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"It starts rushing towards me like a tsunami. And then, like trees and houses being destroyed by a tsunami, I get destroyed by the shock. I get swallowed up in the moment and can't tell the right response from the wrong response. All I know is I have to get out of the situation as soon as I can so I don't drown. To get away I'll do anything. Crying, screaming and throwing things, hitting out even..."

Naoki - sensory overload

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@SensorySp

Compensation of sensory difficulties.

If you support a child or adult with SPD you may have noticed some specific sensory characteristics or ways in which they do activities.

It is common that we will recognise people with SPD responding to their environment differently to how you do.

When you notice this about the person and their own sensory needs and consider if that activity has input from that sensory system.

For example brushing our teeth involves our auditory, tactile, proprioceptive, smell and taste and so can be difficult for many more people.

If someone is sensitive to sound then brushing their teeth may be really difficult as we create sound and vibrations when we brush our teeth which are also felt near our ears inside our mouth.

Understanding our senses

Why they need to work together

All of our senses have to work together as they develop as this is how we learn to understand and engage with our environment.

All of our senses are constantly working and our brain is doing a very clever job of helping to alert us to what is important and what isn't at that moment in time.

As we gather more experience from our senses we gradually focus less on our actual senses and focus more on the activity or action we have learnt to do.

For example as a baby when they realise they have 2 hands - the awareness of 2 sides of our body is a stage of our development which we need our senses in order to be able to do.

Sensory Integration for skill development

Something as simple as reaching out and picking something up involves many of our senses.

Our tactile, visual and proprioceptive sense all work together for me to do that. I do not think about each sense everytime I pick something up, I just do it.

As we develop this is how we begin engaging with our environment and it all relied on our senses in order for me to be able to do this.

I would like you to do something after you have finished reading this. At some point throughout your day I want you to think about one of the activities you do like washing your hands, chopping vegetables, reading a book and try and think about which senses you are using to do that activity.

When you do this you will very quickly realise why some children & adults with SPD may find some daily activities difficult.

Everything we do includes at least 2 or 3 sensory systems.

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

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