



Sensory processing

Sensory seeking

Systems are 'under' sensitive to sensory input or needs more of it to function. Child/young person will be looking for more sensory stimulation. The individual can become distracted whilst looking for more sensory input.

Sensory avoiding

Systems are 'over' sensitive to sensory input. The child/young person experiences sensory input more intensely than others. They will avoid certain activities/experiences because it is overwhelming to them.

Low registration

The child/young person may not appear to react and respond to sensations that others do. Refers to how aware each person is to each of their sensory systems and processing. Individuals have varying degrees of sensitivity and have varying ways of outwardly responding and expressing their awareness of these sensitivities. Some children may become fearful of sudden noises, surprise touch etc.

Sensory sensitivity

A heightened sensitivity to stimulation of the senses. Over-sensitivity to sensory input from the environment or internal processing systems. Individuals will often complain about sensory stimuli that others perceive as 'ordinary'.

Sensory hyposensitivity

Under-responsivity to stimulation of the senses, often making the child wanting to look for more sensory input – e.g. constantly needing to touch or move, preferring strong smells and tastes.

Sensory overload

One or more of the body's senses experiences over-stimulations from the environment. When the brain is overwhelmed by this input, it enters fight, flight, or freeze mode in response to what feels like a crisis, making the individual feel unsafe or even panicky.

Ways of supporting a child or young person with the above -

Sensory motor circuit

A sensory motor circuit involves a sequence of physical activities that alert, organise, and calm the child. "Participation in a short daily sensory motor circuit prepares children to engage effectively with the day ahead." (Jane Horwood)

One page profile

Make a profile for your child/young person which can enable you/ a school/club etc to make reasonable adjustments to empower and enable your child to succeed.



Sensory systems

SOUND (auditory sensory system)

Sounds can be painful, and a child/young person can have difficulty with two or more people talking at once. This over-sensitivity can make it difficult to screen out background noise.

Other children/young people may be under-sensitive to noise and find it difficult to process certain sounds.

SIGHT (visual sensory system)

Children/young people may be over-sensitive to colours, patterns, or light.

Others may be under-sensitive and therefore do not see certain colours or transparent objects. Certain features (e.g. colours) may not be of interest to the pupil who therefore may not process this information.

Some children/young people may need visually defined spaces.

TASTE (gustatory sensory system)

Children/young people can be over-sensitive to the taste of certain foods and find some tastes very unpleasant.

Others may be under-sensitive to taste and therefore enjoy eating highly-flavoured food.

Children/young people may also experience difficulties with certain textures of food.

SMELL (olfactory sensory system)

Children/young people may be over-sensitive to certain smells.

Others may not have a keen sense of smell and might lick objects or smear substances so that they can smell things better to block out other sensations.

TOUCH (tactile sensory system)

Children/young people who are over-sensitive may dislike the touch of others or the feeling of clothing on their skin. Certain textures can cause distress.

Other children/young people might be under-sensitive and as a result may have a dangerously high tolerance for pain or discomfort.

BALANCE (vestibular sensory system)

This is our sense of movement which is detected with our head.

Children/young people might not keep balance easily and can have difficulties in certain environments, such as uneven moving surfaces.

PROPRIOCEPTION (movement and coordination)

Children/young people may have difficulty sensing where the body is in space and having a sense of where it starts and ends. This clearly presents problems when moving around and in doing activities which involve movement and coordination.

INTEROCEPTION (internal feelings)

Interoception is the ability to detect and deal with internal bodily sensations. It helps a child/young person understand what is going on inside of the body like hunger, thirst, feeling hot or cold, fatigue, or a full bladder.

This sense also helps us to recognise and respond to our emotions.

Sensory profile

Name			
What/who/where makes me happy and calm?			
What/who/where makes me worried or cross?			
Things that help me			
Sensory preferences	Environment		
	Personal		
Sensory aversions	Environment		
	Personal		
Positive sensory programme		Low registration	Sensory seeking
How to help the individual to achieve their most calm/alert state and communication style		Sensory sensitivity	Sensory avoiding
Sensory Support		Environmental	Individual
Reasonable adjustments			