

The Sensory and Physical Environment and Toolbox of Strategies – RP network



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Communication Friendly

Please stop us if...



we say something that you do not understand

we speak too fast

you want us to repeat something

You have a question



Ordinarily Available provision

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2

Training Structure:

Sensory and Physical Needs

Impact of Sensory and Environment

Targeted Support

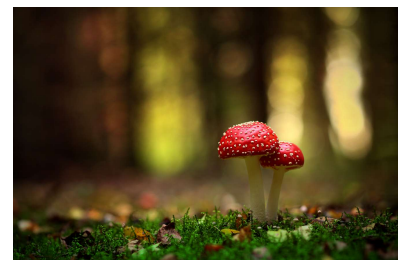
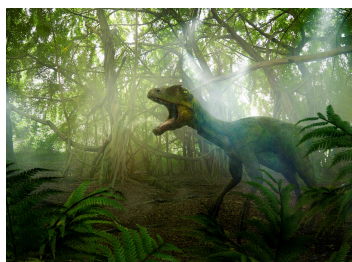
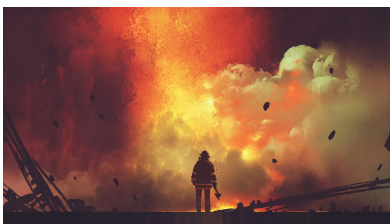
Adaptations and Regulation

Whole School Strategies

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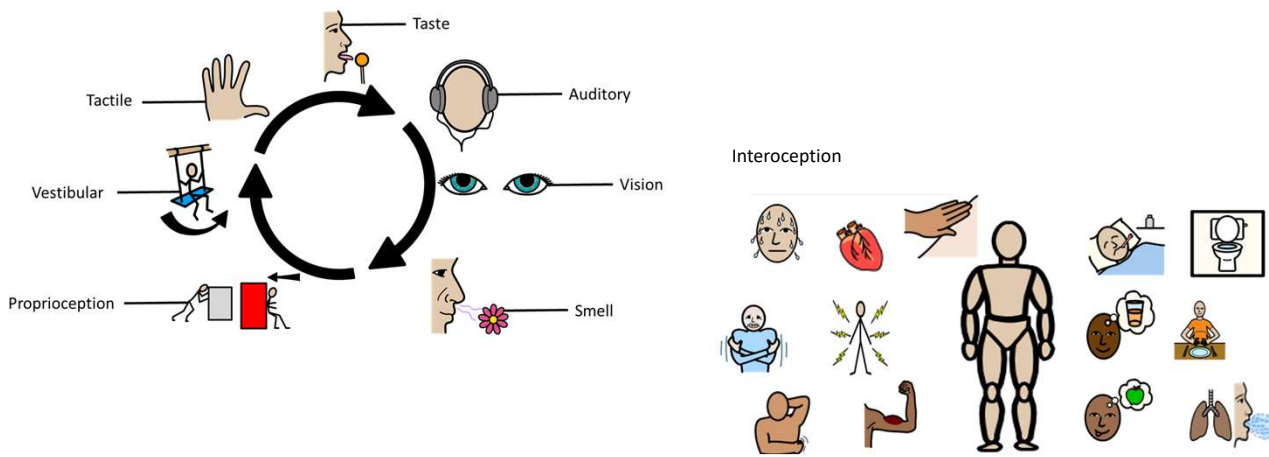
We are all Sensory Beings!



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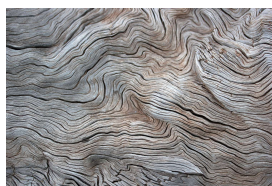
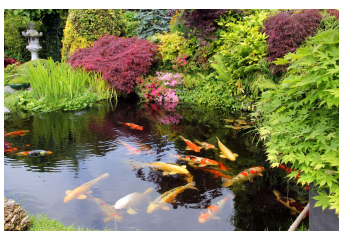
Our Sensory System



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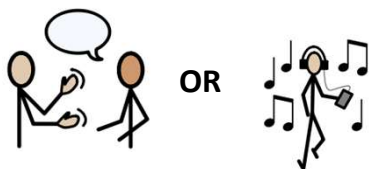
Our Sense of Vision



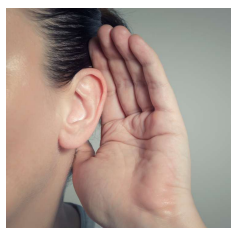
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Our Auditory System

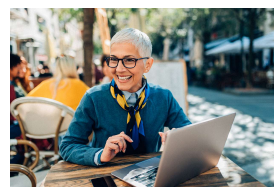


OR



Auditory

Where is the sound coming from?

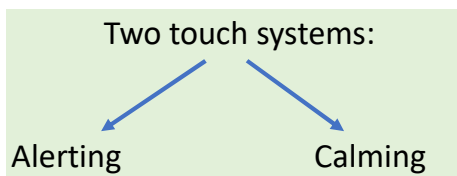
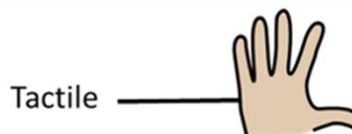


What sound to ignore?

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Our Tactile System

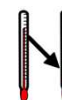


Helps with:

Textures



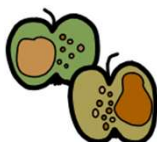
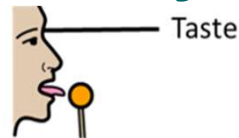
Temperature



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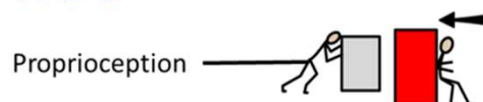
Our Olfactory and Gustatory Systems



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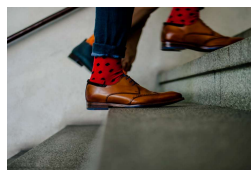
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Our Proprioception Sense



Receptors: Joints and muscles

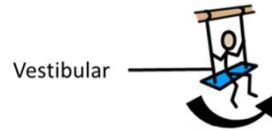
Helps with:



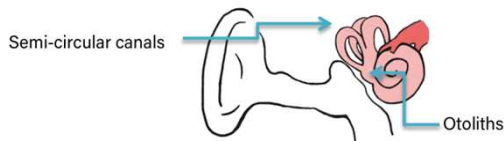
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Our Vestibular Sense



Receptor: Vestibules in inner ear



Source: Griffin OT

Your Balance System in Action

This is your vestibular (balance) system, which is part of your inner ear. It sends information about head motion and orientation to the brain for processing in order to send the right commands to the rest of your body.

