# BRIEFING NOTE – SENSORY ATTUNEMENT TO PLACE

### 1. How can we **understand** place through sensory engagement?

The table below presents different sensing modalities along with questions to help you tune in to your senses. The sensing modalities and questions listed here are only suggestions, designed to help you get started. You are welcome to play around, combine sensing modalities, and create your own! Throughout this exercise you are welcome to participate alone, or in groups.

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| **Sensing modality** | **Possible questions for attunement** |
| Vision | * What objects, processes, patterns, colours, shapes, etc., do I notice? * What comes into view by changing the way I see (e.g. up close, far away, upside down, etc.)? * What don’t I see? * *Is what I am seeing making me feel included or excluded in this place and activity? How so, or how not?* * *What might those with different lived experiences than me be seeing that is making them feel included or excluded?* |
| Aurality (sound) | * What sounds, objects, patterns, etc., do I hear? * What changes when I change how I listen? (e.g. closing eyes, putting ear against objects or the ground, etc.)? * What don’t I hear? * *Is what I am hearing or listening to making me feel included or excluded in this place and activity? How so, or how not?* * *What might those with different lived experiences than me be hearing or listening to that is making them feel included or excluded?* |
| Smell | * What can I smell? * What changes when I change how I smell (e.g. closing eyes, plugging ears, moving closer to or further away from things in this place)? * What don’t I smell? * *Is what I am smelling making me feel included or excluded in this place and activity? How so, or how not?* * *What might those with different lived experiences than me be smelling that is making them feel included or excluded?* |
| Taste | * What can I taste by opening my mouth and paying attention to my tongue? * Are there any objects or items in this place that I feel confident to taste? Why or why not? * *What feelings of inclusion or exclusion are present in these ideas I’m having about what I can taste or not taste here?* |
| Vibration | * What vibrations can I feel in my body? * What changes when I change my proximity to things in this place (e.g. resting a hand on something, getting low to the ground)? * *Is what I see making me feel included or excluded in this place and activity? How so, or how not?* * *What might those with different lived experiences than me be seeing that is making them feel included or excluded?* |
| Motility (movement) | * How does this place encourage me to move my body (e.g. hands reach out, head bows, fingers tap, etc.)? * How does it invite me (or not) to move *through* or *across* space? * *What feelings of exclusion or inclusion accompany the way this space invites me to move my body?* |
| Tactility (touch) | * What textures and sensations can I experience through my fingertips, or on other surfaces of my body? * Are there any objects or items in this place that I feel confident to touch? Why or why not? * *What feelings of inclusion or exclusion are present in these ideas I’m having about what I can touch or not touch here?* |
| Atmospheric sensation and sensitivity | * What can I sense in the atmosphere (e.g. wind, temperature, humidity)? * *What feelings of exclusion or inclusion accompany these atmospheric sensations?* |
| Emotion, feeling | * What feelings or emotions are elicited by being in or moving through this place? * How do these change in concert with attunements such as those listed above? * *What feelings of exclusion or inclusion accompany the feelings or emotions that are being elicited?* |

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### 2. How can we record our sensory engagements with place as information, data and “anecdata”?

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| **Recording technology** | **What can you do?** |
| Descriptive writing | Note down in words what we see, hear, feel, taste, etc. Pay attention to details, and “think with a pen” (i.e. allow the descriptions to occur in ‘real time’ as much as possible). |
| Listing, counting | Create lists (through writing or voice-recording) of species of plant noticed, different sounds heard, number of humans encountered, etc. |
| Drawing, sketching | Use pencils, colours, or natural materials to record images. Your drawings can be representational (“realistic”) or non-representational/impressionistic (e.g. patterns, feelings). |
| Photography | Take photos of objects, scenes, textures, patterns, relations, etc. |
| Poetic writing | Use association, metaphor, synesthesia or other poetic devices to make note of your sensory experiences. |
| Recording (e.g. phone) | Make voice notes using your phone. Record sounds. |
| Rubbings, impressions | Record textures or shapes by making rubbings of objects or surfaces (using a paper and a crayon, chalk, or dirt). Record colours or other materialities by rubbing objects (grass, mud, berries) on your paper. Be careful not to unnecessarily disturb or destroy living things. |
| Mapping, tracing | Record movements and patterns by gripping a writing implement (fist grip is helpful) and tracing the movements you are making and/or observing onto paper. |