dementia expressed the importance of being able to continue to have relationships with others. It was found that these relationships may be as simple as holding hands or looking into the eyes, or as complex as conversations about the person's past. Harmer and Orrell found that "Residents felt valued by quality social interactions, especially when family members were involved, reflecting Kitwood's theories, which claim that positive interactions reinforce the personhood of those with dementia."

Therefore, it is important to consider interaction as an aspect of the sensory stimulation.



It is the team's intention that the sensory store should be inclusive – available to anybody requiring stimulation or calm. It may be that the sensory store is used alone as an object library, where users can take what they like when they need it and replace once they are done.

The intention is to use the sensory store as a materials base for the next stages of research. This will include taking the sensory store to groups of people, for instance at World Mental Health Day and recording in some way the choices, actions and responses of participants. Hopefully, this will give an insight into the preferred qualities of objects, which will help with the development of new therapeutic interactions and objects.

The blog will also continue to be used by the team as a way of communicating both between themselves and to others the current research in regard to the sensory objects.



## SENSORY STORE

M

F

### Observer

How much interest was shown in the object?

Not much interest

A bit of interest

A lot of interest

### Please choose an object from the shelf

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1 Initially, what made you choose it?

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2 Which sense did you feel it most appealed to?

Touch     Sight     Smell     Sound     Taste

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3 How did you interact with the object?

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4 What word(s) would you use to say how it made you feel?

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# How did the interaction with the object make you feel?

- stress release • fruity • comfort • cool • soothing • curious • spiky • feel happy • she did not feel anything, but found object cute • mysterious • feels close to nature, want to explore • don't know • strange • happy, light-hearted, reminiscent of children's toys
- intrigued • occupied, calmly focused • happy • giggle • completely opposite to expectations - surprised to feel it was soft • challenged expectations • enjoyed the movement • playful • engaged and interacted • like it • happy • nice, pleasurable to touch
- calm • comforting • reminiscent of the seaside • meditative - pulls me into the sensation • relaxing - reminds me of the beach • fun
- surprised about how much you could squeeze it • intrigued • amused • relaxed • childlike • rhythmic • happy • surprised
- comforted • curious • relaxed • satisfied that I could bend it without doing harm • calmer • distracted and stimulated • creepy •





# Creative Connections

The use of visual language to provide positive moments of engagement

Julia Brown, Graduate Architect, Northminster's Society, Coventry University and  
Jenni Brown, Senior Lecturer and Gill Dugan, Design Course Leader at the University of Central Lancashire  
jointly created and produced their respective tactile and visual aids to support people with dementia in their daily lives.

## INTERACTIVE WALL PRIZES

The Alzheimer's Society's 'Prizes for People with Dementia' project was a collaboration between Northminster's Society and the University of Central Lancashire. The project was designed to provide people with dementia with a range of tactile and visual aids to support them in their daily lives.

## A TOUCH OF SUMMER

The book was designed to stimulate the sense of touch through the use of tactile and visual aids. The book was designed to provide people with dementia with a range of tactile and visual aids to support them in their daily lives.

## LUCKY NUMBERS

The book was designed to stimulate the sense of touch through the use of tactile and visual aids. The book was designed to provide people with dementia with a range of tactile and visual aids to support them in their daily lives.

## ONGOING & FUTURE STUDIES

These findings need to be tested in other contexts to ensure they are applicable to a wider range of people with dementia. The project was designed to provide people with dementia with a range of tactile and visual aids to support them in their daily lives.

Alzheimer's Society | uclan

PLEASE DO TOUCH



Leading the fight against dementia  
Alzheimer's Society

Support and help for people with dementia and those who care for them



### Sensory Store

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Dementia is a blanket term for loss of cognitive functioning. It affects 1 in 3 people over the age of 65 and is becoming a larger concern as the age of the general population increases. There are currently 900,000 people with dementia in the UK, with numbers predicted to rise to over 1,500,000 by 2021.

It is believed that sensory therapies may help to reduce and possibly delay the effects of dementia. There is no cure but delaying the effects for just 5 years could halve the number of deaths caused by dementia each year.

**The objectives of this project were:**

- To create a 'Sensory Store', a collection of objects and materials that can be used to stimulate the senses.
- To gather a body of knowledge on sensory stimulation and its use within dementia care as well as information on what people with dementia respond to.
- To create a log documenting the process.

**Method**

Objects were chosen to be part of the collection if they elicited a response from the person interacting with them. Both negative and positive responses were seen as useful at this stage in the process.

Literature pertaining to research was gathered from a variety of sources including nursing journals, scientific papers, books, websites and others.

However, it is also apparent that sensory stimulation alone is unlikely to slow the rate of dementia worsening and as Kinward makes clear "People with advanced dementia desire to have someone continue to communicate with them even if it is just making eye contact and speaking through their hoarse voice".

Therefore, it is important to consider interaction as an aspect of the sensory stimulus.

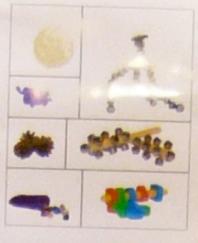
**Results**

The Sensory Store is currently composed of 100 different types of objects and materials with scope to expand this number. Various objects, such as fabrics, textures, scents and sounds can be found in the collection. It is believed that any person could find at least one object that they are curious about.

In conjunction with this, there is a log up and running on what people are discovering the Sensory Store process, including research found and dementia made by the team.

The gathered literature describes various ongoing research projects where it was found that sensory stimulation might indeed help to improve wellbeing and possibly cognition in those with dementia. With increasing knowledge in alternative therapies, their positive effects are becoming more apparent. Kinward states that "One of the most significant of the recent additions to this area is the development of methods for providing human contact and pleasurable stimulation to the senses, replacing cognition almost entirely; these include massage, relaxation and aromatherapy".

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PLEASE DO TOUCH

### Creative Connections

The aim of this project is to create a collection of objects and materials that can be used to stimulate the senses.



PLEASE DO TOUCH







# Please touch



**Alzheimer's Society, Central Lancashire.**  
(2012 - present).

**World Mental Health Day.**  
(October 2012).

# Sensory Store



# SENSORY STORE

@ The World Mental Health Day Event

Wed 10th October 2012 at 53° Venue UCLan



The Sensory Store was composed of 108 different found and bought objects and materials, that were selected to those that were expected to excite or soothe the senses, with scope to expand this number. The objects consisted of various shapes, sizes, colours, textures, uses and sounds. It is thought that any person could find at least one object that they wanted to pick up and touch. It was our intention to use it as a testing resource.

SENSORY STORE	
<input type="checkbox"/>	M
<input type="checkbox"/>	F
Observer	
How much interest was shown in the object?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Not much interest
<input type="checkbox"/>	A lot of interest
<input type="checkbox"/>	A lot of interest
Please choose an object from the shelf	
1 Initially, what made you choose it?	
2 Which sense did you feel it most appealed to?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Touch
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sight
<input type="checkbox"/>	Smell
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sound
<input type="checkbox"/>	Taste
3 How did you interact with the object?	
4 What word(s) would you use to say how it made you feel?	

## PLEASE DO TOUCH

How did the interaction with the object make you feel?

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The World Mental Health Day event is part of UCLan's annual Mental Health sponsored events.