



BEST PRACTICES GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD) refers to a condition in which the brain has trouble receiving and responding to information that comes through the senses. People with SPD may be oversensitive or under-sensitive to sensory stimuli such as sounds, lights, textures, tastes, and smells. The best practices guide for SPD involves understanding the needs of individuals with SPD and implementing strategies that can help them manage sensory input effectively.

DESCRIPTION OF IMPLEMENTED STRATEGIES

Understand Sensory Sensitivities

Recognize Specific Sensory Triggers that may cause discomfort or overstimulation, such as bright lights, loud sounds, or certain textures.

Know the Type of SPD - SPD can manifest in different ways, so it's important to know!

Create a Sensory-Friendly Environment

Use soft lighting and reduce noise - provide noise-canceling headphones or create quiet spaces, try to minimize background noise or allow for breaks in a quieter environment.

Offer soft textures and fabrics - avoid clothing or materials that are irritating to the touch.

Organize Space - keep spaces clutter-free to reduce visual overstimulation.

MODULE 2

SENSORY PROCESSING DISORDER (SPD)





Keep Sensory Diet that refers to a personalized, structured plan that includes sensory activities that help to regulate the children's sensory system: **Use calming and deep pressure activities** and **remember about alerting activities** like jumping jacks, swinging, or using a trampoline which can help someone with under-responsivity feel more alert. **Keep balance and improve movement!**

Keep Routine, Predictability and Prepare for Changes

Provide sensory breaks - keep scheduled breaks to avoid overload. Remember to **create a Sensory-Friendly Corner** to engage in calming activities or simply retreat when feeling overwhelmed. It could include soft seating, noise-canceling headphones, calming visuals, and sensory toys.

Collaborate with Other Therapists - Occupational Therapy (OT), Sensory Integration Therapy and Behavioral Therapy - in some cases, therapy can help teach coping strategies for managing sensory overload and reactions.

Keep Positive Reinforcement

Reward Self-Regulation and **encourage Self-Advocacy** - teach children to recognize their sensory needs and communicate them to others. **Educate caregivers and educators** - ensure that family members, teachers, and other caregivers understand SPD and know how to respond appropriately. During classes **use visuals and communication aids** like social stories, photos, and videos - it can help explain what's happening and help reduce anxiety. All the time **promote empathy** - encourage understanding in peers, classmates, or colleagues.

Manage Overstimulation

Recognize signs of overstimulation and **use deep pressure techniques** like firm hugs, weighted blankets, or a pressure vest. Use also **calming breathing techniques** - practice deep breathing exercises, progressive muscle relaxation, or meditation.

Adapt Activities in Social Situations - offer earplugs, headphones, or quiet areas for those kids who may struggle with sensory input from others. **Modify learning materials** and **offer alternative learning strategies**.

Find Support for Self-Care and Practice Self-Compassion - you should seek support from groups, therapy, or other resources to avoid burnout. It's important for you to acknowledge your feelings, take time for yourself, and practice self-care.





RESULTS AND IMPACT

Implementing these strategies has led to:

- improved classroom engagement of students with sensory processing disorder;
- help children better manage their responses to sensory stimuli;
- make children are less likely to feel overwhelmed or distracted by sensory input, leading to more sustained attention and focus in therapy or class activities;
- fewer meltdowns or anxiety-related behaviors experienced by children, as they feel more secure and comfortable in their environment;
- better pupil's control over their movements, which can enhance their physical and academic performance;
- higher student self-esteem, especially when their abilities are recognized and used meaningfully;
- increased teacher confidence in adapting their practice and identifying students needs;
- strengthened collaboration between teachers, families, and SPD therapists.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The strategic use of sensory-focused interventions by teachers during therapy can dramatically improve the emotional, social, and academic outcomes for children with Sensory Processing Disorder. By addressing sensory needs in the classroom and therapy setting, children are better able to engage, learn, and thrive in an environment that might otherwise feel overwhelming. The positive results include better self-regulation, enhanced focus, improved social and communication skills, and overall increased well-being for the child. Always remember that every person with SPD is unique, and what works for one person may not work for another, so individualized plans and flexibility are basic keys to achieve the best results of therapy and success of children with SPD.