

SNOEZELLEN AS A THERAPY



Snoezelen is introduced by Lebenshilfe founder and researcher T. Saraswathi Devi for the first time in India at Lebenshilfe



K. Alekhya playing with fiber lamp

Visakhapatnam, as a relief to the suffering parents and families having people with severe mental retardation with the help of Floor Jonker, Jeanny Mannekes who motivated Lolkje Brouwer, Esther Borgmann, Ellis Goede and Irma Rusche experts in this field working at Holland.



What is Snoezelen: It is a Dutch Therapy founded by Mr. Ad Ferheul in the late 1970's in Holland and it is introduced



worldwide. It is a multiple sensory activity that is focusing on the five primary senses organized in a sensory world creation. The word Snoezelen is a combination of two Dutch words: 'doezelen', that means to relax, and 'snuffelen' that means to explore, to seek out. Snoezelen is an excellent therapy in a safe, comfortable environment with nice, proper, soft stimulus. The five senses (taste, feeling, smell, hearing and vision) will be discovered and experienced.



**Investigator with Niels Snoek in
DIRKSLAND, Holland**



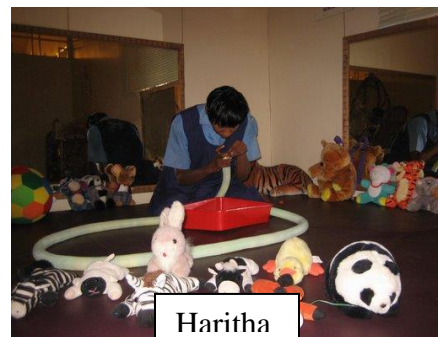
**Investigator with Lolkje Brouwer and
Esther Borgmann**

Saraswathi Devi's dream to bring Snoezelen to Lebenshilfe was thus realized with the help of Hollanders. Floor jonker And Jeanny Mannekas.

Benefits of snoezelen therapy:

THE ORIGIN, BEGINNING, SOURCE OF SNOEZELLEN.

Referring to the NETWERK-broadcast of Monday October 13th2003 in which was suggested several times that snoezelen arose at the Hartenberg in Ede. I would like to write about the real start of snoezelen.



But before I start I would like to emphasize that I have lots of respect about what happened at the Hartenberg in relation to snoezelen.

I also know that Ad Verheul and Jan Hulsegge when they were writing their book about snoezelen (snoezelen, a different world - Publisher Intro, Nijkerk) have

tried to discover the place of origin. It was not easy for them to get information. I quote their book:

The name snoezelen was made up by a couple of boys who worked, instead of their National Compulsory, at the relaxation department.

The first beginning of snoezelen was started by three institutes. The real starter has been the institute Haarendael at Haaren.

In 1986 I visited the writers at the Hartenberg to clear up one and other.

I am not well informed about what has been published about snoezelen after that time, but it looks like after almost 30 years of the origin there is still obscurity about the start of snoezelen.

In 1973/74 two disobedient persons (Klaas Schenk and under signed) were admitted to the Relaxation Service (at that time only one person Rein Staps). We were occupied with all kinds of relaxation activities.

However the deep mental deficient pupils were skipped by us most of the time. Because we really wanted to do something about this and my experience as Creative teacher (4yrs) ideas arose for simple sensory activities.

The name snoezelen (first still snoeselen, with an s in the middle) suddenly was there. Together with Klaas, who took care of technical escapades we brainstormed. We wrote lots of papers with possibilities, went shopping and conjured the auditorium to "snoezelarea". Because of the great success after an experimental period snoezelen was regularly offered as an activity.

When our supervisor noticed our success, he went publicgiving lectures at other care institutions. It's a pity that the slide series of this beginning period got lost. Even the "s" in the middle of snoezelen changed very soon .



Niels Snoek, Rein Staps, Klaas Schenk

The next article will give broader information what happened in the beginning period. On request of Rein Staps I wrote this article for Samivox (5e annual no 6 april 1975) An issue of the foundation Samivox (this is the eldest published article about snoezelen).

"Snoeseldays"

Relaxion project for the deeply mental deficient at Haarendael.

Prehistory.

At a certain moment, beginning 1974 we, relaxation leaders, realized we offered our deeply mental disturbed very little specific . They did go to the fair, the circus and the movie in other words they participated at the regular relaxation activities that are more suited for the better pupils.

It was clear we needed to create a new activity that was aimed at the idiotic person. After lots of thought and talking we reached the activity "snoeselen".

Purpose.

The purpose of snoeselen is to make the deeply mental deficient a little better.

To create a situation in which he will become active in a different way, even though we are also satisfied if he enjoys passively.

Snoeselen.

To reach the above goal we have started from the perception, the hearing, the feeling, the smell and the taste.

This perception takes place in the auditorium there by means of soft light, music and other objects; smell etc. a kind of dream world is created.

To create this dream world some conditions have to be fulfilled, very important is the creativity of the organizers - not less important are the means and especially the financial means that are available.

Even though no money was reserved in the estimate for snoeselen last year, we had to use lots of our inventiveness; we had to do with what we had.

It seems almost impossible to describe the snoeselen atmosphere --- it is really something you have to experience.