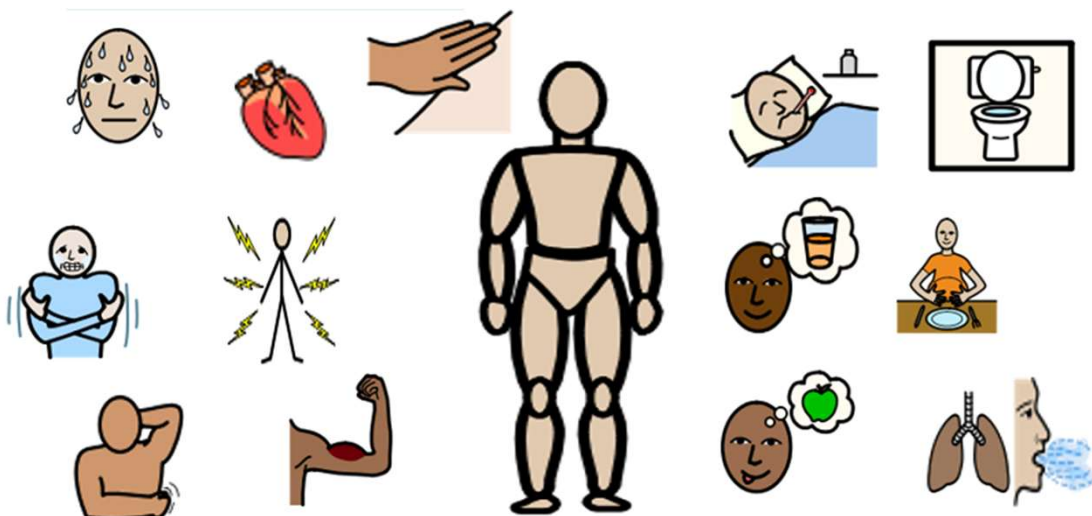
- Gaze Stability**
Coordinates eye and head movements
- Gait Stability**
Keeps you upright and stable
- Spatial Orientation**
Maintains your sense of equilibrium

Source: Your balance system in action. Infographic by Garyfalla Pagonis.

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Our Interoception System



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Why is Interoception so Important?

Emotions

Emotions are taught by thinking about how it feels in the body, what happens if they can't 'feel' what is happening in their body? Or they cannot distinguish between good and bad physical feelings?

Toileting

How often do students ask to go to the toilet when they have arrived in your lesson and they didn't think about it at break time? Perhaps they do not realise they need the toilet until the last minute – not feeling the pressure in the bladder or bowel

Similar issues may arise around girls on their period, they may not notice the uncomfortable feeling as their sanitary pad is full and leaking

Eating

Students may not interpret the signals that they are hungry, fully, nauseous etc. We will cover ARFID later

Working on interoception can support these aspects by learning to:

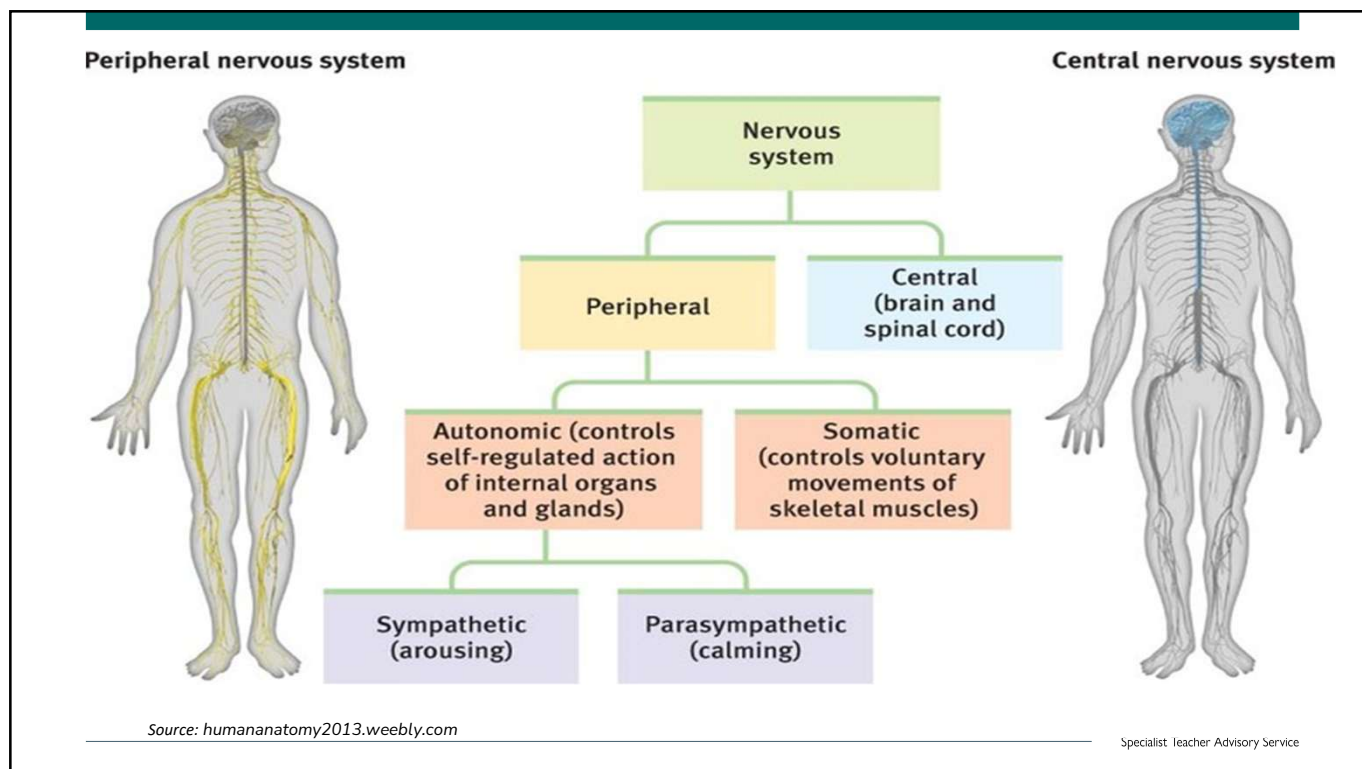
Identify bodily signals – Recognise and observe how their body feels

