



## **Tactile Sensitivity**

### **Every Time We Touch**

This simulation will equip you with the necessary tools you will carry through the rest of your simulation journey. The purpose of this station is to demonstrate the decline in touch perception in the skin experienced by older adults. The cause of this sensory decline is a loss in cell hydration and a decrease in the thickness of the epidermal (topmost) layer of the skin (1). The older adults have difficulty feeling changes in touch pressure, vibrations, pain, and temperature (1). This results in increased risk of harm, from touching extreme temperatures, that can result in hypothermia, frostbite or burns (1). This station will also prepare you to simulate arthritis, one of the most prevalent and sometimes debilitating disorder in older adults (1).

### **Materials**

- Rubber gloves OR winter gloves
  - Electrical tape, scotch tape or duct tape
- Access to three textures such as surfaces that are smooth, rough, soft, fluffy, hard, crunchy, hot, or cold. (e.g., pillow, desk, carpet, tile, keyboard, plant)

### **Procedure**

1. Put on the rubber or winter gloves on one hand (either hand is fine). Wrap the tape around your first and second fingertips. To simulate arthritis, wrap the tape around your joints on your first and second fingers. It should feel stiff when you try and bend your fingers, but not uncomfortable. If you use thick winter gloves, you do not have to add electrical tape.
2. Touch as many different textures around you as possible and notice differences in fingers that are taped and fingers that are not.
3. Perform several usual tasks such as opening and closing doors, typing on a computer, writing with a pen, using your cellphone, and notice differences.
4. You will continue to wear **ONE** of these gloves throughout the entirety of the evoking empathy lab simulation journey. The purpose of keeping one glove on, and removing the other glove, is to allow you to experience other simulations with both impaired function (the hand with the glove) and normal function (the hand without the glove). This will help you understand the difference between the two sensations.

### **Reflection Questions**

1. What did you notice between textures that are opposite (hard vs. soft)?
2. Can you differentiate well between textures that are slightly different?
3. What struggles would loss of touch create in performing daily tasks in your life?