# Title Slide: Sensory Lounges? Yes! Let’s Do It!

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## Slide 1: Agenda:

* Need
* Goals
* History
* Process
* Research
* Effective
* Resources

## Slide 2:

Need: To increase a sense of belonging, students need agency to co-create spaces where they can step away from college stress and recenter themselves.

## Slide 3: Goals:

* Co-create sensory reduced calming spaces
* Give students a safe space to destress, relax, and stim (calming repetitive actions)
* Demonstrate efficacy (ability/capacity to do...)
* Normalize the needs of neurodiverse individuals and increase shared knowledge

## Slide 4: History

* Kutztown Sensory Room: Megan
* UNCG’s Sensory Lounge – Tina

## Slide 5: Process

Subtopics: Timeline, steps, allies, culture

## Slide 6: Timeline

* Consider steps 2-3 months in advance
* Plan to pilot for a semester
* Collect data
* Adapt to feedback as received
* End of semester - report data to stakeholders
* Determine next steps
  + Permanent space?
  + Move location?
  + Add more sensory spaces?

## Slide 7: Steps

* Explore established spaces (educational, business, etc.)
* Identify potential space & funding
* Talk it up (SGA, GSA, DAPi, Counseling, Leadership, etc.)
* Solicit stakeholder ideas and donations (wish list, check surplus)
* Means to collect data (QR codes)
* Get started - update and encourage feedback, as progress
* Adapt

## Slide 8: Allies

* STUDENTS!!
  + SGA
  + GSA
  + DAPi
* Intercultural Teams
* Student Affairs
* Counseling
* Victims' Assistance
* Recreation/Wellness
* Housing/Residence Life
* Police/Public Safety
* Everyone

## Slide 9: Culture

Typical access representation in Disability field

* Neurodiverse students
* Students with ASD
* Other students who have disabilities

Open minds

* Universal design of space
* Welcoming/inclusive for all students
* Students with and without disabilities benefit

## Slide 10: Belonging Spaces (Research)

## Slide 11: Co-create

Zilonka et al, quoted block (2009), “to belong is to act as an investor, owner, and creator of this place.” Source: Zilonka, R., Cai, X., Medina, N.E.C., Chung, G.Y. (2019). *Where Are We From?: A Critical Community Autoethnography of Place, Space, and Belonging* by Ph.D. International Female Student-Scholar-Activists in the U.S. International Journal of Critical Pedagogy, Vol 10 No. 1

## Slide 12: Safe Space

jaekel's students mapped how they spend their day and identified “spaces they found salient or meaningful” (Jaekel 2017, p. 137). Source: Jaekel, K. S. (2017). *Engaging in Inclusion: Cultivating LGBTQ Students’ Sense of Belonging Through a Critical Place-Based Curriculum*. International Journal of Critical Pedagogy, Vol 7 No. 3

## Slide 13: Rightful Presence

"An invitation to show up in fully authentic ways and make contributions" (Faircloth et al, 2021, p. 3). Source: Faircloth, B. S., Gonzalez, L. M., & Ramos, K. (Eds.). (2021). *Resisting Barriers to Belonging: Conceptual Critique and Critical Applications*. Lexington Books.

## Slide 14: Efficacy

## Slide 15: Feedback: What did we learn?

Subtopics: Graphs and Enhancement Opportunities

## Slide 16:

Graph: Title reads “Why did you decide to come to the sensory room? Please select all that apply.”

79 Responses

53 (67%) chose “to relax”

20 (25%) chose “I had a break”

24 (30%) chose “To hang out”

45 (57%) chose “just to check the space out”

26 (33%) chose “to help me focus/refocus”

3 (4) chose “to stim”

The survey included an “other” box, which elicited answers such as “to calm down,” “I was overstimulated,” “I have sensory issues,” “I needed to ground myself,” “to pray,” and “a one-on-one meeting with my boss.”

## Slide 17:

Graph: Title reads: “How do you feel after your sensory room visit?”

