Sensory Approaches to Enhance

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Welcome!
Objectives

At the end of this session, you will be able to:

• Describe sensory regulation approaches
• List the seven sensory systems
• Identify practical strategies for individuals
• Identify environmental modifications
• Consider how to use resources for a sensory diet
What is Sensory Processing?

**Sensory Processing** is a complex set of actions that enable the brain to understand what is going on both inside your own body and in the world around you.
Sensory Processing Definitions

• Registration- how easily your brain recognizes and responds to stimuli

• Integration- taking in sensations from different sensory fields at the same time, making sense of the combination and generating an adaptive response

• Modulation- allows the brain to keep pace with what is happening

• Defensiveness- protective response that should turn on when needed.
Brain Work

• Your brain has a lot of work to do throughout the day.
• There is a continuous flow of information available from all the sensory systems.
• The brain must: sort through the information, prioritize the information, decide how to understand what is going on and decide what you will do based on the information available.
Sensory Input
What affects children’s ability to process sensory information safely and effectively?

• Emotional state: stress, mood, social relationships, trauma
• Environment: home, school, work
• Demands of the task: multi-tasking
• Predictability/past experiences: familiar stimuli, expected/unexpected
• Defensive component- fight, fright or flight
Sensory Modulation

- Ongoing process, often unconscious
- Each person has unique tendencies / preferences
- Affected by stress, trauma
- Habits and rituals play an important role
Sensory Modulation Strategies

• Increase self-awareness
• Improve ability to engage in self-care
• Help people cope with stressors and triggers
Sensory Modulation Strategies

- Increase self-awareness
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- Help people cope with stressors and triggers
Visual

- Sight
- Light
- Integrates senses
Olfactory

- Odors
- Links to emotions
- Links to memories
Gustatory

- Taste
- Links to attention
Tactile

• Touch
• Pressure
• Heat / Cold
• Rough / Smooth
Auditory

• Hearing
• Sounds
Vestibular

• Middle ear
• Balance
• Head rotation
• Location in space

IMPORTANT NOTE: linear movement has longest lasting positive affects on regulating the sensory system
Proprioception

- Positioning of body
- Sensory points
- Deep pressure through joints and muscles
- IMPORTANT NOTE: proprioceptive input has lingering positive affects on regulating the sensory system
Sensory Modulation

Things you can do
Sensory Processing Challenges

Oversensitive
Under-responsive
Craving/Seeker
Avoider
Observation

• What comes right before?
• Triggers?
• Calming activities?
• Attention grabbers?
• Distractions?
• Grounding events or actions?
Sensory Modulation Activities

- yoga
- bath
- exercise
- rocking
- touch
- food
How to Create the ‘just right’ sensory environment

- Color
- Light
- Noise
- Furniture
- Schedule
- Program resources
- Personal items
- Space
Lighting

• Avoid fluorescent light
  (use light covers if needed)
• Natural light is best
• Install dimmer switches
Color

- Avoid bright and white
- Earth tones are good
- Blues
- Greens
Things you can add

• Beanbag chairs
• Posters
• Murals
• Colored lighting
• Projected light
• Meditation bell
• Water fountain
• Scents
Offer choices

• Books
• Music
• Nature sounds
• Exercise balls
• Journaling
• Art / Crafts
Sensory Room
Sensory Rooms

- A safe space
- Practicing coping strategies
- Quiet activities
- Relaxation
- Exploring sensory preferences
- A place to go during transitions
- Chilling out before bedtime
Sensory Retreat

- Mini retreat space
- Soft chair
- Pillows, blankets
- Bins
Sensory Retreat Components

- Soothing tools, matched to the person
- Decreased sensory input
- Relaxing touch
- Calm, quiet
- Low light
Wellness Benefits

A sensory retreat can:

• Offer a safe place
• Provide tactile stimulation
• Assist in self-regulation
• Recover from or avoid a sensory meltdown
• Help get ready for sleep
Sensory Diet
Downloadable resources

Guide for Setting up a Sensory Room (1 page)
https://www.ot-innovations.com

SPD Education Toolkit for Adolescents and Adults (Spiral Foundation)
https://thespiral.foundation.org/

Sensory Connection to Trauma and Treatment...
(Karen Moore & Angela Balzarini-Leonhart)
https://reachcounseling.com/
Websites

**A Sensory Life** (A. Voss)
http://asensorylife.com/

**The Alert Program** (M. S. Williams & S. Shellenberger)
https://www.alertprogram.com/

**Zones of Regulation** (L. Kuypers)
http://www.zonesofregulation.com/index.html

**Raising a Sensory Smart Child** (L. Biel & N. Peske)
https://www.sensorysmarts.com/
**Books**

*Sensory modulation & environment: Essential elements of occupation, 3rd ed.*  
(T. Champagne)  
https://www.ot-innovations.com/

**Sensational Kids** (L. J. Miller)  
https://www spdstar.org/

**Living Sensationally: Understanding Your Senses** (W. Dunn)  
http://www.jkp.com/uk/living-sensationally.html

**Is it Sensory, or Is it Behavior?** (B. Paris & C. Murray-Slutsky)
Assessment

Adolescent/Adult Sensory Profile
(C. Brown & W. Dunn)
Available from https://www.pearsonclinical.com/
For more information

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