Still I like to try, by describing a few observations to make this atmosphere a little imaginative.

a) The visual: the twilight state is important in this situation, experimental films are shown (of Norman Mc.LAREN) slides with colour flatten and abstract compositions and liquid slides - there is a closet pasted with aluminium foil and mirrors ,on top a turning light -on the wall a cord with lights we walk around with little stars there is a show box.

b) The auditif: several speakers are hanging playing especially quiet music (sitar gamelan guitar)also hanging is a big doll with a speaker inside there is a chariot (in the shape of a cube covered with thick foam with a cassette player on the inside) you can lay down on the chariot and while moving you can listen.

c) In a corner there is a bed filled with balloons: the size of the bed is about two by four meter with mattresses standing up on this bed lots of balloons - there is a part with all hay there are lots of balls on the floor there is a rocking bed with a compressor you can blow air through your hair or trouser leg - you can rock in a hammock .

The smell: incense is burned or we spray with fragrance cans or we use cologne handkerchiefs.

e) The taste :in a corner there are a few tables with dishes ,one filled with whipped cream, one with applesauce, one with chocolate scones, one with gherkins, chips etc.

If you keep yourself occupied for some time with snoesel objects there seem to be lots of possibilities and every time you find yourself making up something else.

However due to the lack of money and time most of the ideas refrained from being executed. It occurs however that with a minimum of possibilities a real snoesel atmosphere can be created. It is clear that the children are very quiet

during snoeselen and even yourself are inclined to speak softly. In the auditorium 6-8 pupils are coming with their leaders and stay for about an hour. This includes that we have to do snoeselen three days after one another (4groups a day) to give each group a turn. It is especially important to know that the children do not have to anything and everything is allowed.

Guidance

We should not underestimate the role of the leader during snoeselen.

Each time there have been discussions before and after to point them especially what they have to do during snoeselen: to mind the children as little as possible - they should have their own way, of course if necessary to offer them protection - to observe the children very well, - not to forbid anything - to try to discover what a child likes very much.

Progress.

About once every three months we have organized snoeseldays for this past period. The experimental character has finished even though new suggestions are worked out. Later various snoeselactivities were brought to the wards.

This past January, when we organized snoeseldays again we invited different boarding schools and institutions from the neighbourhood to have a look. Lots of people were interested and other houses made a plan to organize snoeseldays.

At Haarendael we have been a bit pessimistic concerning the progress of snoeselen due to the reduction of the personnel in the relaxation service.

To conclude I would like to remark that it pleases me snoezelen is successful, not only with deeply mental deficient, but also with demented, toddlers, psychiatric patients and possibly still many other groups are being snoozed.

-that in many countries all over the world is being snoezelen.

-that (scientific) research is being

-that books and assays are being written.

-that courses are being given.

-that symposia are being organized.

-that the word snoezelen has been admitted to the dictionary.

-that in many Trainings attention to snoezelen is being paid.

I am pleased snoezelen has taken such proportions. In this way I like to wish all the people that contribute to snoezelen now and in the future, for and with their fellowman, lots of luck and pleasure.

Lebenshilfes Notable Experience with Snoozlen therapy: Introduction of snoozelen at Lebenshilfe helped greatly in solving connected with sensorial as well as severe behaviour problems. Alekhya who was afraid of entering onto the snoozlen room started getting motivation started paying interest in the fiber lamp (promotion of touch and visual skills) together with improvement in Power of attention and concentration. Stopped her awful habits of tearing the cloths, beating the peers, biting the service providers etc. Though not paying much interest either to touch or to play

With the available toys gradually she has obtained all the skills necessary to apply in the snooze Len room.

Outcome is extremely notable in the case of Alekhya.

Haritha is very very fearful, afraid of touching the toys, not willing to mingle with peer groups and with teachers or service provides other than her own teacher. Sitting all alone all the time keeping her head and face downwards, never responding with people unless having some close acquaintance. Slowly after couple of weeks she started observing the snoozlen room but never initiated to touch any available activity connected material. One day surprisingly she found standing in the front of mirror and touching her body parts pointing nose, ears, mouth, fingers, hands, etc showing her inner interest towards her self body image. In the snoozlen room she used to pay attention towards the snoozlen music which helped her to promote hearing skills.

A 6 year old girl Anila was presenting non-stop crying, unable to walk due to motor problem, unbearable habit of pinching, beating, pushing people around, breaking objects into peaces for no reason. While sitting in a bending position, moving backwards and forwards (swinging) carrying visual problems unable to take a look at the object from direct angle. She was closing one eye with one hand and trying to approach the fibber lamp with bit difficulty, which helped for improvisation of visual problems to some extent. Her intense interest for music

and usage of music bed for vibrations increased concentration and simple language skills also.

Introduction of SNOOZLEN (sensory world) stood as a pragmatic solution for severe behaviour disorders modification by motivating the five sensorial organs to the best satisfaction of the parents and families encountering behaviour problems.



Sarah with Niels Snoek and Floor Jonker

At Dirksland in Holland where he is living.

The Very purpose of bringing Snoozlen to Lebenshilfe and its implementation among children having sever mental disabilities as well as sensorial problems is for creation of total relaxation and to provide a solace to the suffering parents and families.

SNOEZELEN IS WORTH-WHILE FOR IMPLEMENTATION.

- INVESTIGATOR.