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Anxiety: The Use of Sensorial Stimulation in Relation to Mind-Body Awareness and Techniques (Sensory Modulation) in Day-To-Day Symptom Management of Anxiety

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Abstract

Anxiety is commonly experienced by all individuals around the world one way or another. Experienced symptoms of anxiety often includes corporal bodily sensations and/or ruminating and intrusive thoughts following maladaptive cognitions towards an undesired event or trigger. Cognitive distortions can potentiate and provoke feelings of uneasiness and ambivalence, making it harder to function and/or concentrate on day-to-day tasks. There exists a number of symptom management techniques and coping strategies wherein anxiety is concerned, however the field of sensorial items/devices in anxiety management lacks in investigation and attention wherein anxiety, mind-body awareness, and multisensory experience in emotional regulation is concerned. The use of sensorial items/devices in support of enabling greater mind-body awareness and grounding deserves greater attention to be brought towards their use in anxiety symptom management outside of the counselling session.

Introduction

Anxiety as per according to the American Psychological Association (APA) is defined to be an

"...emotion characterized by apprehension and somatic symptoms of tension in which an individual anticipates impending danger, catastrophe, or misfortune. The body often mobilizes itself to meet the perceived threat: Muscles become tense, breathing is faster, and the heart beats more rapidly.

Anxiety may be distinguished from fear both conceptually and physiologically, although the two terms are often used interchangeably. Anxiety is considered a future-oriented, long-acting response broadly focused on a diffuse threat, whereas fear is an appropriate, present-oriented, and short-lived response to a clearly identifiable and specific threat."[1]

Anxiety in essence is therefore a felt and/or perceived fear, anticipation of future concerns wherein a person seeks control in situations where they feel they are lacking domination or agency[1]. Anxiety activates the nervous system, where one can engage in "fight or flight" (i.e., staying – fight, or leaving to escape the perceived threat – flight)[1]. Experienced symptoms of anxiety can provoke a wide array of behaviours amongst individuals such as avoidance, hinderances to normative functioning, and cognitive distortions[1].

In this sense, experienced symptoms of anxiety can be

characterized by both mental and physiological symptoms[17,19]. Mental symptomologies include feelings of unease, unhappiness, intrusive and ruminating thoughts[17]. Physiological symptomologies manifest as increased heart rate, perspiration, trembling (i.e., shaking), gastrointestinal distress (i.e., irritable bowels), and muscular strain[17], as well as tension or migraine headaches[21]. All of which in turn impair overall cognitive functioning and processing, resulting in cognitive distortions such as maladaptive thinking patterns, decision-making abilities, memory, concentration, learning/assimilating information, as well as distorted perceptions of the environment[19].

The causes (i.e., etiology) of experienced symptoms of anxiety vary as per according to research, which contends that anxiety disorders can root from *biological causes* (i.e., resulting from incidents of hereditary, neurochemical imbalances, pharmacological implications, and nutritional factors), *psychological causes* (i.e., as a result of personality traits, low self-esteem, cognitive dissonance, conflicts, developmental crisis, distorted perceptions), and/or *social causes* (i.e., adverse life experiences, lack of social support, limited social skills, situations of anomie (i.e., changes in both social and personal values), political and economic instabilities (including "terrorism" and "natural calamities")[19].

Anxiety disorders are categorized as one of the most, if not the most, common mental health challenge amongst individuals around the world[4]; where about 30% of adults throughout their lifetime experience anxiety at some point[1]. Considering the various features of anxiety and anxiety disorders, there exists a wide range of therapies for the treatment of associated symptoms which vary in intensity, purpose, and creativity.

Objective

The objective of this literature review is to shed light on the use of sensorial items/devices targeting mind-body awareness outside of the counselling session to try and help individuals better manage and cope with their experienced symptoms of anxiety.

Methodology

This paper will pursue a narrative literature review, whereby academic publications ranging from vast time periods will be analyzed. Academic works will be searched from various different research platforms, such as National Institute of Health (NIH), PubMed, Wiley, PLoS ONE, Semantic Scholar, and Google Scholar; as well as certain legitimate Internet websites. The purpose of reviewing academic projects ranging from 2002 to 2026 is aimed at providing a comprehensive analysis of the progress that the topic has made throughout the years to date. That-is-to-say, this narrative literature review seeks to bridge gaps in highlighting certain features that may be lacking in terms of further investigation in light of forever evolving innovative approaches seen within the world of therapy and counselling.

This literature review will first begin by identifying and defining the various different types of existing anxiety disorders, something of which is integral in stating given that the literature review is premised around anxiety disorders. The paper will then proceed to analyzing research on the various established therapies used in mediating experienced symptoms of anxiety; touching upon important elements such as traditional approaches and contemporary technological approaches. This first section of the paper reviews without precise summary (as the purpose of the paper is not to focus on already established techniques), the diverse clinical approaches to anxiety management. The paper will then move on discussing the second body of the paper, which will touch on research investigating mind-body awareness techniques used in anxiety management strategies. This second of the paper will outline various self-awareness techniques that can help support an individual to reach mental grounding and emotional regulation via a more holistic and natural avenue. The third section of this review will then advance towards describing the research on sensorial stimulation and anxiety management strategies, depicting the assorted approaches and techniques currently practiced in post-modern society today. Finally, this literature review will near the end of its sections by harmonizing the paper's central idea via the discussion, conclusion, future research, and limitations sections.

Literature Review

Types of Anxiety Disorders

As per according to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder, 5th ed., Text Revision (DSM-5-TR), anxiety disorders are separated into eleven different categories[3]. Each disorder is defined and presented as follows below:

(1) **Separation Anxiety Disorder**: Touches on the situation wherein an individual presents as "…excessively fearful or anxious about separation from those with whom…[they are]…attached [to]"[1]. This sense of worry is recognized as being inappropriate for the persons' age, and can cause problems towards their overall functioning[1]. Common maladaptive cognitions representative of separation anxiety disorder include being "…persistently worried about losing the person closest to…[them].. may be reluctant or refuse to go out or sleep away from home or without that person, or may experience nightmares about separation"[1]. Symptoms develop during childhood and carry to adulthood[1].

(2) **Selective Mutism**: Specifies the situation in which a child will not speak in certain social situations where they are expected to (for example: at school, with family/friends/other social individuals), notwithstanding that the child will speak in other situations[1]. Selective mutism amongst children is observed to manifest before the age of 5 years-old, where majority of children are found to outgrow selective mutism, however for those whom do not where symptoms persist, can proceed to develop social anxiety disorder later on[1].

(3) **Specific Phobia**: Regards the situation wherein the individual presents with an "…excessive and persistent fear of a specific object, situation or activity that is generally not harmful…[where the individual knows that] their fear is excessive, but they can't overcome it"[1]. Specific phobia behaviours can lead to an individual to experience such distress that they resort to extreme actions to avoid what they fear[1]. Specific phobias can be caused by animals, natural environments, situational, fear of injury, fear of medical care, fear of blood, fear of injections and/or transfusions[2].

(4) **Social Anxiety Disorder (previously called Social Phobia)**: Occurs when an individual "…has significant anxiety[, extreme fear or]…discomfort about being embarrassed, humiliated, rejected or looked down on in social interactions"[1]. Social anxiety disorder can cause an individual to avoid the triggering social environment. Common examples of social anxiety disorder include public speaking, meeting new people, eating/drinking in public[1].

