The concept of a controlled multisensory stimulation environment was first introduced to the Elliot Adult Day Program’s Manager during her employment as a camp nurse for multiply challenged children and adults in the 1980’s. Since then that concept has remained with her in the hopes that someday this approach to care could be utilized for the participants of the Elliot Adult Day Program.

Snoezelen, originally developed in the Netherlands in the 1970's, is a non-directive therapy and can be staged to provide a multi-sensory experience or single sensory focus, simply by adapting the lighting, atmosphere, sounds, and textures to the specific needs of the individual at the time of use. The intent is to provide people who have sensory and learning disabilities with the appropriate relaxation and leisure. Snoezelen can be used for people with autism and other developmental disabilities, dementia and brain injury. Elderly confused individuals who have difficulty relating to existing environments or to demands made upon them also appear to benefit from the basic and primary sensory stimulation that this offers. The caregiver (friend, staff or family) can also enjoy this environment.

Fashioned after the Netherlands’ Snoezelen concept, the Elliot Adult Day Program is the first Adult Day Program to offer this approach to care. Although numerous study outcomes vary, this approach has been found to be very effective in promoting relaxation and a calming effect.

This multi-sensory room has been beneficial in assisting clients who are experiencing anxiety, agitation, restlessness and even chronic pain. The room has low lighting, calming sounds, scents and visuals effects. This room is designed to deliver gentle stimulation to the various senses using special lighting effects, color, sounds, music, scents and textures. Although formal documentation is maintained for trending and statistical purposes, the primary focus is to offer an environment for relaxation through gentle stimulation.

To date the use of this specialized room has resulted in optimal outcomes.

Program participant PJ. was a 60 year-old gentleman with advanced Alzheimer’s disease. As the disease progressed, PJ. became increasingly agitated, would pace and attempt to exit at any opportunity. He was introduced to our multi-sensory room. With gentle encouragement, PJ. entered the room and was able to sit back in the recliner and actually relax. With the gentle stimulation and soothing staff approach, PJ.’s agitation diminished. He was able to close his eyes and listen to the gentle sounds in the room. PJ. remained in the room for 30 minutes. When he returned to the program area he was calm and able to engage in the program activities.

For more information, contact the Elliot Adult Day Program at 663-2405. Tours may be arranged by appointment only.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Snoezelen
Hutchinson, R., Kewin, J., Sensations & Disability, 1994, ROMPA.

The Elliot
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