Interpret their significance – Understand what these signals indicate for them personally

Apply regulation strategies – Use tailored actions to adjust and improve how their body feels

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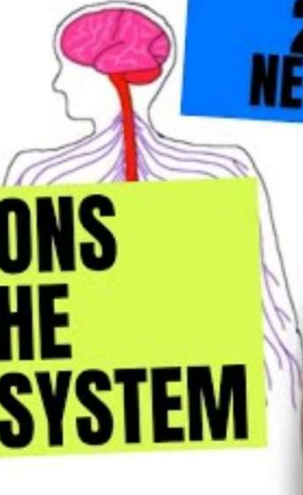
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PERIPHERAL NERVOUS SYSTEM


SOMATIC NERVOUS SYSTEM
VOLUNTARY MOVEMENT



**2-MINUTE
NEUROSCIENCE**

INVOLUNTARY

DIVISIONS
OF THE
NERVOUS SYSTEM



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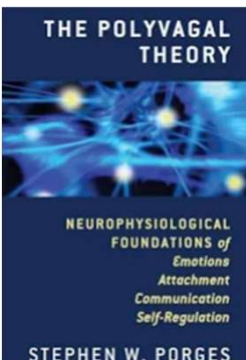
The Polyvagal Theory

Neuroception: process by which our ANS non-consciously assesses the environment for cues of safety or danger

Ventral Vagal System:
Feeling safe,
connected, calming

Fight or Flight

Dorsal Vagal System:
Shutdowns under
stress or danger



Video : [lol81khalat2 v13 cSE dSH vid 90 MM tm1walk tm2taichi len pfb aMs gM 16x9 30 12 25](#)

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Practice Time

You walk into a web.

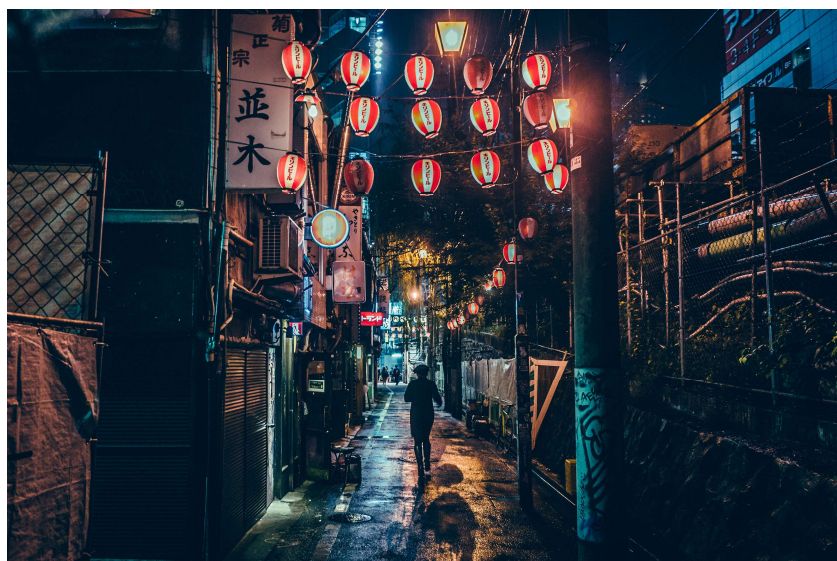
What sense or senses are you using to understand the situation?



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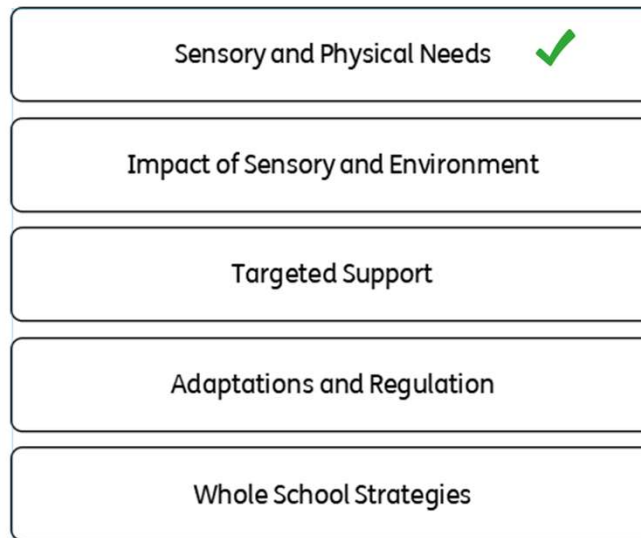
Now Imagine.....



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Training Structure:



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Sensory Integration is...



“ the neurological process that organizes sensation from ones’ own body and from the environment and makes it possible to use the body effectively within the environment”

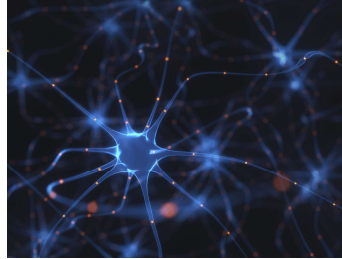
A. Jean Ayres (1972)

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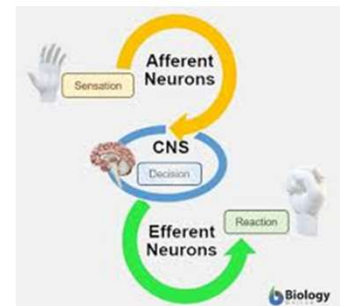
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Neuroplasticity

Our brains are 'plastic'.



