

**S**noezelen-MSE processes can be therapeutic, educational and/or recreational. A variety of modules are designed to connect with different goal groups. All of the processes have universal applications that deliver a broad spectrum of optimal possibilities for enriching quality of life.


The definition of Snoezelen, according to a position paper written by members\* of the ISNA-MSE General Assembly:

*“The conceptual framework of MSE/Snoezelen is a dynamic pool of Intellectual property built on an ongoing sensitive relationship between the participant, the skilled companion and a controlled environment, where a multitude of sensory stimulation possibilities are offered. Developed in the mid 1970s and practiced worldwide, the MSE/Snoezelen is guided by ethical principles of enriching quality of life. This shared approach has applications in leisure, therapy, and education, and takes place in a dedicated space suitable for all people, particularly those with special needs including dementia and autism.”*

Multi-Sensory Environments offer engaging sensory experiences. Diverse applications for therapeutic, recreational and educational purposes can be facilitated by anyone interested in learning, appealing not only to the professional, but to families who want to engage in quality time with their family members.

The important thing to understand about these processes, is that they are done together. The Individual is not left alone. The range for creating and facilitating sensory experience possibilities, ones that engage individuals in enriching processes, is based on relationship-building, and, is unlimited in this capacity.

\* Members: Ad Verheul, Anne Eijgendaal, Maurits eijgendaal, Paul Pagliano, Sandra Fornes, Jan Hulsegge og Krista Mertens.



**T**he sensory concepts of Snoezelen-MSE processes have universal applications for enriching quality of life.

**Connect**



The International SNoezelen Association (ISNA) connects people all over the world who are working with Snoezelen-MSE. Please visit our website to learn more or find Snoezelen-MSE centers and scheduled training conferences near you. ISNA President Maurits Eijgendaal, can be reached at [maurits@isna-mse.org](mailto:maurits@isna-mse.org)

## What is a Snoezelen Multi-Sensory Environment (MSE)?

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A relaxed, multi-sensory, experiential process, primarily benefitting people with autism or other developmental disabilities: dementia, intellectual disabilities, hyperactive, hearing impaired, visually impaired, children with perception/sensory disorder and/or disturbed social behavior, and psychiatric patients.

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## *Background Story of Snoezelen*

Snoezelen is a combination of two Dutch words that, when translated, mean 'to explore' and 'to relax.' The name is sometimes given as a description for a space or "room" that is a dedicated collection of multi-sensory technology, arranged and programmed to create specific environments for experiential learning and/or recreation.

Snoezelen had its beginnings in Holland in the early 1980's. The concept was created by Ad Verheul and Jan Hulsegge. They were both experimenting with some new ideas for recreation and relaxation for adults with disabilities, while working as therapists at De Hartenberg Centre.

Snoezelen interactive processes, used in conjunction with MSE products, are often designed to meet the needs of a particular client or group, choosing from a wide range of sensory equipment that can be installed.

It is common for the term 'Snoezelen Room' to be used interchangeably with other names, especially 'Multi-Sensory Room' and 'White Room.' These additional references went into circulation in recent years, after an American company registered the term 'Snoezelen' as their own trademark for providing facilitated processes with multi-sensory equipment. While there are trademarked restrictions in the U.S. as to how the term 'Snoezelen' is referenced, it essentially refers to experiential processes associated with MSE equipment. 'Snoezelen' is still the common reference used in Europe, where 'Snoezelen' was originally developed.

Fundamentally, all of these terms refer to the same thing. The difference is only a matter of semantics. 'Snoezelen' is a trademarked process, but there are many companies that create and manufacture MSE products, and design arrangements for rooms, centers, and home environments. Again, it is only a matter of semantics.

Ongoing training events for Snoezelen-MSE can be found on the International Snoezelen Association-MSE website. Growing awareness of Snoezelen-MSE principles, and the training of others in the educational and relational processes, will provide more experiential, quality of life opportunities for individuals with disabilities.



## *Building Relationships with Snoezelen-MSE*

Integrating a relationship-building framework of Gentle Teaching with the processes of Snoezelen-MSE, increases the effectiveness of the facilitator's knowledge and skill, and creates an optimal, Snoezelen-MSE experience for the Individual.

The technological innovation of a Snoezelen-MSE environment engages individuals in meaningful, purposeful exchanges. Personalized programs delivers therapeutic, quality of life services by developing companionship and a sense of community.

A framework of Gentle Teaching mentors social-emotional development through relationship-building. Interactions that incorporate relationship-building skills and elements of companionship, support the Individual in learning new skills and improving their quality of life.



Mentoring with Gentle Teaching supports others in making changes and learning new things. It is the trusted relationship that supports the greater capacity for quality of life. The primary element of Gentle Teaching nurtures intrinsic motivation for an individual, who discovers new meaning and moral memory for their daily life. A Snoezelen-MSE program is based on this teaching philosophy, and the application of processes for social-emotional development. These processes awaken natural curiosity, exploration, discovery and learning.



Interactive multi-sensory equipment is operated by facilitators, trained in equipment use and applications that mentor a spirit of gentleness. Personalized processes revolve around the four pillars of Gentle Teaching: safe, loved, loving and engaged.

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