

Sensory Tent

South Frontenac Group, Voyageur Council

Critical Shift: Sections are equipped to welcome and include all youth.

Our Story:

The Scouters of the South Frontenac Group recognized there was a need for a safe, calming space at camp. At a Council-wide camp, they decided to set up a sensory tent as a cool-down space for anyone who might need it. They wanted it to be welcoming to all, and opted to add a pride flag to the outside to make it clear that this was meant to be a safe space. A flag, a walled tent and some chairs created a safe, calm space for anyone to take a quiet moment for themselves.

The Problem:

Youth sometimes need a break from interactions, whether at a meeting or a larger-scale event like a camp. Without a designated safe place to go, youth sometimes wander off on their own or become overstimulated if they cannot find a safe place.

Our Solution:

Scouters Janet and Gord recognized this need at a Council camp and decided to devise a plan to combat this. They opted to set up a walled tent near the first aid station to provide a safe, quiet space for anyone who needed a break from programming.

Why It Works:

By creating a safe space for anyone who needs it, everyone can feel safe and included at camp. A sensory tent provides a quiet space for anyone who needs a break from activities. Including a pride flag outside the tent helps to signal that this is truly a safe and welcoming space for anyone who could benefit from it.



What Success Looked Like:

- The sensory tent was there to welcome anyone who might need a break and many people took advantage of it.
- Youth and Scouters commented that they felt included and safe due to the presence of the tent (and the pride flag it featured).

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Give it a Try!

Step-by-Step

1. Identify which camp or event might benefit from a sensory tent. Even a day event may benefit from having a space for people to take a break.
2. Find a space for your sensory tent – South Frontenac opted to put it near the first aid tent so that it was easy to find and centrally located.
3. Find a tent to use – a walled tent of some sort (marquee tent, dining shelter) is best. It should be blocked off from most of camp but should have an open entrance or side to easily maintain the two-Scouter rule.
4. What will you add to your space? It can be as simple as providing a couple of camp chairs, or you could take it a step further and have some games or mindfulness activities (colouring, fidget toys, etc.) available. A pride flag can be featured to signify that it is for mental health needs and also a safe space for everyone.
5. Designate Scouters to support the space – this helps to ensure that the two-Scouter rule is being maintained at all times and that the space is being used appropriately.
6. Share that the space is open for anyone who needs it along with any ground rules for it (ex. Notify a Scouter that you're going to the tent).



Tips & Tricks

- Simple fidget toys may help younger youth use the space more effectively.
- Older youth may prefer their own calming tools (music, ear defenders, books, etc.)
- Ask when they can be checked in on (5 mins, 10 mins, 15 mins)

What Do I Need?

- A walled tent with a table, chairs and any calming activities/tools (ex. fidget toys, books, puzzles, single use ear plugs, etc.).
- Scouters (or youth volunteers) to help support safe use of the space.

Provide your feedback on this Trail Card by clicking [HERE](#)
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