They grow with time, experience.

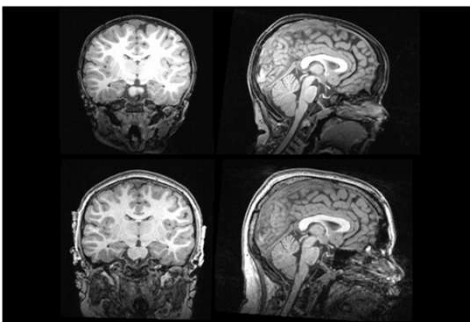


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The Differences in the Brain

Sulzer and Tang discovered that autistic CYP had much less synaptic pruning - about 16 percent - compared with nonautistic CYP, who had roughly half of their synapses pruned. This process is thought to be important for intellectual and behavioural development, including responses to sensory input.



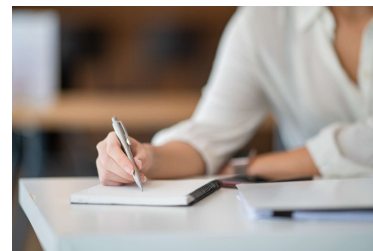
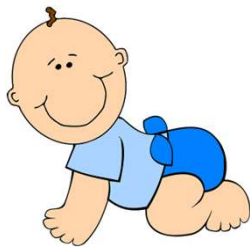
People with autism produce sometimes more or less hormones than NT people.

This can affect their mood, their sleep, digestion, stress levels and sensory reactions.

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Links between Sensory and Motor Skills



Look for strategies on this website:

<https://hiowhealthcare.nhs.uk/application/files/1917/2735/8476/section-4b-fine-motor-skill-development.pdf>

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Links between Sensory and ARFID



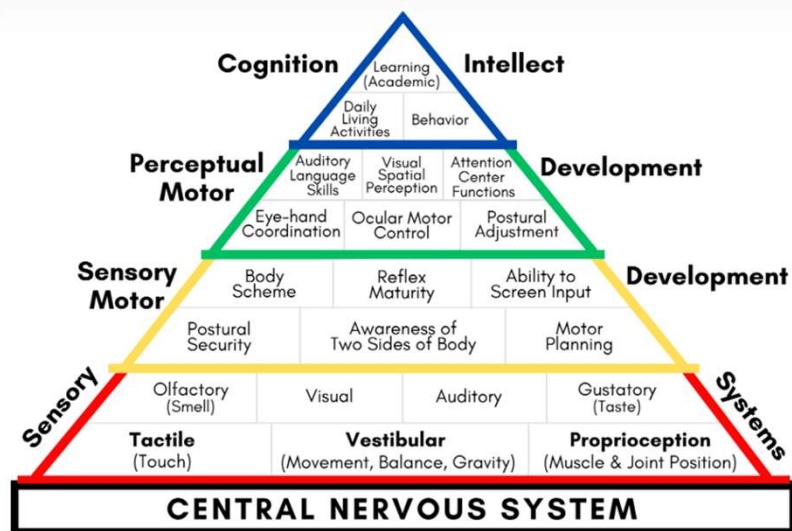
NHS
Hampshire Child and Adolescent
Mental Health Services

<https://hampshirecamhs.nhs.uk/help/professionals/eating-difficulties-professionals/>

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Pyramid of Learning by Taylor and Trott



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Examples of What Sensory Difficulties Could Look Like in the Classroom?

Sensory and Behavioural Characteristics

- Fidgety and finds it hard to sit still
- Easily distracted or distressed
- Difficulty focusing
- Difficulty with fine motor activities (e.g., handwriting)
- Avoidance of messy activities
- Reluctance to engage in group activities
- Seeks sensory input through movement or physical play
- Sensitivity to noise and lights
- Difficulty discerning if they are hot or cold

Physical and Social Interaction

- Difficulty managing transitions between tasks
- Bumps into other children and appears clumsy
- Needs to touch other people or things
- Does not understand personal space
- Seeks fast, spinning movements
- Fearful of swings and playground equipment
- Fearful of surprise touch
- Enjoys bear hugs
- Refuses to wear certain clothing and needs labels removed

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Signs of Sensory Overload

Signs of sensory overload:

Getting pale in the face

Increased sweating

Breathing quicker and heavier

Getting agitated

Closing their eyes or blinking more

Feeling sick or nauseous

Yawning more

Higher voice pitch and louder volume

A sudden change in their energy levels – really high or really low

More or less tension in their muscles – go floppy or tense

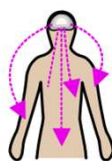


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Additional Issues for Teenagers

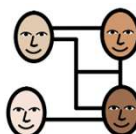
Puberty – Hormones



Self-care



Motivation & socialising



Exams and stress



Movement & Screen Time



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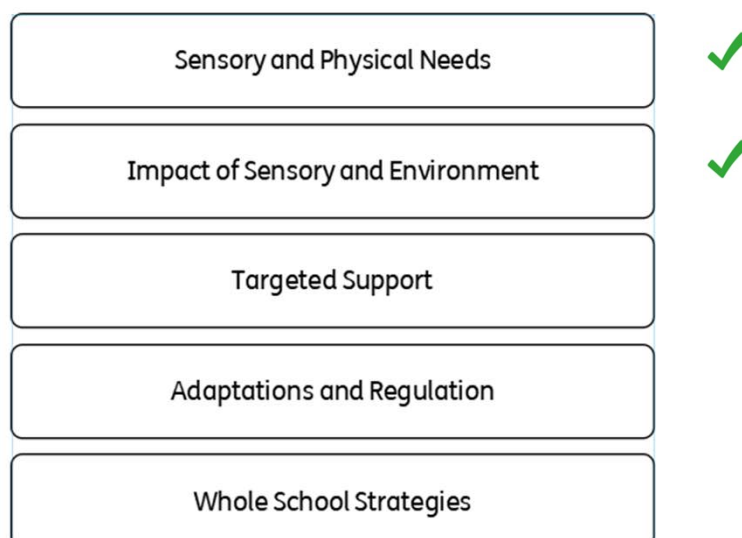
Break



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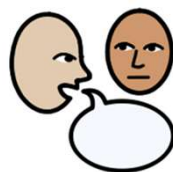
Training Structure:



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Discussion



So how can you support sensory needs in school?

