

Issue 26, Another “go to” OT strategy...deep pressure touch!

Which one is NOT deep pressure touch? (see page 2)

- 1) Lying on your stomach on a carpet
- 2) Wearing a weighted vest
- 3) Crawling through a tight space ie) behind a couch
- 4) Being wrapped up in a blanket
- 5) A big bear hug



In the last issue, I wrote about heavy muscle work and how it works to help all people feel more focused and regulated. Another very effective OT strategy is deep pressure touch. Similar to heavy muscle work, it brings “high engines” down and “low engines” up.

Brainwaves is a monthly newsletter designed to create some “brainwaves” within my community of colleagues, friends and clients.

What is “deep pressure touch”?

“Deep touch pressure refers to a form of tactile sensory input which is often provided by firm holding, firm stroking, cuddling, hugging, and squeezing. Deep touch pressure acts as a calming or focusing agent to increase activity in the parasympathetic division, and lower activity in the sympathetic division of the Automatic Nervous System (ANS)... Deep touch pressure also causes the release of both serotonin and dopamine in the brain. These are “happy” neurotransmitters and produce a feeling of calm within our nervous system.

Deep touch pressure's role as a calming agent benefits individuals ... with high levels of anxiety (anxiety disorders) or arousal. ... individuals with proprioceptive, vestibular and tactile sensory seeking behaviours...”

<http://www.mytjacket.com/the-science-behind-it.html>

“It is sometimes used as an intervention - either as part of sensory integrative therapy or as a technique in its own right - to help individuals with sensory sensitivity.” www.researchautism.net

Kim Barthel, occupational therapist, explains the neurochemical benefits of deep pressure touch...

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_MbXvvIG9DQ

Research

Research in this specific area is limited and shows mixed results. Massage therapy has research evidence in the general population. More research is needed in the area of autism!

Handout for Parents or Teachers (13 pages)

<http://liaise.co.uk/blog/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Liaise-Loddon-Deep-Pressure-Factsheet.pdf>

Answer? #3 does not belong! Crawling through a tight space is heavy muscle work while quietly sitting in a small, tight space would be deep pressure touch.

USING DEEP PRESSURE TOUCH

At home, daycare or school...

- lying on the carpet, or floor
- sitting in a corner, under a desk, on a beanbag chair
- allow child to “burrow” or “nest” in furniture forts
- memory foam chairs or Chill-Out® chair
- weighted articles (vests, lap pads, shoulder snakes)
- Snug Vest® or T. Jacket® (pressure vests)
- hand or arm massages
- on carpet, EA uses legs and body to envelope child
- bear hugs

At home...

- crawling behind or under furniture or between cushions
- heavy blankets or swaddling
- snug or tight clothes; compression clothing
- playing “hot dog” games with a therapy ball
- massages or squeezes
- sitting in a full tub of water!

Some people make their own deep pressure touch tools...remember the recommendations is not more than 10% of the person's body weight. If you are uncertain, contact an occupational therapist for guidance.



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