

Providing access to sensory approaches training for alcohol and other drug clinicians

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Introduction: Sensory approaches (SA) refers to a range of strategies which utilise sensory systems to regulate arousal states when experiencing symptoms of distress and agitation.¹⁻³ These are used in clinical settings to promote self-regulation⁴ and have numerous benefits including low cognitive demand, rapid effects and minimal resource outlay.⁴⁻⁶ For those with alcohol and drug (AOD) issues, SA can aid management of cravings,⁷ and mood states,⁸ and meeting of social, emotional and psychological needs.⁹ Despite this, little attention has been brought to using SA within AOD services.

Abstract body text:

A barrier to the implementation of SA is a lack of effective and accessible training.^{10, 11} To meet this need for the AOD workforce, several initiatives were undertaken which were informed by those with lived experience of AOD issues, training participants and specialised reference groups. 1) A *Sensory Approaches for AOD Practice* workshop¹² was developed with 139 participants completing the training. 2) A web-based toolkit of resources was created,¹³ including sensory webinars which have been accessed 1369 times. 3) Consultation and advice were provided to clinicians and services and communities of practice were established.

Discussions and Conclusions: SA are evidence-based trauma-informed interventions used alongside current AOD interventions to support self-regulation and wellbeing, and management of cravings and mood. Clinicians and those with lived experience of AOD issues value initiatives that further their capacity to use SA. Investment in training initiatives can broaden individual and systemic applications of SA in the AOD sector.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

No conflict of interests to declare.

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