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Module 2

Sensory Processing Disorder SPD

Exercise 1

RECOGNIZING THE STRENGTH OF PUPILS WITH SPD AND BUILDING ON THEM

Name of the Tool

"Superhero Moves"
Sensory Superpowers Activation

Objectives of the Tool



To help participants recognize their sensory strengths and activate their bodies in a fun, positive way.





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Introduction of the Tool

The exercise is a proposal that is included in the broadly understood space of exercises supporting the recognition of the developmental strengths of a child with SPD. What a child feels good in, is the starting point for building self-esteem, faith in one's own strengths and abilities. These strengths of the child will later determine more difficult therapeutic steps, such as struggling and working on what is not yet within the child's developmental range, which, due to the specificity of the disorder, still causes many difficulties for him. The main goal of exercises aimed at recognizing the strengths of a child with SPD is to create a supportive and engaging environment where children can recognize their strengths and develop motor skills, body awareness, focus, and confidence through structured exercises. Training for teachers focused on working with students with SPD in a class group allows for practical familiarization with exercises that will help them better understand the difficulties related to sensory processing of their students. The proposed tool is a simple introductory exercise to classes that are consistent with the structure of conducting classes for children with SPD. Due to the specificity of these classes as a comprehensive impact on various developmental spheres, this exercise is activating and motivating in the first phase of general classes so it's called "Sensory Superpower Activation".

Applying of the Tool: Clear steps

✓ **Step 1 Introduction (2 minutes)**

Gather participants in a circle and ask "What are your super senses?". Try to talk with them for a while about their strong and power skills. Some of them can talk about their strengths using gestures and facial expressions - it is good if they can empathize with their emotions with their whole body and show them non-verbally.

✓ **Step 2 Recognizing strengths of participants (5 minutes)**

Encourage them to share things they do well (e.g., "I hear things from far away", "I love soft textures", "I move really fast"). Give them the pieces of paper and pencils and encourage them to draw symbols of these activities and skills.



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✓ Step 3 Superpower Activation (3-5 minutes)

Announce, "Let's activate our sensory superpowers with movement!". First use only the speech commands, then try to change to more active and challenging way - silently change cards with symbols drawn by participants and wait for their movement connected to these commands.

✓ Step 4 Activation and Movement (5-7 minutes)

Call out different superhero moves while emphasizing sensory strengths:

Super Stomp: Jump up and land with feet firmly on the ground (helps with proprioception).

Eagle Ears: Cup hands behind ears and walk around to listen to different sounds.

Feather Fingers: Rub hands together and then lightly touch fingertips together (stimulates tactile awareness).

Slow-motion Stretch: Reach arms high, then bend down slowly, touching toes.

Variation: You have to remember that for participants who are sensitive to loud sounds, you can use hand signals or pictures as proposed, instead of verbal instructions.

Timing

Around 10 - 15 minutes

Extra materials for implementation

Some pieces of paper, color pencils for drawing, recording sounds.



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Exercise 2

RECOGNIZING AND DEALING WITH WEKNESSES OF PUPILS WITH SPD

Name of the Tool

“Teachers’ experiences”

Objectives of the Tool



- To understand how children with SPD respond to different sensory stimuli.
- To understand hypersensitivity to sensory stimuli (e.g. sounds, light, textures).
- To adapt the school space to the needs of children with SPD.
- To increase empathy and understanding for children with SPD.



Introduction of the Tool

Recognizing and dealing with weaknesses of pupils with Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD) requires a thoughtful, patient, and individualized approach. SPD affects the brain processes sensory information, and it can result in over- or under-sensitivity to sensory stimuli. It may manifest in a variety of ways, such as difficulties in school environments, social interactions, and daily activities.

When working with a class group that also includes students with sensory processing disorders, it is important to support their difficulties in order to compensate their weaknesses. Teachers can be prepared themselves in a special way to take on the challenges associated with therapy for such students. Through their own experiences of various aspects of the difficulties of children with SPD, they will be able to better understand the specifics of these disorders.

The following exercises, presented in a few steps, are an open proposal for teachers to stimulate their creative approach during workshops. They are based on reflection sections, which are a kind of verbal summary of one's own experiences in the discussed areas of difficulty.

Applying of the Tool: Clear steps

✓ Step 1 Sensory Difficulty Recognition (15 minutes)

Goal: To understand how children with SPD respond to different sensory stimuli.

Description: Teachers can conduct a simulation in which, for example, ears are covered, a blindfold is put on, or clothes with different textures are worn - they try to move around with their eyes covered, try to study in noise, or put rough material on themselves, etc. These experiences will help teachers better understand how children with hypersensitivity or insensitivity to stimuli may feel.

Reflection Questions: What difficulties did you encounter during the task? What was uncomfortable about the situation?

