RÉ-CONFORT®
design and tactile aesthetics of soothing spaces
in psychiatric settings

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"Re-comfort: design and tactile aesthetics of soothing spaces in psychiatric settings" is a design research project on the conception of experimental kits (system of objects) allowing the patient to regain his calm and tranquility.

This research is based on a phenomenological approach centered on the patient, on his haptic perceptions and his emotional and psychological feelings. Practical experiments with users (caregivers and patients) have been set up and are underway in several psychiatric units: at the UHSA Paul Guiraud (Villejuif), the EPS Ville-Evrad (Aubervilliers) and the GHU Paris (G05, G19, G25 and G26).

The first experiments validated our intuitions. Patients and caregivers feel a sense of calm and tranquility after the Ré-confort* tactile relaxations. The majority of the workshops at GHU Paris and UHSA Villejuif took place with care. The workshops at the EPS Ville-Evrad systematically involved patients and caregiver. Contrary to some reservations on the part of the caregivers, the patients all reacted positively. The experiences brought them peace. The experiences (lasting between 20 minutes and 1 hour) are always followed by a time of exchange and discussion. These exchanges are recorded and listened to again a few days later. Each workshop is the subject of a detailed report, written in the days following the workshop (text explaining the process, photos, discussions, verbatim).

Workshops that involve patients and caregivers are appreciated. They transform the patient-caregiver relationship and create more horizontality. Patients note that a calmed caregiver soothes the patient and vice versa.

*Tactile relaxation Ré-confort proposes to experiment the appeasement by the touch by occulting the sight. It is based on the intuition that visual sensations provoke strong cognitive responses that are interpreted before tactile sensations. Tactile sensations would be translated by taking into account visual information. These interpretations could block the imagination by diverting the participant from his feelings.

By proposing to rediscover a material through touch, we propose to the participants to let their imagination run free, to let themselves be carried by the subjective power of the material. Touching implies an action, a setting in motion of a part of our body which is reflected on the whole body. We have the intuition that this action has a positive effect on breathing and heart rate. This research aims to find alternatives to the use of the isolation room and the chemical straitjacket. It is particularly interesting in the context of the psychiatric hospital in France where the use of isolation is almost systematic.

Several decrees of the High Authority of Health oblige the psychiatric hospitals to reduce the isolation.

To create the conditions for this experiment, we have a kit: tactile tablecloths with interior covers where objects/materials are hidden.

We would like to validate our intuitions by scientific measurements in a cognitive neuroscience laboratory.
Can touching a ball (hairy latex ball, kinetic sand in a pantyhose or food lentils in a pantyhose) guided by sound relaxation be soothing?

How does the brain react during these manipulations?
hairy relaxation ball

food lentils in pantyhose

cinetic sand in pantyhose

hairy relaxation ball