(5) **Panic Disorder**: Concerns experiencing reoccurring panic attacks, where the individual can become overwhelmed with both physical and psychological distress[1]. Panic attack symptoms can include – heart palpitations/rapid heart rate, sweating, trembling/shaking, shortness of breath or smothering/choking sensations, chest pain, feeling dizzy, light-headed or faint, fear of dying, fear of losing control, feelings of being detached, chills or hot flashes, numbness/tingling, or nausea or abdominal pains[1]. Individuals whom experience a panic attack can mistake the experienced symptoms for a heart attack and seek hospitalization[1].

(6) **Agoraphobia**: Refers to the situation wherein an individual fears of "…being in situations where escape may be difficult or embarrassing, or help might not be available in the event of panic symptoms."[1]. Symptoms of agoraphobia in general last six months or more, as well as hinders an individual's functioning[1]. Individuals whom suffer from agoraphobia experience challenges in "…two or more of the following situations: using public transportation, being in open spaces, being in enclosed places, standing in line or being in a crowd, being outside the home alone"[1]. An individual whom suffers from agoraphobia will – (1) avoid a triggering situation/space, (2) require an accompaniment in order to endure provoking situation/space. When agoraphobia goes untreated, the individual can isolate and lock themselves in their home, unable to leave the house.

(7) **Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)**: Involves the "…persistent and excessive worry that interferes with daily activities"[1]. Symptoms of GAD can manifest as ongoing worry, physical symptoms ("…restlessness, feeling on edge or easily fatigued, difficulty concentrating muscle tension or problems sleeping"[1]. Experienced symptoms of GAD can provoke challenges with the individuals employment, social relationships, and day-to-day functioning chores and/or appointments[1].

(8) **Substance/Medication-Induced Anxiety Disorder**: Disorder that develops as a result of substance intoxication or substance withdrawal, where symptoms such as anxiety or panic attacks can occur as a result of anxiety caused during or after (withdrawal) intoxication from alcohol, caffeine, cannabis, inhalants, or other illicit drugs such as hallucinogens, opioids, sedatives, hypnotics, anxiolytics, or stimulants[9]. Substance/medication-induced anxiety disorder can lead an individual to become abstinent from substances, or being to become overly anxious while consuming a substance[9].

(9) **Anxiety Disorder Due to Another Medical Condition**: Describes the situation wherein an individual experiences symptom of anxiety as a result of another medical condition, where the experienced symptoms of anxiety are the "… physiological consequence of another medical condition"[2].

(10) **Other Specified Anxiety Disorder**: Refers to when an individual presents with symptom "… characteristic[s] of an anxiety disorder that cause[s] clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning… but do not meet the full criteria for any of the disorders in the anxiety disorders diagnostic class"[2]. Other specific anxiety disorder essentially denotes the situation when the practitioner "… chooses to communicate the specific reason that the presentation does not meet the criteria for any

specific anxiety disorder. This is done by recording "other specified anxiety disorder" followed by the specific reason (e.g., "generalized anxiety not occurring more days than not")"[2].

(11) **Unspecified Anxiety Disorder**: Occurs when an individual presents with symptom "… characteristic[s] of an anxiety disorder that cause[s] clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning… but do not meet the full criteria for any of the disorders in the anxiety disorders diagnostic class"[2]. Unspecified anxiety disorder ultimately designates the situation when the clinician "… chooses not to specify the reason that the criteria are not met for a specific anxiety disorder, and includes presentations in which there is insufficient information to make a more specific diagnosis…"[2].

Important changes to note wherein anxiety disorders in the DSM-5-TR are concerned include modifications brought to the classification of Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD), a disorder no longer being categorized as an anxiety disorder, and rather anew in current day being classified as its own disorder under the category of Obsessive-Compulsive and Related Disorders[3]. As well as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Acute Stress Disorder (ASD) anew in current day being classified under the category of Trauma and Stress Related Disorders instead of anxiety disorder as opposed to an anxiety disorder as it previously was[3].

Research on Anxiety Management Strategies

Research on anxiety management strategies and coping mechanisms is vast, as well as is an ever-growing topic within the international research community. Anxiety is experienced worldwide, it is not a disorder that is unique nor specific to any one region or country. Notwithstanding such, experienced symptoms of anxiety can differ from one culture to the next wherein triggers are concerned. Meaning, anxiety may be a common international phenomenon however triggers importantly vary wherein gender dynamics, socioeconomic conditions, political environments, cultural norms, and societal openness to mental health are all concerned.

Traditional anxiety management strategies include psychopharmacology (i.e., medication) or psychotherapeutic treatments, such as cognitive therapies, behavioural therapies, a combination of both cognitive and behavioural therapies (i.e., Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)), sensorial approaches, mind-body awareness (i.e., mindfulness), and support groups are amongst the most common types of therapeutic approaches applied to anxiety management strategies[19]. Psychotherapeutic approaches to anxiety management are ultimately premised on the concept of trying to help the patient make sense of an underlining existing fear that has been exaggerated and/or disproportionate to the reality of the situation as experienced by the patient, and how to cope and navigate through said associative cognitive distortions developed towards a given trigger[2].

Within contemporary society the dawn of a newer type of technological revolution is taking place, where mental health mobile applications and artificial intelligence (AI) are broadening the landscape of accessibility to mental health support for a number of individuals around the world. Telemedicine and teletherapy are amongst two of the evolutionary proponents that the Internet has birthed wherein access to mental health support is regarded. Mental health mobile applications and AI technologies have been developed to provide support for patients in practices of relaxation and mindfulness (i.e., guided meditation), exposure to fears/triggers[4], as well as provide users with opportunities to access CBT chatbots, AI-powered virtual therapists, AI mental health assistants (for example: Chatgbt), virtual companions, AI-driven self-reflection platforms, interactive activities for mental well-being, etcetera, highlighting the different various avenues and directions of possibilities for expanding mental health care and support[17].

AI and mobile applications come with a number of pros and cons, just as any form of treatment. Technological mental health aids support self-management approaches and lend to greater accessibility to professional help/support (especially in reaching patients who live in more remote and secluded geographical locations that do not host a large mental health support repertoire), are cost-effective, time-efficient, as well as encourage greater self-autonomy[4,6,17]. These innovative modernizations also provide certain increased levels of digression, anonymity, and de-stigmatizing feelings for patients utilizing said therapeutic aids as per according to research[4,6,17]; especially wherein cultural populations whom are less accepting and open about mental health support and rehabilitation are concerned. Furthermore, technological advances in digital mental health support can also provide users with help that is sometimes perhaps more up-to-date than what is occasionally provided by certain real-time therapists and counsellors whom may not necessarily be engaging in newer approaches and/or therapies with patients, thus categorizing them as more out-dated and behind in certain advances that could yield greater patient success and rehabilitation by virtue of AI[6,17].

Notwithstanding such, AI technologies also host important pitfalls amongst which include ethical concerns regarding patient confidentiality, and accuracy of "therapy" or "counselling" afforded by certain AI technologies such as chatbots[6]. In addition to such, AI technologies also

encourages patient's to engage in self-management coping strategies as research contends, which remains a critically important aspect towards mental health rehabilitation and recovery[4]. Self-management strategies however place a burden on the patient whereby the patient first needs to be able to apprehend and comprehend their current physiological and mental state in order to pursue self-management interventions, where guided therapy therefore rests as a necessary and important component prior to the patient being able to practice self-management techniques. Self-management techniques include the use of mental health mobile applications and AI technologies such as chatbots. Thus, AI technologies can therefore pose as a certain problem to patient's whom have not yet first consulted with a real-time therapist, counsellor, or coach, which can greatly impact the effectiveness of AI-driven therapeutic approaches suggested to the patient, and possibly even discourage the patient from seeking trained help from dedicated professionals based on a negative experience with AI therapeutic supports.