✓ Step 2 Sensory hypersensitivity recognition (15 minutes)

Goal: To understand hypersensitivity to sensory stimuli (e.g. sounds, light, textures).

Description: The teacher introduces stimuli that may trigger hypersensitivity in children (e.g. loud sounds, intense light, different textures of materials) and observes the reactions of the participants. Collects information about which stimuli cause discomfort.

Reflection Questions: What strategies can help the child cope with hypersensitivity? What environmental modifications would be helpful?



Step 3 Sensory Arousal Regulation Activity (5-10 minutes)

Goal: Learn methods to help regulate sensory arousal.

Description: Participants perform breathing exercises (e.g., abdominal breathing) and use calming techniques such as deep body pressure (e.g., by wrapping in a blanket or pillows) or rhythmic rocking. Teachers learn how to implement these methods in the classroom to help children regain sensory balance.

Reflection Questions: What techniques have proven effective in dealing with overstimulation? What changes can be made to the daily routine?

Step 4 Problem-solving and space adaptation (20 minutes)

Goal: To adapt the school space to the needs of children with SPD.

Description: Teachers analyze the space in the classroom and come up with changes that could help children with SPD. These changes could include: quiet zones, better lighting, special mats for sitting, reducing noise, adjusting sounds - they can write down on the paper their suggestions and proposals connected to special needs of children with SPD. They can prepare a special model of the school building plan and graphically draw changes that can help SPD children in everyday school functioning.

Reflection questions: What changes in the space could help reduce sensory discomfort? What strategies could work in the children's daily functioning?

Step 5 Empathizing with the child's experiences (20 minutes)

Goal: To increase empathy and understanding for children with SPD.

Description: The teacher plays the role of a child with SPD, experiencing situations that may cause difficulties, such as intense light, noise, uncomfortable clothing, etc. This exercise aims to make the teacher aware of how different stimuli can affect the child.

Reflection questions: What were the feelings during the role-play? What changes in behavior can help the child's daily functioning?

Timing

Around 90 minutes



Extra materials for implementation

You need large sheets of paper, colored pens and pencils, markers, materials and fabrics with different textures, materials to cover the eyes for each participant, or other disturbing stimuli, sound recordings of various forms of noise.



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Sensory Processing Disorder SPD

Exercise 3

SOFT SKILLS FOR TEACHERS TO SUPPORT THESE STUDENTS IN THE CLASSROOM AND AT HOME

Name of the Tool

"Mirror" - reflection of communication

Objectives of the Tool



To develop active listening skills, empathy and clear expression of thoughts.





Introduction of the Tool

Soft skills play a key role in a teacher's work, as they are essential for effective classroom management, building relationships with students, parents, and colleagues, and responding to changing educational needs. While hard skills, such as subject matter knowledge, are of course important, it is often soft skills that determine the quality of a teachers' work and their ability to influence students' development. A high level of soft skills plays an important role in the teacher's work with students who, due to various deficits, have difficulty with finding their place in a class group - this also includes children with SPD. Teachers' soft skills are the abilities and behaviours that individuals in this field use to complete their duties successfully. The specific difficulties of children with SPD require a special approach from teachers to support the emotional development of these students. This exercise is the simple how to develop skills of students and also teachers during the workshops, and aimed at developing soft skills such as empathy, expression of thoughts, listening to improve the communication skills of teachers. It can be a good example of how a teachers can practice communication skills in a school group, as well as facilitate the development of their own communication and social competences.

Applying of the Tool: Clear steps

✓ Step 1 Introduction (5 minutes)

Divide participants into pairs: each pair consists of a teacher who will speak and a teacher who will listen.

✓ Step 2 Story of an experience (10 minutes)

The person who speaks tells for 3-5 minutes about one of their experiences related to working at school. It can be something positive or difficult that happened in the classroom. The person listening does not interrupt, but listens actively, paying attention to the words, tone of voice, gestures and emotions.



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Step 3 Reflection (10 minutes)

After the story is over, the listener is asked to repeat what they heard, but in the form of a reflection: "I understand that...", "Do I understand correctly that...?"

It is important that the listener tries to repeat the essence of the message, without adding their own interpretations or assessing the situation.

In addition, he or she can ask about the feelings accompanying the experience, e.g. "How did you feel in this situation?" or "What was the most difficult for you?".



Step 4 Summary (10 minutes)

After the reflection is completed, both people share their feelings. The speaker can describe how they felt when their experience was reflected, and the listener can tell how easy or difficult it was for them to correctly understand and reflect the message.



Step 5 Group debriefing (10 minutes)

The whole group shares their impressions of the exercise: What were the difficulties in communication? What was the most important in reflecting the message? What skills are worth developing in everyday work?

Timing

About 45 minutes, taking into account the change of roles between participants.

Extra materials for implementation

You don't need any extra materials.



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