



# Understanding our senses

## Vestibular

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"My husband and I used to have a soft bed that would bounce every time he rolled over or moved a leg. I couldn't stand it and would scream at him about an hour into the night. I would wake up every time he moved!"

Susan

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## Characteristics relating to Vestibular sensation

We might notice lots of physical movements rocking, bouncing, spinning, climbing, running, gymnastics, jumping etc.

For these people they are requiring more movement in order to process things in their environment.

For people who are hyper-sensitive to movement we may notice characteristics of them wanting to stay in the same place, squinting eyes while walking around but also before moving.

It's so important we personalise the purpose of why someone may be responding to their sensory input in the way that they are. Sensory processing is a personalised processing system so we need to really understand someone's over-riding sensory needs in order to provide effective support.

This is our sense of movement which is detected with our head movements.

We have fluid between our ears which moves, when this happens we gain movement input. It's this movement which tells us how fast we are moving.

We know that some people with auditory impairments or sensitivities may also be sensitive to movement and this is due to where we sense this movement - between our ears.

Vertigo is linked to our vestibular sense. Being over-stimulated in this movement sense can mean someone feels dizzy, sick and just want to feel grounded.

## Importance of our visual sense

In order to really understand this sense of movement in our bodies we also require visual information to help it make sense.

You may notice some people who easily feel travel sick will turn their back towards the window in the vehicle as you are moving, or wear a hood or close their eyes. By reducing this visual input we are helping to reduce the sense of movement.

If you were dizzy or just come off a really spinny ride one of the first things that you might do to help you feel less dizzy could be to close your eyes and hold onto something.

Our visual sense therefore supports our sense of movement alongside the information we are receiving from our head movements.

For people who look for more vestibular input they may enjoy physical input as well as fast moving visuals that spin or move around. This can be a way that people with limited movement may gain that internal sense of movement.

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

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