Research on Mind-Body Awareness Techniques Used in Anxiety Management Strategies

Research on mind-body awareness techniques wherein anxiety management strategies are concerned is found to be a fairly new topic of investigation within the research community. What research has found so far on mind-body awareness interventions is that such provides a "low-stigma" option for individuals seeking to mediate their experienced symptoms of anxiety[5]. Mindfulness techniques refers to one being able to pay "…attention to one's thoughts, feelings, and physical sensations and adopting a nonjudgmental stance toward[s] them"[5]. The approach is premised on helping an individual gain greater control over their emotional regulation skills by becoming more in-tune with their body, mind, and feelings to a triggering situation and/or event alerting the individual of distress[18]. That-is-to-say, mind-body awareness strategies attempt to try and help the individual learn to become more aware of their physiological reactions towards stressful events whereby the individual can try and sooth themselves and control their emotional dysregulation through awareness techniques rooted in mind-body practices[18]. Mind-body awareness techniques aims to therefore try and help support the individual to become more autonomous and independent in their emotional regulation process in facilitating a greater sense of self by learning one's corporal bodily sensations in a given unsettling event and/or situation[18]. Mind-body awareness techniques take the following forms:

Mind-body awareness (i.e., mindfulness) techniques wherein anxiety is concerned is premised on seeking personal homeostasis by virtue of interoceptive awareness (i.e., "…the ability to identify, access, understand, and respond appropriately to the patterns of internal signals – provides a distinct advantage to engage in life challenges and on-going adjustments"[18].

Mindful Awareness in *Body-Orientated Therapy (MABT)* is a mind-body awareness techniques which ultimately seeks interoceptive regulation (i.e., sensory modulation) by teaching individuals to recognize internal bodily signals/sensations by paying attention to felt corporal sensations which in turn enhance sensory awareness of one's emotional experience, inciting the individual to use a combination of manual (i.e., touch-based), mindfulness, and psychoeducation approaches in their emotional regulation process[18]. MABT places an emphasis on the individuals capacities to develop mindfulness practices that support the individuals ability to be in and maintain attention in the present-moment with openness, curiosity, and self-compassion[18]. Mindfulness as per according to the MABT approach, therefore encourages the individual to increase their tolerance of their "…thoughts and feelings, particularly uncomfortable ones, and facilitates the unlinking of uncomfortable observations from scripted unregulated responses", especially in situations where the individual tends to normally avoid these sensations[18]; by becoming increasingly more interoceptively aware, such can reduce distress and improve emotional regulation[18].

Meditative practices refers to a type of mind-body coping strategy whereby an individual learns to calm their consciousness (i.e., their mind) in the pursuit of achieving inner peace and harmony[7]. Meditative practices have roots in traditional Chinese medicine such as qigong in which meditation seeks to bring the mind and body as one, where the goal is to reach "detached observations" or "restful alertness"[7]. In conjunction with such, meditative practices attempt to empty the mind where self-observation and "…acceptance of process rather than content" can take place[7]. Meditative practices extend to mantra meditation, mindfulness meditation, yoga, qigong, and tai chi[7].

Yoga has been around for thousands of years, originating in India[5]. Yoga as a mind-body approach to anxiety management is found to exercise a myriad of mind-body awareness techniques via elements of "…static postures (asanas), flowing movements (vinyasas), patterns of breathing (pranayama), and mindfulness"[5]. Yoga exercises therefore provides a combination of coping techniques to try and help the individual ground themselves in physical exercise.

Relaxation techniques are taught to individuals suffering from symptoms of anxiety to try and interrupt or prevent experienced symptoms of anxiety[5]. That-is-to-say, relaxation techniques help to teach the individual to become aware of corporal sensations related to symptoms of anxiety where the individual in recognizing such, can proceed to apply specific techniques such as progressive

relaxation, breathing, or imagery coping strategies[5]. The purpose of relaxation techniques is to try and help foster an introspective awareness wherein mind-body connections amongst an individual is concerned, and try to and help the individual to calm their emotional dysregulation in which they are experiencing.

Massage therapy consists of applying physical touch in "…rhythmic long strokes, kneading, and percussive touch" amongst an individual's different body parts such as their shoulders, neck, back, arms, and legs[5]. The Swedish Massage (SM) is found to be one of the most common massage therapy approaches used[5]. Interestingly, research finds that individuals whom receive massage therapy on a regular basis present with a noticeable decrease in experienced symptoms of anxiety[5]. Research also finds that individuals whom are exposed to an environment in which hosts different sensorial relaxing approaches such as thermotherapy or relaxing room, also present with an amelioration in experiences symptoms of anxiety[5].

Tai Chi is a traditional therapeutic tool with roots from China used over centuries[5]. Tai chi was initially practiced as a martial art, however evolved over the years "…into a form of mind-body exercise involving a series of synergistic and deliberate movements while shifting weight accompanied by deep relaxation and visual concentration"[5].

Reiki developed in Japan during the mid-19th century[5]. Reiki refers to a type of "energy therapy" whereby a trained guide places/lays their hands on or just above the person with the objective of re-directing energy within the person's body to help support and encourage the person's own healing response and process[5].

Therapeutic touch refers to a form of holistic "energy therapy" develop in Western culture during the early 1970s where therapeutic touch is performed by a guide/practitioner where said individual moves their hands around a person's body from a distance of about two to five inches from the body, where the person's energy is "assessed" "…by feeling for changes in temperature, pressure, rhythm or a tingling sensations… and redirecting and rebalancing energy though the use of hand movements… to bring the two energy fields into a harmonic resonance"[5]. Bandealy et al. (2021) explain in their study that research does not specifically defend any conclusive results correlating reductions in experienced symptoms of anxiety and therapeutic touch practices, however presents such nonetheless as a mind-body approach to anxiety management[5].

Qigong is another traditional mind-body practice from China which focuses on relaxation techniques to try and help cope and reduce experienced symptoms of anxiety[5]. Qigong exercises employ body, breath, and cognitive adjustments by tapping into one's experienced psychological and physiological elements of experienced symptoms of anxiety "…including both dynamic (movement) and static (still) forms…" of coping[5].

Guided imagery is categorized as a relaxation technique that has been used since ancient times, where the focus is guided towards the interaction of an individual's brain, mind, body, and behaviour whereby the individual is taught to use their own imagination and mental processes to turn a negative mental image into a positive mental image or anxiety provoking feelings[5]. Guided imagery can either be guided by a dedicated professional, be recorded, or be self-directed by the individual themselves[5].

Overall, when describing the various mind-body approaches to anxiety management, it can be assessed that becoming aware of one's experienced corporal bodily sensations is imperative in effecting impactful management of mental processes and/or cognitive disruptions. Through mind-body awareness techniques, one becomes more in-tuned with their physiological experiences of symptoms of anxiety which in turn can be used to increase interoceptivity of one's mental state in order to optimally manage experienced symptoms. By becoming more aware of your physiological state, such consequently fosters greater mental awareness whereby psychotherapeutic approaches can precedingly take place with possibly greater success in mediating symptoms by virtue of greater self-awareness. Importantly, when analyzing the various mind-body awareness techniques, it becomes evidently apparent that the individual needs to withdraw themselves in order to engage in a mind-body awareness strategy effectively. That said, mind-body awareness techniques therefore are essential in anxiety management strategies, however do not provide an individual with the necessary discretionary methodology to manage their experienced symptoms of anxiety; and is hence an imperative part of emotional regulation, however not the entire approach.

