



How to Use the “Ghost” Sensory Tool (for Workers)



What is a “Ghost”?:

- A ghost is a sensory tool made of stretchy material.
- It can be used to provide sensory stimulation or relaxation for clients of all ages.
- Maybe you’ve seen one at the resource room at your school or in your SNE’s, or Occupational Therapist’s office or space.
- You might also know this as a “body sock” or “sensory sock”.

General:

- The first time a client uses a new tool, they need to be shown how to use it. They often need to practice using it a few times to build confidence with it.
- First introduce the ghost by trying it on yourself in front of the client. Watch the client for signs they are interested (e.g., looking, smiling, reaching, approaching, vocalizing).
 - If you are seeing signs that the client is interested, ask the client to try putting their feet in it (or even just a foot, if they seem nervous). Progress from there, allowing them to sit in it while you are doing a therapy session.
 - If you are using it in a therapy session the client can leave their head out.
- Watch for signs that the client is not interested (e.g., pulling away, pushing away, scared look in their eyes, turning their back away from you, saying “no”).
- **Remember**, it’s best to explore the tool when the client is calm and happy. If we introduce it when the client is stressed, the excitement of something new could stress them out even more. As a result, the parent or worker might think the “ghost” doesn’t work or that it makes things worse.



- Young babies under 2 years of age or clients with severe motor weakness may not have the strength to get out of this tool. Please ensure these clients are closely supervised while using the ghost.
- Never use the ghost tool as a restraint or punishment.

When to Use it?

To prevent the client from becoming dysregulated or “not on just right”

- The best time to learn is when we are feeling good. Using the ghost before you begin your therapy session may help some learners to feel more available to learning when it is time to start.
- The first time you use the ghost, have it out and visible in the room or at the worktable. Sometimes at the beginning of the session, the client may spend 2-5 minutes fully in it to help calm themselves down.
- Some clients love to use it at the end of the session to go in it and roll around the floor (if there are mats or a carpet). If transitioning out of your session is difficult, this can be a great tool to prevent upsetting the client while leaving your session. So yes, plan it in your session according to your client’s individual needs and preferences.

When the client is not on “Just Right” (dysregulated):

A well-timed session with this tool can help them to get back to “just right”.

- Do not make other demands of them while they are getting to “just right” using the ghost.
- Allow the quiet and decreased visual effect of the ghost to help calm them.
- They can also push against the stretchy material to activate their body’s proprioception system which may help them to regulate and calm themselves more quickly.

How to Explain the Ghost Sensory Tool to parents?

- Explain that it is a sensory tool that works on the visual system, proprioceptive system and touch systems.
- The tool helps the client to focus on their body and helps block out their visual sense. Then they can focus on other senses like the touch of the material or the proprioceptive sense as they push against the stretchy fabric.
- It almost becomes their own little sensory safe space that is portable and can be used almost anywhere.
- Parents should never force a child to use the ghost but should offer it often so their child gets used to it (remember to look for signs of interest listed above).

Where to buy?

The ghost tool can be ordered on the following websites at the time this information sheet was created:

<https://www.fdm.ca> - search “ghost”

<https://indigenousinclusive.com/> - search for “sensory sock”

More information

For more detailed information on sensory knowledge and awareness visit our website and watch the following video:

<https://www.disabilityprogramsspecializedservices.org/trainings/introduction-to-sensory-awareness/>