

How to develop sensory kits to manage cravings and difficult emotions for people with problematic AOD use

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Background: People may use alcohol and other drugs to manage cravings or difficult emotions. While distressed, it may be difficult to use strategies that require mental effort to cope with cravings.

Description of Model of Care: Sensory tools like weighted blankets and fidget items are becoming mainstream; anyone can buy these at local shopping centres or online without professional guidance. This misses critical considerations of risk, safety, and person-centred care. Evidence-based and individualised sensory kits can support people with problematic AOD use to navigate cravings in their recovery. This workshop provides key steps and considerations for developing a sensory kit with someone who has problematic AOD use.

Acceptability: The resource, "Using your senses to cope" has been downloaded 7234 times from the freely available Insight webpage. In collaboration with the Metro North AOD Client Advisory Committee, positive feedback was received on the resource and associated training.

Conclusion and Next Steps: AOD workers can help people who have problematic AOD use to create their own sensory kits in a manner that accounts for individual needs, risks and safety of the person they are supporting.

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