79 responses

69 (87%) relaxed

32 (41%) centered

25 (32%) focused

50 (63%) less anxious

4 (5%) The same as when I entered it

44 (56%) better than I did when I entered

1 (1%) worse than I did when I entered

The survey included an “other” box which elicited answers such as “my inner child feels safe” and “happy!”

## Slide 18:

Graph: When we asked students who used the sensory room whether they identified as having a disability, 45.7% responded yes and 57.1% responded as no or did not wish to share.

Text reads “56.5% did not self-identify as having a disability”

## Slide 19: Enhancement Opportunities

What would have made your visit to the sensory room better?

Student response: The room was cool! Some things that might be bothersome to those w sensory issues but aren't universally bothersome might be the clicking of the clock, and maybe the windows? Would be super cool if you could put black paper over some of the windows. And maybe more fairy lights up around the room! That way you could turn off the lamps and just sit with the fair lights and lava lamp thing on. These are just suggestions though! Everyone is different & sensitive to different things, so what works for some might not work for all. I like diffusers & nice smelling things, but that might be too strong for some. Anything you add as long as it's controllable by students would be super cool.

## Slide 20: Student Agency and Co-Creation

Image: A lounge chair sits next to a small table. On the wall above the table hangs a TV playing a serene nature scene of a waterfall

Text: Soft music, Meditation music, Nature sounds, GSA donated projector

## Slide 21: Soft blankets and comfy seating

Four images of different types of seating available in both sensory rooms, including padded and beanbag chairs. On one chair sits a throw blanket.

## Slide 22:

Student feedback reads: Maybe signs about audio levels in the room? When I need peace and quiet it may be nice to know that the sensory room is or is not the place for that

Image of the sign on the door to UNC’s sensory lounge that reads: “Sensory Lounge: Open to anyone seeking a calming environment. To ensure the ambience and calming purpose of this Sensory Lounge, please be mindful of the following:

* Shh... Please be quiet
* Limit of 5 people at any time
* No food or beverages except water

“This lounge is a ‘pilot/trial’ area. To help keep such spaces on campus, please complete our anonymous survey by scanning the QR code.”

## Slide 23: Variety of adult coloring books and fidget devices

Two images: One shows a table holding a collection of calming coloring books and markers; the other shows a basket filled with fidget/sensory items such as poppers, stress balls, and rubix cubes

## Slide 23: Lego and sand tables, including images of each

Calming Spaces, with a picture of a corner cushioned seat with two mirrors, a bubble tube, and fiber-optic string lights

## Slide 24: Other quiet things to do

Two images: One of dot games and sensory strips sitting on a table; the other of a heart made of kinetic sand with a sign reading “Kinetic sand for your enjoyment in the Sensory Lounge – Please do not remove”

## Slide 25: Surprise

Image: Screenshot of a senate resolution by the Student Government Association Senate of UNC Greensboro: “A Resolution to Be Entitled Making Sensory Rooms Permanent”, passed during the second reading on 4/5/2022 in a unanimous vote.

## Slide 26:

“ENACTED/RESOLVED, Upon the passage of this bill/resolution, The 99th session of the Student Government Association of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro will allocate the funds necessary to help the Office of Accessibility Resources & Services (OARS) to make Sensory Rooms on campus a permanent program at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.”

## Slide 26: Adapt

* Puzzle table
* Soothing auditory
* More adult coloring books
* More fidget devices (but NOT spread out)
* Other ideas for permanent space:
  + Floor seating
  + Soft pillows
  + Stuffed animals
  + Wall features (sensory mural)
  + Affirmation board

## Slide 27: Disseminate findings

Social Media

LinkedIn: tinavires / meganmrutter

Facebook: UNCG Office of Accessibility Resources & Services

Twitter: #UNCGOARS

Instagram #UNCGOARS

Professional Listserv:

* ASP / CAN
* DSSHE
* AHEAD

Professional Conference: AHEAD

## Slide 28: Questions:

## Slide 29: Resources for Sensory Rooms