What do you already do in the RP?

As a whole school?

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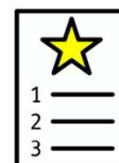
Support for Specific CYP

1- Tracking e.g. ABCC chart

2- Checklists and and self-awareness

3- Acknowledgement and empathy

4- Strategies, adaptations and Plan-Do-Review



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ABCC Chart

| Day and Date | Time of day | A. Antecedents | B. Behaviour | C. Consequences | C. Communication |
|--------------|-------------|---|---|--|---|
| | | <p>What was happening before the behaviour occurred?</p> <p>Include information about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where the behaviour occurred • what the student and any others with them (adult or peer) were saying and doing • any signs of distress shown by the student. | <p>What did the student do?</p> <p>Describe what actually happened in terms of the student's behaviour or actions.</p> <p>Where relevant include information about the intensity of the behaviour (e.g. screaming) and how long it persisted for.</p> | <p>What did you or others do after the behaviour occurred?</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • visual support • verbal instruction • withdrawal • success reminder • distraction • physical intervention • planned ignoring • change of staff • audience removal • offer choices <p>Include information about the eventual outcome for the student.</p> | <p>What is the behaviour communicating?</p> <p>Consider what the behaviour reveals about how the student is feeling and consider why this may be.</p> |

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Sensory Preference Checklist

| Auditory (hearing)  | | |
|--|---|--|
| Over responsive | Under responsive | Seeking |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dislikes loud, unexpected sounds (alarms, bells, sirens) • Responds to loud noises by running away, crying and/or holding hands over ears • Easily startled to unexpected sounds • Prefers to stay away or avoid noisy environments • Easily distracted by background noises • Overwhelmed by canteen, shopping centres, assemblies • Difficulties with higher pitched sounds like hand driers / hoovers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not respond when his/her name is called • Does not respond to instructions given just once • Does not notice sounds around them • May appear to be in their own world • May not be able to tell where a sound is coming from • Ask "what" frequently in conversations • Makes their own noises for fun | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plays music and TV at very loud volumes • Makes noises while doing other tasks • Enjoys noisy places and environments |
| Taste  | | |
| Over responsive | Under responsive | Seeking |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only eats familiar food • Prefers bland food • Dislikes strong food like mint sweets, spicy food • Gags when new food is on offer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often doesn't notice whether food is spicy or bland | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adds salt and spice to their food • Prefers spicy/ salty food • Puts objects to their mouth prior to playing with them |

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Environment Checklist for Specific CYP

Sensory environment checklist for Schools and Classrooms

Child's name: _____ Date: _____

VISUAL

| Pointer | Evidence to look for | Effect on pupil (note your observation and rate the reaction and/or behaviour) | | | | Action for Medium and High risks | Who by & When | Done | Review Date & Actions |
|-----------|--|--|-----|-----|------|--|--|-------------|---|
| | | N/A | Low | Med | High | | | | |
| (example) | Low lighting (e.g. when watching a film at assembly) | | | | | Use noisest visual; discuss what will happen and expectations. Position next to a well-lit area; student aware to move from room if feeling or showing signs of overwhelm. | Classroom staff & student (next event 31 Oct 22) | LSA (+1-10) | Student was more settled; however forgot noisest visual - next event 08/12/22 - use student's |
| Lights | Class lighting- neon lights- flickering lights Sunlight coming through blinds and creating patterns Sunlight coming through the window Light reflecting on objects such as metal or shiny surfaces Glare from the board or computer screen | | | | | | | | |
| Classroom | Cluttered desk Silly walls Hanging displays from ceiling Displays around the interactive board Floor or wall patterns | | | | | | | | |
| Position | Near a window with views of school ground Looking at the whole class | | | | | | | | |

STAS_Sensory Environment Checklist
Created by the C&A team- not to be shared outside of the intended audience without permission
Widgit Symbols © Widgit Software 2002-2022 www.widgit.com

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Self-Awareness

Let's be a sensory detective

Hampshire Services
hants.gov.uk

Getting Started

How to fill in the grid:

- Read each statement and tick how it affects you

| Statement | Always | Often | Sometimes | Never |
|-------------------|--------|-------|-----------|-------|
| It is distracting | | | | |
| It is painful | | | | |
| It has no effect | | | | |

• (copy and paste tick symbol)

Hampshire County Council
hants.gov.uk

The differences between people

Hampshire Services
hants.gov.uk

What do I know about the senses already?

Click to add text

Hampshire Services
hants.gov.uk

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Additional Resources on STAS Moodle

Course: [STAS - Sensory Regulation](#) | [STAS \(mylearningapp.com\)](#)



Smell Sense:

| Sensory modulation types | | |
|--|---|--|
| Over responsive | Under responsive | Seeker |
| Experience sensation with higher intensity | Experience sensation with lower intensity | Looking for more sensory input |
| May notice smells that others don't | Might not notice or react to smells around them | Likes smells, they might go closer to increase the intensity |

Functional Impact

Individuals with over responsive reactions to smell may react very strongly to certain smells. They may want to avoid certain people (perfume, breath, body odour) or certain places (Canteen, Food Tech, Science lab, Toilets) as the smell is either too strong or very unpleasant to them.

Individuals with under responsive reactions to smell may have delayed responses to smells which alerts us of danger (smoke, rotten food or poison).

