Sensory Processing

Sensory Processing Disorder

Sensory processing is when the nervous system processes the message it has received from the senses and the resulting motor or behavioural response. In Sensory Processing Disorder (also known as Sensory Integration Disorder or Dysfunction), the sensory signals are not interpreted in the typical way. A person with SPD will find it difficult to process and respond to the information received from the senses.

Hyper

Receiving too much information

Receiving too little information

There are three main subtypes:

Sensory Modulation Disorder

Difficulty regulating response to sensory stimuli.

This subtype is broken down further into three: Sensory Over Responsivity, Sensory Under Responsivity, Sensory Craving.

Sensory Based Motor Disorder

Difficulty with balance and coordination + skilled motor tasks.

This subtype is broken down into: Dyspraxia and Postural Disorder.

Sensory Discrimination Disorder

Difficulty in understanding sensory stimuli, i.e. difficulties in understanding what is seen, heard, tasted, felt, smelled. This subtype is broken down further into each of the sensory systems.

Hypersensitive: Reassure, and teach them to look for signs that the injury or illness is not as bad as they thought

Hypersensitive

- messy food play playing with food, using food to make things, e.g. pictures from dried pasta etc.
 - trays / plates with sections to separate the foods

Hypersensitive

- warn before touching
- avoid approaching from behind
- use firm pressure when touching
- offer heavy work, e.g. carrying books etc.

Hyposensitive

- messy play, e.g. mud, foam, paints, ice etc.
- fidget toys, e.g. stress balls, koosh balls etc.

Hypersensitive

- Practise balancing at their own rate
 - Warn of sudden movements

Hyposensitive

- cooking activities in the timetable
 - timetabled snack times

Hyposensitive

- rolling
- spinning
- balance activities, e.g. space hoppers, balance board, therapy ball
 - swinging

Hypersensitive

- Try to find out which smells are having a negative effect consider hand creams, shower gels, aftershaves, perfumes, cleaning products etc.
 - · Play with foods

Hyposensitive:

- · Build toileting, drinking and eating into routine times of the day
- Teach tips for recognising body temperature and anxiety levels, and how to rectify
- · Supervise closely if prone to injury.
- · Watch for external indicators of injury or illness

Tactile

SPD can occur in each of the sensory systems: Visual, Auditory, Vestibular (Movement), Smell, Taste, Tactile, Proprioception (Body Sense), Interoception

These are some ideas you could try:

Sound

Hyposensitive

- Use a range of smells some are relaxing, calming, stimulating. Add scents to playdough.
- Create a 'smellory' a range of different smells on cotton wool in small containers / herbs / plants etc
- · Sensory gardens with fragrant herbs and plants

Hyposensitive

- sensory lights, bubble tubes, lava lamps
- mirror balls, disco balls
- spinning tops and wheels
- · pouring play, e.g. pouring sand, water, rice, confetti, glitter

Hyposensitive

- banging on pots, pans etc., wind chimes, rain makers
 - · musical instruments
 - cause and effect toys
 - listening to music
 - give time to respond to speech

Hyposensitive

- activities
- · weighted objects

pushing /pulling

Hypersensitive

- giving warning about noises that are about to happen
- avoid sudden loud noises / shouting / use visual cues
- · a quiet, calm space with dim lighting
 - · listen to preferred music
 - · soft toys / toys that make a gentle sound
 - · headphones / ear defenders

- - jumping

Hypersensitive

 slowly introduce movement activities allow time to process

Hypersensitive

- tinted lenses
- wide brimmed hats / sunglasses
 - avoid glare / bright lights use of blinds, lamps
- minimise visual clutter consider a calm area with minimal visual clutter, relaxing and calming items
 - · consider their colour preferences