Research on Sensorial Stimulation and Anxiety Management Strategies

Research on multisensory stimuli wherein anxiety management is concerned has gained prominence in the field of research over the past few years[23]. Sensorial anxiety relief devices work to help support the individual on various mental and physiological elements. Sensorial items/devices work on (1) *biofeedback and neurofeedback* amongst the individual (i.e., prompting the individual to fidget with the anxiety relief device in conjunction with a felt unease in physiological processing such as increased heart rate, muscle tension, etc., whereby the individual can attempt to regain control over their dysregulated bodily functioning in response to a trigger)[16]; (2) *haptic feedback and sensory stimulation*, which refers to sense of touch fostering grounding techniques during anxious moments[16];

(3) *mind-body awareness techniques* such as meditative and breathing exercises are often found to be integrated in the essence of anxiety relief devices, whereby the sensorial items help the individual to regulate breathing and activate the parasympathetic nervous system responsible for provoking a sense of being calm[16]; and (4) *Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)* is found to have implications of CBT principles by virtue of enabling the individual to recognize/identify and modify anxiety-inducing cognitions and apply a behavioral coping strategy to try and manage such[16].

There exists a number of anxiety sensorial items/devices in which strive to try and help the individual regulate and calm one's nervous system. Objects ranging from visual to tactile/somatosensory to olfactory to auditory to gustation. Contemporary modern-day society has applied and innovated various traditional as well as newer techniques towards anxiety management. Below lists items/devices:

Tactile/Somatosensory

Fidget Toys are items/devices that provide an individual with a haptic, sensorial intervention for experienced anxiety. As per Weng (2025), fidget toys such as "worry beads" (also known as "Komboloi") have existed for centuries dating back to Greek monks on Mount Athos[22]. Worry beads were originally used for praying and mindfulness, and expanded over the years to also be used as decorations and for relaxation[22]. During the Ming dynasty in China, people would hold two metal balls and rotate them against one another in order to try and sooths the mind and enter into a meditative state[13]. In modern contemporary society, fidget toys come in multiple forms ranging from *stress balls*, *magnetic silicone balls*, *slinkies*, *Pop-It's*, *Chinese finger traps*, *Koosh balls*, *fidget spinners*, *fidget cubes*, *sensory stones*, *jewellery*, and other different types of sensory objects aimed at enhancing concentration, distraction, and relieving stress[22]. Research finds that fidget toys are especially effective aids for patients suffering from anxiety and anxiety disorders as well as amongst individuals suffering from neurodevelopmental disorders such as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)[12,22]. Research finds that fidget toys help individuals to self-regulate via a "socially acceptable" method[22]; which can actually decrease incidents of social anxiety as well as internalized anxieties amongst patients[12]. Research also finds that when fidgeting, concentration and task-performance increases, therefore also leading to reductions in anxiety performance is concerned[12,22]. In consideration of the above mentioned, fidget toys are therefore found to decrease experienced symptoms of anxiety and stress by virtue of distracting an individual from the anxiety-provoking trigger and helping the individual to re-focus their attention towards sensorial soothing[13].

In other, fidget toys such as stress balls are found to enable individuals to relieve physiological tension, where re-focusing energy that is inundated with anxiety towards physical tension-release instead[13]. Research also finds that stress balls increase "…focus and awareness by returning them to the present moment"[13], hence being able to regain a certain mind-body awareness by cause of sensorial stimulation.

Another form of fidget is *fidget jewelry*, which have been found to come in rings, bracelets, necklaces, or clips. Fidget jewelry is made with interactive elements in which enable individuals to engage in repetitive motions supporting tactile distraction and sensory stimulation[15]. Fidget jewelry works on the sensation of touch, where anxious thoughts and feelings can be redirected based on tactical stimulation, offering a sort of sensorial distraction and soothing mechanism by activating sensory receptors by touch, where said signals the brain to calm down by consequently activating and re-directing the maladaptive physiological response towards a calming act[15].

Anxiety clothing such as a weighted blanket, vest, and/or stuffed animal are newer forms of sensorial anxiety management items. Weighted items are mainly used for patients diagnosed with ASD, however Hutson and Hutson (2024) find that anxiety clothing is being increasingly more popularized with adults in reason that "weighted items, such as blankets or lap pads, provide proprioceptive feedback that aids in self-regulation by mimicking a calming, deep-pressure touch"[12]. In this sense, physiological distress such as heart palpitations (i.e., rapid heartbeat) can attempt to be managed with weighted or pressured touch in trying to reproduce a "hug" to calm the individual[12]. Furthermore, more recently anxiety sweaters have been developed to include stress balls at the end of sleeves, as well as embedded textile sensory patterns in pockets in efforts to offer individuals a novel and innovative anxiety tool[10].

In other, research on *zootherapy* as a form of anxiety management has found conclusive results wherein petting an animal and/or having the presence of an animal as calming and soothing for individuals suffering from symptoms of anxiety and stress by increasing oxytocin levels and decreasing cortisol levels[11]. In conjunction with such, other forms of non-traditional zootherapy such as robotic imitations of animals have been found to decrease levels of experienced anxiety and stress as well amongst individuals, and more specifically amongst individuals suffering from dementia[6,11].

Olfactory and Gustation

Aromatherapy is an alternative medicine approach as well as a common technique used to try and mediate experienced symptoms of anxiety via the use of essential oils, which can be used by diffusion (from an essential oil

diffusor), bed sprays, by applying a topical cream, body soaps, and by ingesting essential oils orally by placing drops in one's mouth and/or by individual inhalers (precautionary measures are advised when choosing to consume essential oils)[22]. Aromatherapy essential oils identified by research to reduce cortisol levels include lavender and vanilla[22], eucalyptus, citrus, and sandalwood[12]. Research cited by Weng (2025) finds that aromatherapy alone is not effective enough in managing experienced symptoms of anxiety, where using such in addition to other forms of therapeutic approaches such as touch yields greater success[22].

Auditory

As previously mentioned in the section on *Research on Anxiety Management Strategies*, existing technological innovations created for anxiety management relief exist through the use of mental health mobile applications and AI technologies. Research finds that *mindfulness applications* provide individuals with sensorial relaxation through the use of a "calming voice", "music", and/or "slow breathing exercises"[22]. The ultimate objective of mindfulness applications are to try and help support the individual in regulating physiological distress via either breathing or muscle relaxation techniques using meditative efforts to try and help bring the patient back into the 'here and now' (i.e., the present moment, a Gestalt therapy approach)[22].

Visual

Research has found that *light therapy* as a sensorial anxiety management technique provides an individual with a calming and stress-reducing item/device to be placed in a triggering environment. Research has found that color and brightness have an impact on the individual, where in the case of anxiety and stress, three colors of light are commonly used – full spectrum white light, red light, and blue light[20]. Another visualization technique which has already been discussed earlier in the *Research on Mind-Body Awareness Techniques and Anxiety Management* section includes *guided imagery*.

When contemplating the various sensorial techniques for anxiety management, it becomes evident that sensorial items/devices provides individuals with a strategy that can help support individuals in both their psychological and physiological emotional regulation when experiencing symptoms of anxiety occur. The precise science behind sensorial items/devices in emotional regulation are not completely understood yet in current contemporary modern society, however research has found that sensorial items/devices promote the redirection of physiological disturbances via sensorial stimuli that can provide an alternative approach to calming an individual's nervous system as well as support the production of certain neurochemicals responsible for decreasing cortisol levels and relieving symptoms of fight-of-flight (i.e., anxiety). Moreover, research finds that sensorial items/devices also hold an important anthropological purpose within contemporary modern-day society, for sensorial items/devices enhance cultural awareness in an individual's self-management of experienced anxiety by virtue of offering on-demand and discrete object(s) that can be used in diverse environments and settings. Notwithstanding all of such, sensorial items/devices alone are not enough to provide an individual with optimal management strategy, for an individual will need to become self-aware and understand what to seek when engaging in sensorial stimuli when experiencing symptoms of anxiety and stress; for it not knowing why and/or when to apply sensorial stimuli, such remains ineffective when simply distracting one's self and not applying other necessary coping strategies in the mediation of maladaptive and/or distorted cognitions.

