

Sensory Processing Disorder

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Did you know humans have eight senses (vision, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, vestibular, proprioception, and interception) and they are used for understanding and taking in the world around us, without having to give too much thought or effort to the process.

Sensory Processing



Sensory processing is the neurology of how people experience their world. It shapes our experiences and impacts our feelings. It provides individuals with emotional stability and the ability to interact with others socially. It also informs our distress tolerance.

When does it become a disorder?

It becomes a disorder when an individual's sensory input becomes distressing instead of useful information. This may look like temper tantrum or big feelings, a sudden shift in mood, or a need to suddenly move around or leave an area.

3 Categories of the Disorder

Sensory Modulation

The most common form of SPD. It occurs when the brain does not know when to pay attention or ignore information. This looks like individuals seeking sensory input, avoiding sensory input or under processing sensory input.



Sensory Motor

Occurs when the brain has difficulty following directions for sequencing steps. This can lead to struggling to get dressed. It also affects motor control, which can lead to difficulty sitting for long periods of time, or trouble with balance.

Sensory Discrimination

Occurs when there is confusion about the information that is being taken in. It can cause clumsiness or not knowing when you are hungry.





Symptoms that may be seen at home

Under processing Sensory Input :

- High pain tolerance
- Not motivated to do things
- May not notice taste or texture of food unless it is distinct



Sensory Seekers:

- Engages in rough play with siblings or pets
- Does not seem to get tired
- Difficulty falling asleep
- Likes to hang upside down when watching TV or reading a book



Sensory Sensitivity:

- Dislike the sounds of the automatic toilets and hand dryers.
- Dislikes clothing tags or certain textures
- Afraid to be touched by others
- Sensitive to certain food textures and smells

Strategies to use at home

- Create a safe space for your child. Allow them to assist with this or take charge. Let them pick the fidgets they would like, the pillows or blankets they enjoy, and the type of lighting that best fits their needs
- Together with your child, create a comfort kit that includes some of their favorite things such as fidgets, gum, headphones, and sunglasses. This is a great item to have when going to new places, or places you know will be a sensory trigger for the child
- Create a signal that you and your child can use both at home and when out that tell you that they are feeling overwhelmed or need a break from what is occurring. This allows your child to safely express how they are feeling without attracting attention
- Be mindful that transitions are difficult for children with SPD. When trying a new restaurant or experience, go when not many people will be there. This provides the opportunity to not be overwhelmed and take in their new surroundings at their own pace.
- Provide them extra time when completing activities, as they may be easily distracted by their environment
- Create opportunities for you and your child to engage in activities they enjoy such as walks, heavy lifting, playing outside, or sitting together in silence.