

OBSERVABLE EFFECTS OF DEEP PRESSURE THERAPY

Functional outcomes of deep pressure therapy are observed as:

- Improved proprioceptive processing for increased balance
- Improved body/spatial awareness
- Improved coordination
- Improved sleep
- Increased focus/attention
- Decreased anxiety/stress

Overall, people reported feeling more “grounded” following deep pressure input. For people who are hypersensitive to tactile input, desensitization to touch was reported over time.

WHO WOULD BENEFIT FROM DEEP PRESSURE THERAPY?

Children and adults alike are finding deep touch pressure therapy to be helpful in helping them self-regulate. People who benefit the most from DTP include those diagnosed with:

- Attention Deficit Disorder (ADHD),
- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD),
- Psychiatric disorders (mood disorder, depression, anxiety, dementia, post-traumatic stress disorder),
- Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD).

However, as you may already know, it seems like most people benefit and enjoy the positives that deep touch pressure can give them. This is seen with the recent rise in interest with weighted blankets. They are being used for anyone who could use a little more sleep and relaxation in their lives.

Examples of deep touch pressure activities can include:

- Rolling/wrapping a child firmly in a blanket to make a “burrito”
- Squishing a child between two soft pillows (“sandwich”
- Firmly rolling a therapy ball or foam roller on top of child’s trunk, legs, and arms
- Deep vibration to the whole body
- Wearing of weighted vests or compression garments (please get safety advice from a professional before buying/using)
- Weighted blanket use (please get safety advice from a professional before buying/using)

- Bear Hugs
- Deep massage
- Joint Compressions

Like adults, some children enjoy the feeling of a massage and often also have specific preferences about the type of massages they enjoy. Massage is a type of deep pressure activity that accesses the proprioceptive sensory system. This system helps to organise the brain, thereby helping you understand where your body is in space, and helping you function calmly in your day.

Massage is also a beautiful way to connect with your child. You may find that you are able to maintain eye contact for longer periods with your child and may also increase communication, whether it is a verbal conversation or an imitation game with the body. The child will function better in their environment after using massage, but also it is a special time to connect and just be together.

Below are my favourite massage activities that can be done at home, school, nursery, indoors or outdoors. Singing songs while massaging is also a great tool that can be used with all the activities below.

- Arms and Legs massage – Child sits on a comfortable seat (for example a bean bag) and the adult sits across from the child. Place both hands on top of thighs and work your hands down the legs- with strong, squeezing pressure. Do the same from the shoulders and down to the fingers. Take your time when moving your hands down, and try not to lose complete touch with your child's body.
Note: your child will tell you if you are pressing too hard and often will also show you that they are not relaxed if the touch is too light.
- Pillow Sandwich- Take two pillows and put one under your child and one over them. I like to count or speak about the ingredients that I am putting into the sandwich in order to engage with the child I am working with. This activity can also be done while rolling the child into a blanket (like a sausage) or rolling a fit ball/ foam roller over your child's body. Remember to maintain deep pressure throughout this activity.
- Star ball- Get your child to lie on his/her back and help them bring their knees towards their face like they are being squeezed into a small ball. I count until 5 and then ask them to kick out their legs and arms and become a star. They usually benefit from the contrast of the passive and active deep pressure as well as the change in movement.
Note: Be sure to keep away from their feet or you'll get kicked!