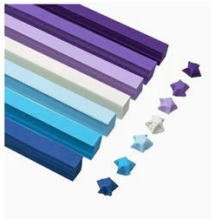
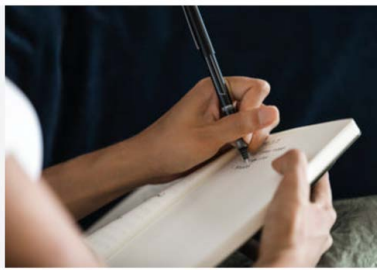
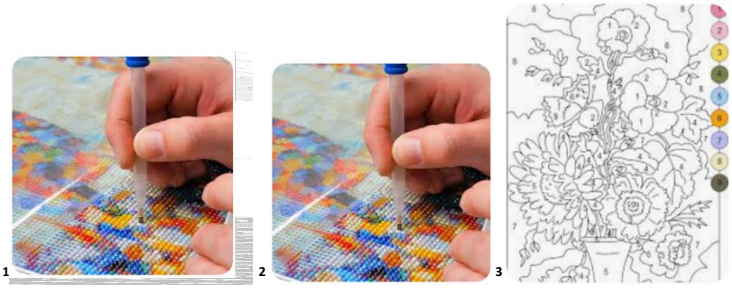
In conjunction with such, research on social anxiety and performance anxiety has presented conclusive data where sensorial items/devices used by professionals in the workplace such as in healthcare, business, educational settings, also during shopping or in leisure centers has had positive impacts on reducing experienced symptoms of anxiety amongst individuals whom use sensorial items/devices and who suffer from social and/or performance anxiety[14]. Macdonald et al. (2024) explain social anxiety as the situation wherein individuals during social situations and/or interactions internalize their held belief that they are being perceived negatively by others, which in turn provokes various physiological and psychological disturbances amongst the individual whereby the individual becomes more likely to avoid and/or reduce their association with the triggering social situation[14]. Macdonald et al. (2024) found that using anxiety sensorial devices/tools during triggering social situations by individuals suffering from social anxiety as a result of *affective haptics*, promoted "… emotional regulation by facilitating response modulation, attentional redeployment, and cognitive change"[14]. The calming effects emitted by vibrotactile stimuli, enables one to become more physically present as well as supports emotional regulation by re-directing assimilated anxiety responses through haptic and tactile experience[14].

Discussion

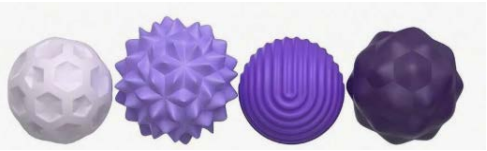
In consideration of the foregoing, sensorial stimuli in tandem with mind-body awareness techniques can perhaps offer a more complete approach to emotional regulation wherein experienced symptoms of anxiety are concerned; especially when outside of a counselling session. As mentioned above, it has been analyzed throughout the number of studies cited, that mind-body awareness techniques do not inherently provide an outright uniquely successful method to anxiety management, however can provide valuable techniques necessary in relieving anxiety

Annex 1 – Sensorial Items + Visual Example

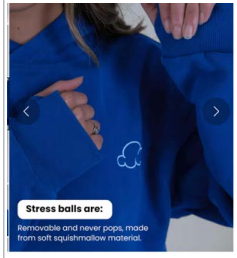
Sensory Item	Visual Example
Fidget spinner	(retrieved from https://ca.shein.com/Aluminum-Alloy-For-Stress-Relief-Silent-R188-Bearing-Metal-Hand-Spinner-With-Drawing-Process-Office-Desk-Toy-For-Adults-Anxiety-Relief-Focus-Aid-EDC-Hand-Fidget-Toy-p-52350048.html?src_identifier=st%3D4%60sc%3DFidgets%20Toys%60sr%3D0%60ps%3D1&src_module=search&src_tab_page_id=page_search1768998991763&mallCode=1&pageListType=4&imgRatio=3-4&detailBusinessFrom=0-1_52350048%7C0-2&pageListType=4)
Fidget cubes with different sensorial sides	(retrieved from https://ca.shein.com/1pc-5pcs-10pcs-Finger-Cube-Stress-Relief-Toy-Squeeze-Hand-Fidget-Toy-Anxiety-Relief-Office-Desk-Toy-Sensory-Toy-Finger-Cube-Toy-Travel-Toy-Random-Color-p-58909800.html?src_identifier=st%3D4%60sc%3DFidgets%20Toys%60sr%3D0%60ps%3D1&src_module=search&src_tab_page_id=page_search1768998991763&mallCode=1&pageListType=4&imgRatio=3-4&detailBusinessFrom=0-1_58909800%7C0-2&pageListType=4)
Stress balls	(retrieved from https://ca.shein.com/7cm-High-Elasticity-Hand-Grip-Ball-Finger-Strengthener-Massager-Exercise-Squeeze-Training-Tool-For-Muscles-Strengthening-Blue-Gym-Accessories-Deporte-Gimnasio-Ejercicio-En-Casa-p-30637910.html?src_identifier=st%3D5%60sc%3Drubber%20wrist%20rebound%20ball%60sr%3D0%60ps%3D1&src_module=search&src_tab_page_id=page_search1768998981886&mallCode=1&pageListType=4&imgRatio=1-1&detailBusinessFrom=0-1_30637910%7C0-2&pageListType=4)
Squish balls (can be filled with sensorial items such as beads, glitter, etc. for example).	(retrieved from https://ca.shein.com/2-5-10-20-30-72PCS-Stress-Balls-Sensory-Stress-Squeezing-Balls-For-Adults-Colorful-Stress-Relieving-Squeeze-Balls-Fidget-Toy-Birthday-Party-Favors-Gift-Bag-Filler-Pinata-Filler-Goodie-Bag-Stuffers-Random-Style-And-Color-p-103112562.html?src_identifier=st%3D4%60sc%3DFidgets%20Toys%60sr%3D0%60ps%3D1&src_module=search&src_tab_page_id=page_search1768998991763&mallCode=1&pageListType=4&imgRatio=1-1&detailBusinessFrom=0-1_103112562%7C0-2&pageListType=4)