Individuals, who seek smells, may forget about personal space in order to get close to a smell they like, or constantly be putting strong smell close to their nose (clothing, glue etc...).

Key Strategies

Complete a sensory and an environment checklist. Consider how the smells around the child impact on their ability to concentrate and learn, and how the smells impact on their alertness and their comfort.

For over responsive:

- Minimise or avoid the smells around the individual
- In rooms that have stronger smells, ventilate the rooms well or allow child to avoid the rooms
- Prepare the child by warning them of the possible strong smells
- Aromatherapy (seek advice from a trained professional as can cause adverse effects)

For under responsive and seekers:

- Use essential oils on their clothing (berbering smell such as citrus, peppermint, pine) Check with specialist
- Social story about being too close to people and around safety in school (fire-gas)

Levels of Alertness (Arousal)

The term level of alertness or arousal relates to how awake or alert or how tired you are. Across a typical day, it is very normal for arousal to fluctuate.

Functional Impact

In order to adjust their level of arousal, individuals use regulation.

Some individuals, particularly those with sensory differences, find regulating harder to do than others. They may need more support to reach optimal arousal.

For over responsive students, the classroom sensory inputs may increase their arousal, e.g. the school bell, students singing or the feeling of their glue stick. They can become quickly overwhelmed or overloaded by multiple sensory inputs. It may result in behaviours like refusing, avoiding or shutting down.

Under responsive and seeking students both have lower baseline arousal. The seekers tend to look at for more intensity to increase their arousal. The under responsive may need additional time or more intensity to register the sensory input.

Key Strategies

Complete the sensory preference checklist to have a better understanding of the student's sensory profile.

Adapt the environment or the activity to support the student's sensory difficulties.

Identify strategies to either calm or alert the students during activities.

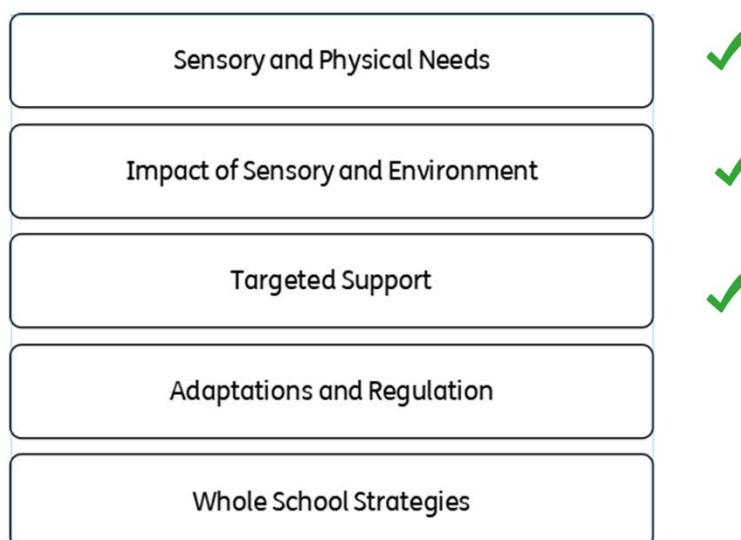
Work with the student on their own sensory awareness so that they learn to regulate themselves or seek support to co regulate.

Sensory Ladders can support students with regulation. They promote individual awareness of self-states and how to use sensory strategies to self regulate.

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Training Structure:



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Adaptations

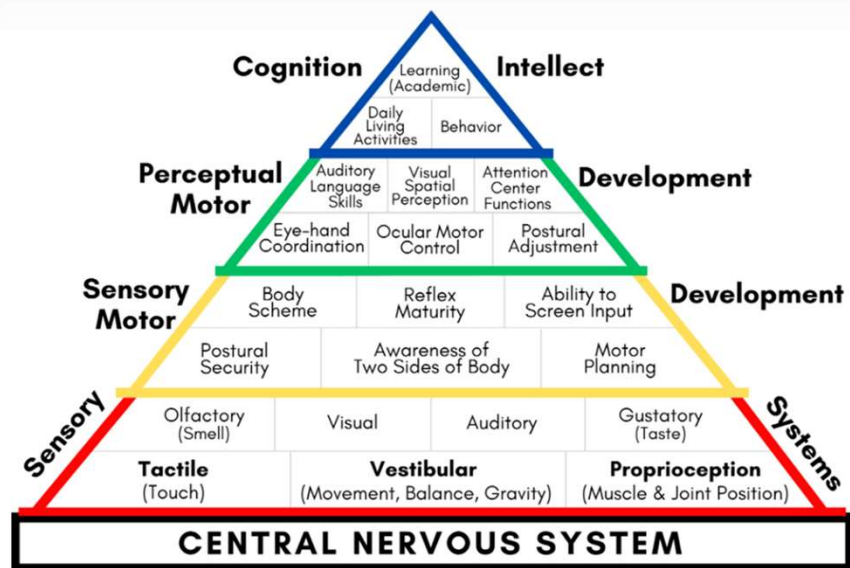
The environment



The task



The activities



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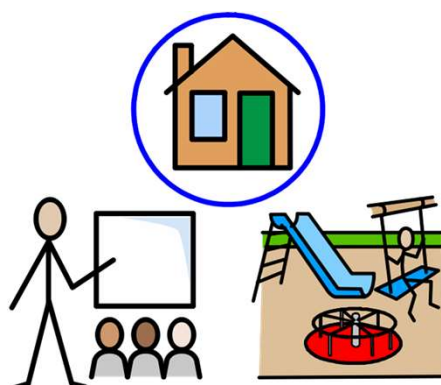
The Environment



