Through technology and innovative design, the Snoezelen room is a controlled multi-sensory environment that helps to create a therapeutic alliance between the client and the Certified Therapeutic Recreations Specialist (CTRS) as well as a safe place to develop life skills. Many organizations create a multisensory environment (MSE) in order to use a wide range of multi-sensory stimulation to provide special environments for individuals with a variety of disabilities, disorders and conditions including, but not limited to anxiety, autism, dementia, intellectual disabilities, brain injury, post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, behavioral disabilities and chronic pain. Building and utilizing an MSE makes a world of difference to the individuals that NWSRA serves.

An MSE is a space for enjoying a variety of sensory experiences in which gentle stimulation of the senses can be provided in a controlled environment. The Snoezelen room is an MSE that is designed to deliver stimuli to various senses and is used to provide multi-sensory or single sensory focus. It is a non-directive therapy that is controlled by the client not by the therapist and is individualized to each client’s sensory needs. Through allowing an individual to participate at their own free will in a safe environment, the CTRS helps maximize the individual’s potential to focus, feel in control, make choices and reduce pain and anxiety both mentally and physically.

Prior to a clients’ entry into NWSRA’s Sensory Therapy Program, the CTRS performs a comprehensive assessment of each individual. The assessment includes a parent survey, review of existing notes or reports, and conversations with family, teachers and service providers to compile an overview of the current abilities and needs of the client. The CTRS utilizes the assessments to create an individual therapy plan outlining the client’s goals. Once goals are created, the therapist meets with the family to discuss the goals as well as benchmarks for success. The CTRS’s write and submit an evaluation after each session to ensure goals are being met, as well as tracking the client’s behaviors, performances and changes from session to session over time. The sensory therapy sessions are recorded, and the parent or guardian is provided an iPad so they may view the client and therapist during the entire session.

Through the NWSRA Sensory Therapy Program, certified staff provide an innovative approach toward providing clients the tools to enhance and unlock their own abilities. It also provides families with an option for therapy that goes above and beyond in customizing the experience to meet the needs of the client. For more information on the Snoezelen Sensory Room, contact Andrea Griffin at 847-392-2848, ext. 235 or e-mail andreag@nwsra.org.