Anxiety rings	 [1](retrieved from https://ca.shein.com/5-10-20-50PCS-Spiky-Sensory-Finger-Rings-Acupressure-Ring-Set-Great-Spikey-Fidget-Ring-For-Silent-Stress-Reducer-And-Massager-Random-Color-Fidget-Ring-Anxiety-Fidget-Toys-Ring-Toys-For-Teens-Fidgets-Toys-Spiky-Sensory-Magnet-Fidget-p-51564655.html?src_identifier=st%3D5%60sc%3Drubber%20wrist%20rebound%20ball%60sr%3D0%60ps%3D1&src_module=search&src_tab_page_id=page_search1768998981886&mallCode=1&pageListType=4&imgRatio=1-1&detailBusinessFrom=0-2&pageListType=4) [2](retrieved from https://www.google.com/search?q=silver+fidget+ring&sca_esv=7961302cda4152b2&rlz=1C5CHFA_enCA978CA978&udm=2&biw=1326&bih=732&aic=0&ei=JstwaYfqPI3Z5NoP-5Ls2A4&ved=0ahUKEwiHle--1ZySAxWNLFkFHXsJG-sQ4dUDCBI&uact=5&oq=silver+fidget+ring&gs_lp=Egtnd3Mtd2l6LWltZyISc2lsdmVyIGZpZGdldCByaW5nMgYQABgHGB4yBhAAGAcYHjIGEAAYBxgeMgYQABgHGB4yBhAAGAcYHjIFEAAYgAQyBhAAGAcYHjIGEAAYBxgeMgYQABgHGB4yBhAAGAcYHkj9CFDrAljVB3ABeACQAQCYAT-gAZ0DqgEBN7gBA8gBAPgBAZgCB6ACkAPCAg0QABiABBixAxhDGIoFmAMAiAYBkgcBN6AHjCqyBwE2uAeJA8IHAzItN8gHHYAIAA&sclient=gws-wiz-img#sv=CAMSVhoyKhBlLWpIaWg4VkV2TzBORzVNMg5qSGloOFZFdk8wTkc1TToOWGVPWVlOaGdwcC02Zk0gBCocCgZtb3NhaWMSEGUtakhpaDhWRXZPME5HNU0YADABGAcggNb0kAkwAkoKCAIQAhgCIAIoAg)
Origami (Paper star making)	 (retrieved from https://www.amazon.ca/Colorful-Decoration-Crafting-Supplies-gradientblue%EF%BC%86Purple/dp/B0C993Z645/ref=asc_df_B0C993Z645?mcid=5a86eab09f193a639bb1673458c3a251&tag=googleshopc0c-20&linkCode=df0&hvadid=753787554431&hvpos=&hvnetw=g&hvrand=10867271519187258649&hvpone=&hvptwo=&hvqmt=&hvdev=c&hvdvcmdl=&hvlocint=&hvlocphy=9000473&hvtargid=pla-2445232837594&hvocijid=10867271519187258649-B0C993Z645-&hvexpln=0&gad_source=1&th=1)
Journaling	 (retrieved from https://www.shopify.com/stock-photos/photos/journalling-on-the-couch)
Art (Examples: mandala's, diamond painting, number painting)	 [1](retrieved from https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.color.mandala&pli=1) [2](retrieved from https://hopalongstudio.com/everything-you-need-to-know-about-diamond-painting/) [3](retrieved from https://artistbynumber.com/products/free-paint-by-number-1?srsltid=AfmBOooR8AhvBV3je2f_dOaQTskLKIweBUss9qyk0Qc-22B5QazjyCYr)

Rubrik's Cube	(retrieved from https://www.puzzles.wiki/wiki/Rubik%27s_Cube)
Pop-It's (i.e., silicone items that one can push circular in and out)	(retrieved from https://ca.shein.com/1PC-4PCS-Silicone-Push-Bubble-Pop-Fidget-Sensory-Toy-Circle-Colorful-Push-It-Popping-Roundness-Square-Octagon-Heart-Shaped-Pop-Tubes-Heart-Fidget-p-34853209.html?src_identifier=st%3D2%60sc%3Dcircle%20fidget%20pop-it%20toys%60sr%3D0%60ps%3D1&src_module=search&src_tab_page_id=page_goods_detail1769000320060&mallCode=1&pageListType=4&imgRatio=3-4&detailBusinessFrom=0-1_34853209%7C0-2&pageListType=4)
Weighted blanket	(retrieved from https://www.amazon.ca/Bare-Home-Weighted-Blanket-Kids/dp/B086KWXJMY/ref=sr_1_1_sspa?dib=eyJ2IjoiMSJ9.PZDYrs-fA0-aN0WZstgOZYmTdO0EK1DSG86tHYzYHZbb9wblrE1ruC-11S5kv7ffy6cu8EYPicV7jCRse4o_DP7ghhhG5okC30avphSYxjaqjazVMYto_xqkR6noG_SVoHFyrpbrWd-ESmf80fpql10mpfph3bXK5nYxR_r7f9hHPGImuc5DCm4qx7q7eZ4NacTh6FsXeEV940mCPTr83blHs7ilUiju2f_5or8CG3yjJpDynvxum9cPqFH7Vyp6yl5JplA5y3XgUQ-4RkBhDiBQRqMPCsl3OMvTTYGP87c.zWGPrko8eINIURefUTkiqTFPcYjr-cmZPjoQjZ0pjTc&dib_tag=se&gad_source=1&hvadid=794125686212&hvdev=c&hvexpln=0&hvlocphy=9000890&hvnetw=g&hvocijid=13297146637203877770--&hvqmt=e&hvrand=13297146637203877770&hvtargid=kwd-672478778&hydadcr=324_1015368417&keywords=weighted%2Bblanket&mcid=f12685c1a4003b2ab330f6d5b7bd79c9&qid=1774709693&sr=8-1-spons&sp_csd=d2lkZ2V0TmFtZT1zcF9hdGY&th=1)
Weighted vest	(Retrieved from https://www.amazon.ca/Power-WearHouse-Compression-Designed-Alzheimers/dp/B0DQC39GKY/ref=sr_1_8?crid=2ZTX4T9JIRLBK&dib=eyJ2IjoiMSJ9.xU12__B-Y-sH_tKjymg-sWhg2y1-9qqE5GLSxxl_SLSe3KzHcrlEIrZA-TivqzHM5Jam_nXabH4toLX1iTrScuQHSmiSDQaylotm6PuLuDFgER9MS95TYyyhgMHhBOI8VqcahbngfcZTEhVCpTO8r9k-dHW7AhKjBoF4_dTM6ptVREVkJzpueoV_-0zk31HpF2BWWiOmR6p3ARlsWt4W0uaYqr6IWmZIBFa-Zj4UMY3rroarKRD-d6XL0G-Br8C6W53WEMSVR1SKOgzjbGdpoxS6rUGltBqSAcVyefhiYYOfQY.73WS9B5OKayePFoTfV3o_cgzLoXw-50wckdUlC-ZLmXc&dib_tag=se&keywords=weighted%2Bvest%2Bfor%2Banxiety%2Badults&qid=1774709862&sprefix=weighted%2Bvest%2Bfor%2Banxiety%2Badult%2Caps%2C137&sr=8-8&th=1)