Predictable

Organised

Calming

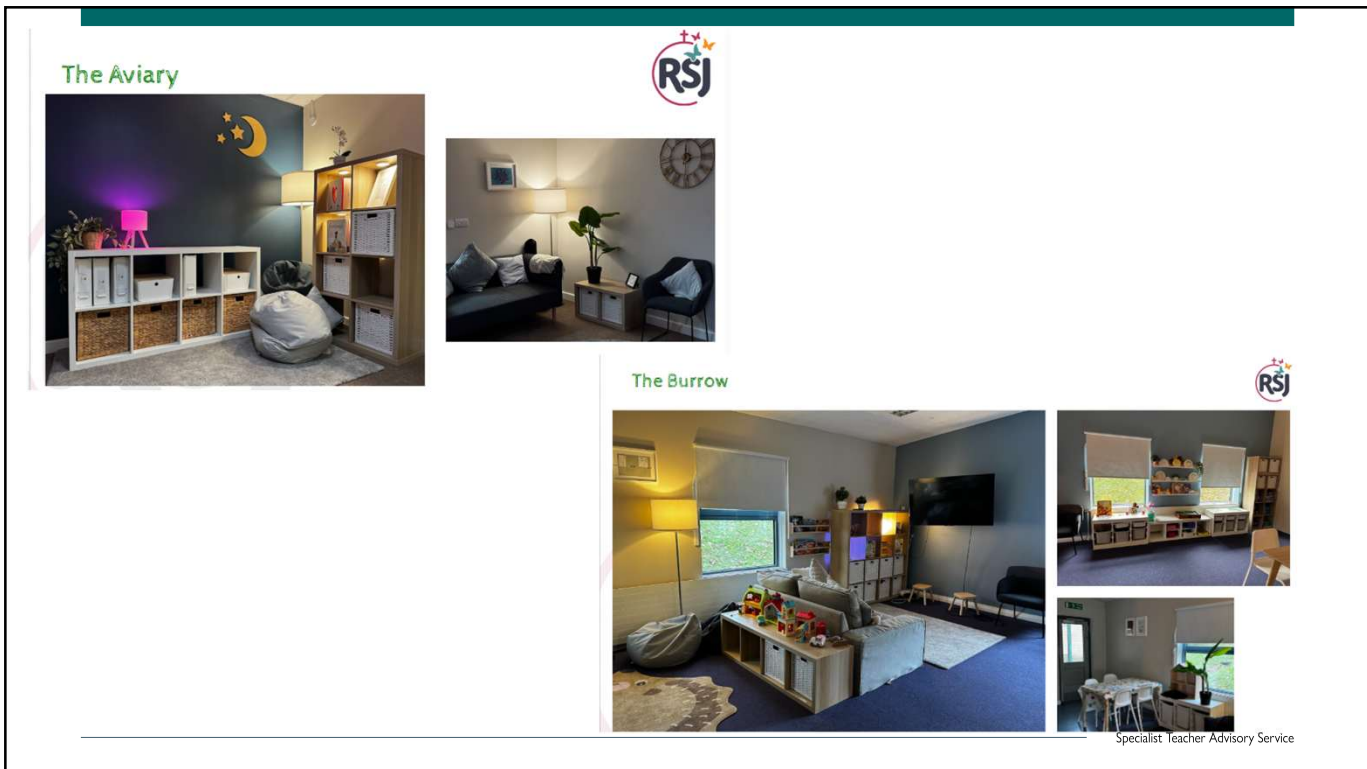


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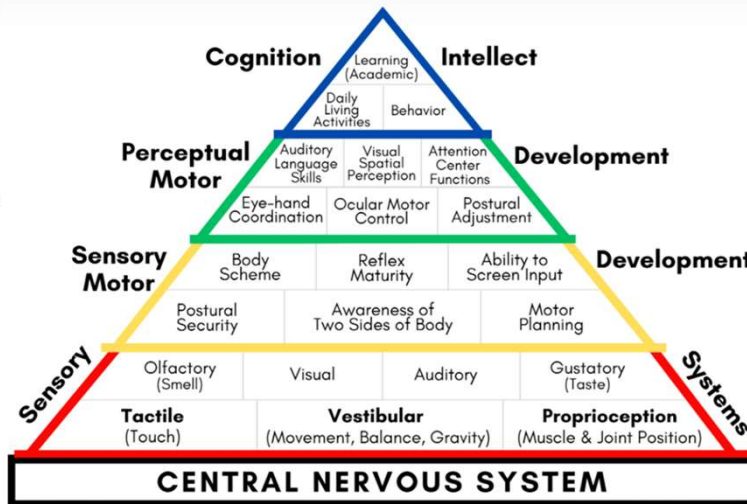
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The Task and Activities



What are the sensory barriers?

How to minimise potential triggers?



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Self-regulation and the 'Just Right'

Arousal Steps



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Regulating Techniques



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Proprioception and Small Movement



Push palms



Pull hands



Hug yourself tightly



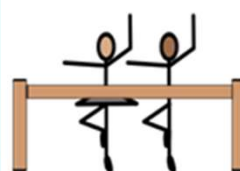
Reach high with one hand, then the other. Then make circles in the air.



Pull or push up on your chair



Stack your blocks



Pull a funny pose



Re-stack your blocks!



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Large Movement and Around School

Movement around the class

Movement between lessons – can be calming or alerting

Alternative routes

Exit or Break cards

Early passes

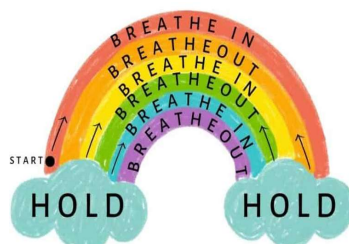
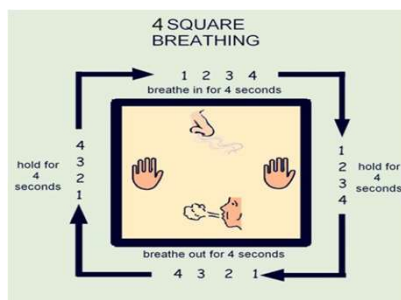
Sensory Circuits



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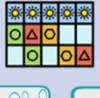









Breathing



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Sensory Tools, Equipment and Space

| Tactile Activities | Oral Activities | Visual & Auditory Activities | Movement Activities | Sensory Space |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|     |     |     |     |     |

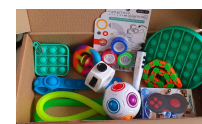
It is important to plan and review how any supports are being used.
There is guidance on the STAS Moodle.

