

Touching and understanding Tactual language



Activity: Learning the terms “warm” and “cold”

Compared to sighted people, blind people have a greater need for words that refer to how something feels. That way the world becomes recognisable. When we convey these words to them, they build a dictionary with tactile terms.

Set-up of the activity

0-2

- Let the client experience warm and cold by filling two hot-water bottles; one with warm water and one with cold water.
- Use a warm and cold thermal pillow.

2-4

- Let the client experience warm and cold by filling two hot-water bottles; one with warm water and one with cold water. There are various hot-water bottles you can purchase in stores, such as the traditional hot-water bottle that you fill with water or an electric hot-water bottle. You can also use a warm and cold thermal pillow.
- Only state what the client is feeling when his hands actually touch something warm or cold.
- Let the client hold the hot-water bottle in his hands or place it on/under his feet.
- While the client takes a bath or washes his hands, state whether the water is warm or cold.
- While the client is eating, state whether the food is warm or cold. Do the same when he is drinking.
- When the client is outside, state that the sun is warm and, in the winter, state that it is cold.

4-6

- Ask the client to give you the warm or cold object.
- Let the client put all the warm bottles in one basket and all the cold bottles in another basket, for example beverage bottles.

Points for observation and focus

- Make sure not to use something that is extremely warm or cold. This may startle the client. Place the hot-water bottle in a cover that feels pleasant.
- Check whether the client prefers warm or cold. You can do this by noticing withdrawal actions or expressions of pleasurable sensations.
- Take into account that some clients only want food and drinks that have been slightly heated.

Alternative materials

- Cool a teething ring in the fridge.
- Cool a hot-cold pack in the fridge or heat it in a bowl with warm water or in the microwave.
- Fill ice-cube bags with cold or warm water and freeze them or fill them with warm water. When you give the client ice cubes, put them in a flannel or plastic bag; otherwise they are too cold.
- Ice cubes in a bowl and warm water in a bowl.

Can also be used in the categories

- Noticing (NT)
- Touch sensitivity (TST)