Weighted stuffed animal	(Retrieved from https://www.amazon.ca/Weighted-Stuffed-Panda-Animals-Weighteds/dp/B0GT3DM3DG/ref=sr_1_3_sspa?crid=2KEVZCWB4O5Z&dib=eyJ2IjoiMSJ9.KnT6zRI3TgM2vW-qNGJko1M1ARHbQ2StqDh0yZFva3Ny9anOa5xuCkop9GKa7zvnWk9adwJCpXYDLc8jpehntF9QMVGA3MZCy-BZswiyXmud4RZQ6UM_t4g7yHaXAIWwODv9juypCRvKzvxvKFpB3fy_bxCqwqHHd6ellDr3YMoXKQdBZQsg55BAnA_z5-ni5FYwKQ7en-luSSNLOt5he6o8fD49uea6MLJbzk1mJBY9OM_qFjdOLuaL3TfDCfdwvZJvo1Q143QJWbrwQHamu6NfZyJuvk2GlFMpGOP4Fm0.hRiAIbrgkkcYs_d9dHIGP_OXvkRSAE6PylA27_wWrr0&dib_tag=se&keywords=weighted%2Banxiety%2Bstuffed%2Banima%3B&qid=1774709805&sprefix=weighted%2Banxiety%2Bstuffed%2Banima%2B%2Caps%2C128&sr=8-3-spons&sp_csd=d2lkZ2V0TmFtZT1zcF9hdGY&th=1)
Magnetic silicone textured balls	 (retrieved from https://ca.shein.com/4-8PCS-Magnetic-Silicone-Ball-Set-Textured-Fidget-Toys-Assorted-Colors-Black-Green-Pink-Purple-Stress-Relief-For-Office-Classroom-Company-All-Year-Use-p-219549767.html?src_identifier=st%3D4%60sc%3DFidgets%20Toys%60sr%3D0%60ps%3D1&src_module=search&src_tab_page_id=page_search1768998991763&mallCode=1&pageListType=4&imgRatio=3-4&detailBusinessFrom=0-1_219549767%7C0-2&pageListType=4)
Sensory soothing stones (silicone pads with different textures on them)	(retrieved from https://ca.shein.com/Sensory-Soothing-Stone-Soft-Textured-Stress-Relief-Toy-For-Teens-Helps-Relieve-Anxiety-And-Stress-Suitable-For-Students-p-157514381.html?src_identifier=st%3D5%60sc%3Drubber%20wrist%20rebound%20ball%60sr%3D0%60ps%3D1&src_module=search&src_tab_page_id=page_search1768998981886&mallCode=1&pageListType=4&imgRatio=3-4&detailBusinessFrom=0-1_157514381%7C0-2&pageListType=4)
Slinkies	(retrieved from https://www.amazon.ca/Original-Colorful-Just-Play-Presents/dp/B08S4567FZ)
Chinese finger traps	(retrieved from https://www.amazon.ca/Fun-Express-FNEIN-9-44-Chinese/dp/B005D1P59W)

Koosh ball	(retrieved from https://ca.shein.com/2pcs-4pcs-6pcs-8pcs-Mini-Sensory-Toy-Set-Balls-Stretch-Balls-Rainbow-Velvet-Balls-And-Sticky-Balls-Stress-Relieving-Toys-Holiday-Party-Gifts-Plastic-Balls-Swing-Ball-Set-Bouncy-Ball-Stocking-Stuffers-For-Teens-Sensory-Toys-Balls-Bouncy-Balls-Sensory-Toys-Stress-Ball-p-143283681.html?src_identifier=st%3D4%60sc%3DFidgets%20Toys%60sr%3D0%60ps%3D1&src_module=search&src_tab_page_id=page_search1768998991763&mallCode=1&pageListType=4&imgRatio=3-4&detailBusinessFrom=0-1_143283681%7C0-2&pageListType=4)
Bead strings (similar to Mala Beads used in meditation practices)	(retrieved from https://www.shutterstock.com/search/buddhist-prayer-beads)
Skin picking anxiety sensory items	[1] [2] [1](retrieved from https://ca.shein.com/1-3pcs-Skin-Picking-Fidget-Toys-Picking-Pad-Silicone-Sensory-Toys-For-Skin-Picking-Trichotillomania-Hair-Pulling-Anxiety-Relief-Suitable-For-Party-Favors-Stress-Relief-Toys-Party-Favors-p-95158738.html?src_identifier=st%3D5%60sc%3Drubber%20wrist%20rebound%20ball%60sr%3D0%60ps%3D1&src_module=search&src_tab_page_id=page_search1768998981886&mallCode=1&pageListType=4&imgRatio=1-1&detailBusinessFrom=0-1_95158738%7C0-2&pageListType=4) [2](retrieved from https://ca.shein.com/1-3PCS-Skin-Anxiety-Toys-Peel-Pad-Anxiety-Peel-Party-Pad-Anxiety-Toys-For-Trichotillomania-Skin-Pickers-Dermatillomania-ADHD-OCD-Adults-p-41042302.html?src_identifier=st%3D5%60sc%3Drubber%20wrist%20rebound%20ball%60sr%3D0%60ps%3D1&src_module=search&src_tab_page_id=page_search1768998981886&mallCode=1&pageListType=4&imgRatio=1-1&detailBusinessFrom=0-1_41042302%7C0-2&pageListType=4)
Finger tracing stencils	(retrieved from https://ca.shein.com/12pcs-Sensory-Stress-Relief-Stickers-Textured-Touch-Help-Relieve-Anxiety-And-Restlessness-For-Teenagers-And-Office-Workers-Suitable-For-Emotion-Calming-Breathing-Meditation-ADHD-Also-Can-Be-Used-To-Decorate-Office-Desks-Great-Gift-For-Family-And-Colleagues-p-280455452.html?src_identifier=st%3D4%60sc%3DFidgets%20Toys%60sr%3D0%60ps%3D1&src_module=search&src_tab_page_id=page_search1768998991763&mallCode=1&pageListType=4&imgRatio=3-4&detailBusinessFrom=0-1_280455452%7C0-2&pageListType=4)

Rubber wrist rebound ball	(retrieved from https://ca.shein.com/1pc-Funny-Novelty-Rubber-Wrist-Rebound-Ball-63mm-High-Elastic-Hand-Throwing-Elastic-Ball-Rope-Halloween-Christmas-Gifts-Youth-Elastic-PU-Training-Spheres-With-Wrist-Strap-Set-Durable-Throwing-And-Bouncing-Exercise-Kit-For-Outdoor-Play-And-Sports-Includes-Baseball-Soccer-Basketball-Tennis-Equipment-Hand-Eye-Coordination-Training-Balls-p-51648170.html?src_identifier=st%3D5%60sc%3Drubber%20wrist%20rebound%20ball%60sr%3D0%60ps%3D1&src_module=search&src_tab_page_id=page_search1768998981886&mallCode=1&pageListType=4&imgRatio=1-1&detailBusinessFrom=0-1_51648170%7C0-2&pageListType=4)
Mind-Body awareness techniques	(1) Try to sit down, up-right in your chair, with both feet planted on the ground. While taking small breaths in-and-out, name at least five items around you (more if needed) until you have regained mind-body awareness. (2) Try to touch the ends of your finger tips with the tips of your nails, count in your head until ten (more if needed), while taking small breaths until you have regained mind-body awareness.
Light therapy	(Retrieved from https://www.amazon.ca/Therapy-Dxles-Temperature-Brightness-Function/dp/B0B52CZ458/ref=sr_1_8?dib=eyJ2IjoiMSJ9.PP97R5Ern-8Neh15sfYnJMHe4p3l3ZgcUNMlhbCNaFgXjaNG_gwwvpUZMIdn_A6ooKvRp6WTdH2E0bpOY62YuDzpIqDVheGM2VU8-Zpfb8cWkZX33ofjP5mU_dvcUtIW-JR2IlhQjuLrAbVNfii_0-iWg0cL-8DDSd_egrEWJv2z8N9KeeWr801YXs0lBFrwlTnxn2pPjwsjO-ZKjxbNWYJP7W_GgLNwVCThAH-oXqMRcHeyJpR5VXHztu8_WGG-IdGepd2MjObzU2hri2CJ6p4An-83qFT-1_rfMQyX0BY.mtFLrpueNUSNR-mS9zCBbe5OeCvj-mMYhGx_JWZfHWo&dib_tag=se&keywords=light+therapy&qid=1774710124&sr=8-8)
Aromatherapy	(Retrieved from https://www.amazon.ca/Diffiser-Essential-Diffuser-Humidifier-Shut-Off/dp/B0B2K931C4/ref=asc_df_B0B2K931C4?mcid=245bf6f70e7832498993a9de47e9ebaf&tag=googleshopc0c-20&linkCode=df0&hvadid=706738922637&hvpos=&hvnetw=g&hvrand=16023820017412387712&hvpone=&hvptwo=&hvqmt=&hvdev=c&hvdvcmdl=&hvlocint=&hvlocphy=9210752&hvtargid=pla-1729616266691&hvocijid=16023820017412387712-B0B2K931C4-&hvexpln=0&gad_source=1&th=1)
Anxiety Hoodie	 (Retrieved from https://www.cloudnineclothing.ca/products/cloud-hoodie)

partially. Inc conjunction with such, it can be stated that more "traditional" approaches as used by licensed professionals (i.e., cognitive, behavioral, and CBT practices) also only provide partial relief for experienced symptoms of anxiety. By incorporating both mind-body awareness practices and sensorial stimuli while outside of the counselling session, such is proposed and suggested by this literature review to render an optimal anxiety management strategy.