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Sensory Tools

- Ask the CYP what helps them feel calm or more alert to improve focus
- Talk with parents to learn what works at home
- Notice if the CYP is masking in school and ask about possible triggers
- Trial one sensory tool at a time and see if it helps
- Use tools only when the CYP needs them, then put them away afterwards
- Make sure tools are safe and do not distract other children
- Check regularly with the CYP if the tool still helps
- Keep parents updated so home and school do the same thing
- Keep tools accessible to the CYP so that they learn to independently self-regulate



If the student needs the tool most of the time

Go back to your environment, task and activity

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Planned Support Strategies



Things to consider:

One size doesn't fit all – use the checklists to understand the child and the triggers

Does the child need alerting, calming or organising?

Try one strategy/make one change at a time – then review

Do they settle in the environment? If not go back to consider the environment, task and activity

 [Energy Accounting](#)

 [Heavy Work Activities](#)

 [Sensory Box](#)

 [Sensory Ladders](#)

 [Sensory Circuits](#)

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Developing Independence

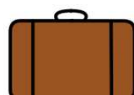


Pupil voice

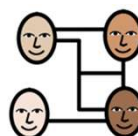


Self-awareness

Toolkit of strategies



Communication with staff

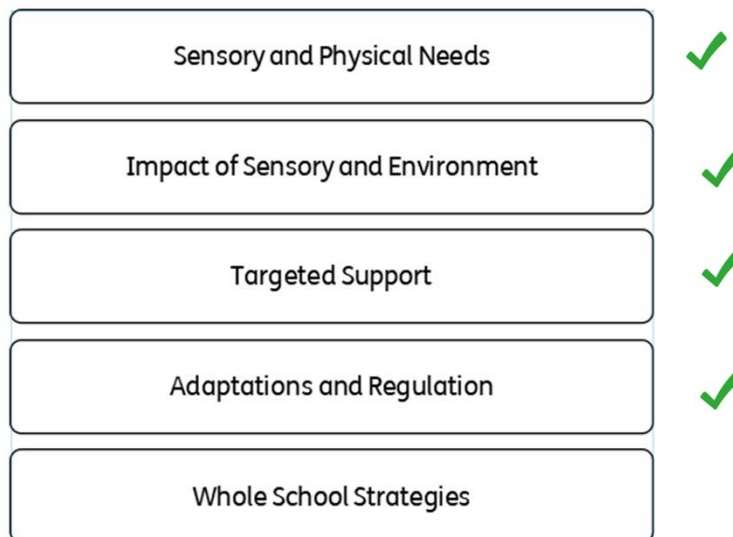


Staff awareness and accommodations

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Training Structure:



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Environment and Adaptations



Sensory activities within the curriculum

Flexible seating



Look at the whole school environment – same as per the classroom – is it predictable?
Organised and calm?

Look at the corridors, halls and playground – think about all the senses and what could be distracting away from the learning but also what can contribute to better strategies.

Think lights, acoustics, visuals etc...

In the playground, what equipment is available to promote proprioception and vestibular activities. Swing, slides, floor marking, monkey bars

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Pupil Voice and Inclusion

Self-awareness - What helps? What could be better?

Create a school sensory council

Plan sensory friendly events

Adaptations to whole school activities e.g. Assembly

Options for extra curricular activities

Planning for special events and trips



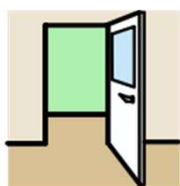
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Increasing Parental Engagement



Coffee mornings



Open door policy



Webinars



Email contacts
on websites



Apps to share information
about the CYP



Involving parents in
support plans



Email bulletins/weekly newsletters

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Training Structure:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Sensory and Physical Needs | ✓ |
| Impact of Sensory and Environment | ✓ |
| Targeted Support | ✓ |
| Adaptations and Regulation | ✓ |
| Whole School Strategies | ✓ |

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Reflection Time



Now take 5 minutes to plan your next actions.

Look back at the notes you made.

Plan what you will do: in your classroom, for a specific CYP (your toolbox!), within your year group or key stage, and at a whole school level.

Give yourself a timeframe for Plan Do Review.

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Implementing Sensory Support

All staff

Put training into practice
Reflect classroom environment and RP
Consider whole school environment

For some
CYP

Complete Tracking Chart to identify triggers e.g. classrooms/areas/times
Complete Sensory Preference Checklist
Complete Sensory Environment Checklist
Review Toolkits on the STAS Moodle linked to any sensory areas of need

For
complex
CYP

SENCo/RP Manager can book a 30-minute problem solving meeting if more in-depth support via your allocated STA's 'Bookings with me' link
Book a sensory audit – this would incur a charge

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Signposting

<https://www.sensoryintegrationeducation.com/>

<https://www.sensoryintegrationeducation.com/products/courses/discover-sensory-processing-integration>
– Free course online with case studies

<https://www.nhsggc.org.uk/kids/life-skills/joining-in-with-sensory-differences/>

https://www.wholeschoosend.org.uk/user/login?redirect_to=https%3A%2F%2Fonlinecpd.wholeschoosend.org.uk%2F

<https://www.griffinot.com/>

<https://www.kelly-mahler.com/what-is-interoception/>

<https://www.kelly-mahler.com/printable-resources/>

<https://hiowhealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services/a-z-list-of-services/childrens-therapy-service>

<https://semh.co.uk/social-emotional-and-mental-health-semh/resources/sensory-profiles/> online sensory profiles

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And Finally...

Questions and Evaluation



<https://forms.office.com/e/Sy7P0e8Mh1>

Contact Us

Email Stas.service@hants.gov.uk
Phone 0370 779 0779

This information is for the sole use of the participant and should not be shared outside of the intended audience without permission from the Specialist Teacher Advisory Service (STAS)

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