



# Understanding our senses

## Interoception

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Interoception is our internal sense which alerts us to messages relating to hunger, thirst, tiredness, needing the toilet etc.

This sense is hugely linked with us recognising and responding to our emotions.

Interoception is an internal sense which gives us information from our organs and therefore tells us. It tells me when I am in pain, when I'm hot, cold, sleepy etc.

A key component to understanding these messages is understanding our emotions in relation to this. I have to have an understanding that a lethargic feeling can relate to me being tired. We have to learn to piece together little pieces of information from these internal messages to recognise how we are feeling.

"In restaurants I find it noisy that I can't tell if I'm full or not when I'm eating."

Emily

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@SensorySp

## The importance of self-regulation

Self-regulation is what we are all doing for our body's to feel 'good'. As a child we begin learning how to regulate with the help of others.

We will be co-regulating as a baby - I will cry when I'm hungry and someone will feed me. I will cry when I'm cold and someone will swaddle me.

When we are self-regulating we are able to focus better, engage with people better and be more aware of our feelings. If I have difficulty in self-regulating or understanding these internal messages from my Interoceptive sense then I may find it difficult to focus, control my emotions, I may feel anxious and I find it difficult to support myself.

Some people who find it difficult to regulate their emotions may have difficulty in recognising these internal feelings.

Research tells us also that external sensory messages can over-ride someone recognising these internal messages.

## Understanding emotions in relation to Interoception

We have to learn to recognise my emotions. We do this through experiences of understanding and responding to these internal feelings.

For example if my heart was beating really fast, my stomach was tingly and my muscles were shakey I might be able to piece that information together to understand that I was feel anxious.

It is the processing in my brain which helps me to make sense of these messages and know how to respond.

My body's ultimate aim is for homeostasis, this is our natural level of balance.

The things we do to reach homeostasis are all forms of self-regulation. We are all doing this throughout all aspects of our day.

**These characteristics are not all of the ways someone with a SPD might regulate their sensory needs it is just 1 example from each sensory system.**

This information is based on our online training 'Understanding our senses' you can find these online via our website shop.  
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