Anxiety can be felt/experienced in the body in various diverse manners either mentally (i.e., psychologically) and/or corporally (i.e., physiologically). Emotional regulation amongst an individual when experiencing bouts of anxiety requires one to develop an interoception towards both their mental and physiological functioning and sensations (i.e., sensory modulation); which is an integral element implicated in the sensorial processing of one's central nervous system[8]. By being able to regulate and calm down one's central nervous system and sensory processing by virtue of interoception has been found by research to be positively correlated to the body's functioning in reaching a homeostatic state[8].

Sensorial items/devices when used to alleviate experienced symptoms of anxiety, research has found that the varies sensorial tools produce calming effects physiologically amongst an individual, for when applying tactile stimuli during physiological and/or psychological distress such provides the individual's central nervous system an impetus to calm down and return back to a homeostatic state. Sensory items/devices go beyond aiding neurodiverse individuals, but also support other populations in addressing sensorial needs in view of tactile relaxation.

Interestingly, Hutson and Hutson (2024) shed light on an important aspect of anxiety management in relation to sensorial items/devices wherein cultural diversity and inclusiveness is concerned[12]. Hutson and Hutson (2024) emphasize the fact that majority if not all research on sensorial anxiety items/devices are rooted in Western culture investigation, where taking the example of aromatherapy for instant, might not necessarily meet the needs of other non-Western cultures in terms of calming and anxiety-reducing odours[12]. Moreover in conjunction with such, when reflecting on acceptance of mental health within different cultures, an important detail is forgotten where it is very true that not all cultures and/or societies are accepting of mental health. In this sense, symptom management needs be more discrete if frowned upon culturally, which is what sensorial items/devices precisely provide individuals with[12]. In this sense, anxiety relief items/devices are found to support individuals in coping with their experienced symptoms of anxiety not only in an effective manner, but also in discrete ways where public displays of managing might actually provoke further anxiety (i.e., social anxiety) based on cultural norms and/or perceived negative opinions of others is internalized.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be stated that the use of sensorial items in anxiety management strategies can have undeniable and positive results. The act of regaining mind-body awareness as a result of sensorial stimulation derived from tactile, olfactory, visual stimulation, enables one whom is experiencing symptoms of anxiety to ground themselves and reclaim corporal sensation to regulate (i.e., sensory modulation) the nervous system back into the present moment by virtue of interoception. It can also be concluded in this literature review that there exists concrete data found in research that defends the utility of mind-body practices in positive anxiety relief.

What has been found in this literature review is that research however lacks in investigating the distinct correlations between anxiety relief devices (i.e., sensorial items) and mind-body awareness practices used together in one single approach/method. Academic publications wherein the two key variables (i.e., (1) anxiety relief devised (i.e., sensorial items) and (2) mind-body awareness practices) were not found researched together. There exists an impressive volume of academic studies and literature reviews focusing on each variable separately discussing interoception and sensory modulation, notwithstanding such, this literature review can draw positive conclusions between the two variables of interest, however research cannot defend this conclusion indefinitely given that there is no precise data proving such.

For example, when analyzing the mind-body awareness technique of massage therapy, the use of aromatherapy (i.e., essential oils) when giving a massage with human touch invokes important contemplations when considering the correlations between mind-body awareness and the use of sensorial stimuli in seeking calmness and relaxation for experienced anxiety. For the use of aromatherapy (olfactory stimuli) and mind-body awareness by massage therapy, the individual is applying various coping strategies in order to reach a state of calmness and relaxation. Moreover in this same train of thought, as mentioned essential oils identified to be commonly used in aromatherapy include eucalyptus, lavender, and vanilla – do these scents manifest relaxing predispositions and relief to individuals in reason of mental associations/imagery? Meaning, eucalyptus and lavender are scents commonly found in spas, does this therefore provoke a mental association of greater relaxation and calmness amongst a patient in light of mental identifiers placing the scent of eucalyptus in an environment (i.e., a spa) which exudes de-stressing? Does the scent of vanilla incite happy memories and mental images and sensations such as possibly Christmas time, ice cream, treats, things

of which can remind one of warmth, safety, and comfort? In this sense, aromatherapy is understood to accordingly provide physiological relief as well as perhaps also very possibly mental grounding as a result of a sort of mind-body imagery practice.

The above mentioned provides a train of thought offering an example to the suggestion made in this literature review to combine both sensorial stimuli and mind-body practices as one in a single innovative approach to try and mediate experienced symptoms of anxiety. This literature review acknowledges that mind-body awareness techniques should be first taught and exercised with a trained and dedicated professional in order for the individual to develop an interoception towards their mind-body awareness first before engaging in self-guided practices. Once one is able to develop and establish their interoception, and become more aware to their corporal bodily sensations and needs, then be introduced towards a covert intervention such as anxiety items/devices to further soothe and reduce their experienced anxiety. It first takes introspection prior to efficient management amongst an individual in essence. That said, this literature review proposes a new type of anxiety management approach that focuses on specific mind-body awareness practices and the use of sensorial stimuli by a trained professional. It should be noted that this literature review does not propose nor suggest a complete eradication of experienced anxiety and stress, however rather proposes an approach by combining both mind-body awareness and sensorial stimuli together in order to better manage experienced symptoms of anxiety collectively.

Future Research

Future research can build off of this narrative literature review by utilizing such to assess, evaluate, and investigate the effectiveness of employing sensorial items in mind-body awareness and grounding techniques targeting anxiety management coping strategies for patients outside of the counselling via a project that includes real-time human subjects in order to collect data to test and defend this literature review's proposed conclusions. This literature review can be employed by future researchers to continue to try and attempt to innovative approaches wherein anxiety management for individuals around the world is concerned. Future research can help to build a pathway forward in clarifying whether or not there exists a clear link between sensorial devices and mental grounding and self-awareness techniques in anxiety management skills training via participant based studies. Conclusively, such can bring forth certitude towards the proposed hypothesis found within this narrative literature review.

Limitations

Limitations of this literature review include the fact that this literature review does not include specific conversations on Sensory Processing Disorders (SPD), which could add further depth and enlightenment to the content discussed wherein the use of sensorial stimulation for anxiety management is concerned. Another limitation is found in the decision to not include laughter therapy approach in the *Research on Mind-Body Awareness Techniques and Anxiety Management* section of this paper, in reason of the author's personal bias towards the technique (perceived by the author to not be relevant); an approach of which could add further depth to the literature review written. Furthermore, another limitation of this literature review includes the fact that this paper did not include a discussion on wearable vibrotactile devices (discussed in Haynes et al., 2022 publication), which could have added to further depth of this literature review as well.

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Not applicable – no research subjects.

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Availability of Data and Materials

Information, referenced articles, and statistics cited throughout this review can be accessed online.

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