**access**

Job Corps Accommodation Support Newsletter

Spring 2018

Supporting Students with Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD)

Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD), formerly known as Sensory Integration Dysfunction, refers to a condition in which the brain has trouble receiving, organizing, and responding to information that comes in through the senses. In other words, the central nervous system is ineffective in processing sensory-related information. Students with SPD may have difficulties in accurately processing a range of sensory information such as interpreting sights, sounds, smells, and touches. They also may have motor-related challenges and struggle to get their bodies to do what their brain is thinking.
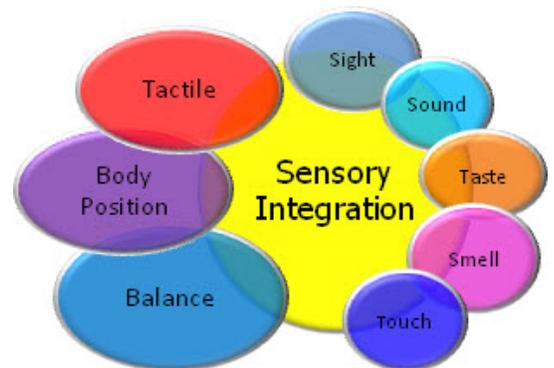
SPD Manifestations

So how does SPD manifest? Students with SPD may experience hypersensitivity (over-sensitive) and/or hyposensitivity (under-sensitivity) to the various forms of sensory input. An individual may be hypersensitive to taste, smells and sounds and also be hyposensitive to touch. The manifestations vary from individual to individual and require the typical individualized review related to a specific student's accommodation needs.

What does SPD look like in a Job Corps student? Some possible manifestations in the Job Corps environment might include sensitivity to:

> loud noises that may result in the student experiencing physical pain or struggling to focus and pay attention. These responses might be triggered by fire alarms, bells that signal class changes, crowds of people talking simultaneously, etc.

> touch that may result from skin exposure to various types of clothing fabric or to the tags in clothing, to others brushing physically by the individual perhaps in a crowded hallway during class changes, or from light or unexpected touch such as someone placing a hand on the person's shoulder to gain their attention.

> various types of lighting which may result in the individual experiencing dizziness, headaches, nausea and/or an inability to focus.

> various types of food textures which may result in the individual becoming nauseous or physically ill.

Supporting Students with Sensory Processing Disorder (cont'd)

Behavior and SPD

A student with SPD may have behaviorally-related manifestations that result from their challenges in processing sensory input. These resulting manifestations from SPD should not be viewed as willful or negative behavioral challenges but recognized as functional limitations that may require accommodations in order for the student to be able to access and participate in the Job Corps program. As stated previously, each student with SPD will have characteristics and symptoms that are unique to that individual.

Functional Limitations and Accommodations

The following table outlines some common functional limitations and possible accommodations to support students with SPD.

Functional Limitation	**Functional Limitation**
Touch - Hypersensitivity	Touch - Hyposensitivity
Accommodations	**Accommodations**
➢ Allow to leave class a few minutes early each class period and before lunch to avoid hallway crowds	➢ Allow breaks to do some "heavy work" such as carrying some books, picking up supplies in career technical such as bricks or tools
➢ Allow to eat lunch at a different time or location	➢ Allow frequent breaks for movement in general
➢ Allow seating in classrooms, assemblies, dorm meetings, etc. in area out of traffic flow	➢ Provide/use lap weights or wearing weighted wrist or ankle bands
➢ Allow to keep wet wipes or to wash hands frequently if working on career technical task where the student is getting hands and/or clothing dirty. S/he may need to change clothing if they get too dirty and should keep an extra uniform in the career technical area	➢ Provide/wear a compression vest
➢ Provide modified uniform (e.g., tagless, soft fabric type, seamless socks, etc.)	➢ Allow access to fitness equipment at lunch time or designated times of the day
➢ Provide cotton linens or softer microfiber linens	➢ Tape a square of some type of textured material in the working area (i.e., sandpaper, etc.) that the individual can touch to aid input
➢ Allow a pass for activities that involve standing in line so s/he can be assisted separately like for paydays, etc.	➢ Allow to use fidget items to meet the need for touch-related input and assist with focus

Functional Limitation

Sight or Visual

Accommodations

➢ Provide a decluttered workspace (e.g., minimal things on the wall)

➢ Provide decluttered worksheets (i.e., either break down assignments into smaller sections and provide each in isolation on a worksheet and/or provide a "mask" that can be used to cover part of the worksheet and only reveal the sections that the student is working on currently)

➢ Provide graph paper to assist with lining up columns

➢ Provide templates for drawing shapes if needed for math class and/or career technical training activities

Functional Limitation

Taste - Hypersensitivity

Accommodations

➢ Modify menu for student to include foods the student is not averse to eating

➢ Provide an option to have a repeating menu so that the student can anticipate what foods will be served on what days of the week

➢ Provide a very small serving of the general menu items (in addition to the modified menu items) to assist individual in trying new foods for nutritional benefit

➢ Provide a chewy tube if frequently chews on inanimate objects such as pens, pencils, etc.

➢ Use a plate with dividers so that differing foods to not touch or mix with other foods on the plate

Functional Limitation

Noise - Hypersensitivity

Accommodations

➢ Allow the appropriate use of stress relief techniques or tools to include assistive technology

➢ Allow flexible schedule or built in breaks to go to a quiet location (and use the stress relief techniques, if needed)

➢ Allow the use of noise-cancellation headphones (should muffle the sound but not completely block it out for safety reasons)

➢ Provide paper towels in the restroom in lieu of the loud air-dry machines

➢ Allow to sit near exit during assemblies or during activities that are typically noisy

Functional Limitation

Noise - Hyposensitivity

Accommodations

➢ Provide copies of notes of oral instruction or give notes with fill-in-the-blank options so the student can process the oral information being shared without overly focusing simultaneously on what needs to be written

➢ Repeat instructions and have student repeat what was said or is being asked

➢ Provide visual cue for obtaining attention of the student as s/he may not immediately respond to the calling of their name

➢ May need a headset or ear buds for watching TV (as they tend to play the volume on high and may need guidance about safe volume levels to use)

See the *Disability Resources* section for resources to support students with SPD. A SPD webinar is available on the Job Corps Disability website on the Trainings and Webinars/Disability Specific page.

Spotlight on Assistive Technology: Sensory Resources

Heat Pad

Heat Pad is an app designed to help individuals relax by simulating various heat-sensitive surfaces that react to the heat of the user's fingers. and create reminders. It is an effective tool in assisting Job Corps students when overwhelmed and/or overstimulated.
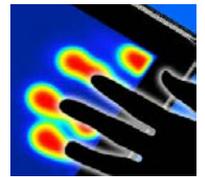
Miracle Modus

Miracle Modus is an app designed to mitigate sensory overload by providing a source of hypnotic rainbows and soft bells. Students who prefer visual and/or auditory input can use the app to decompress and refocus their energy.

Dropophone

Dropophone is an app that allows individuals to create their own minimalist melodies. Students can use this app as background for focus or overall self-regulation by customizing sounds, tempos, and patterns for each user.

Pocket Pond

Pocket Pond places a virtual fish pond on your phone, which is great for helping to calm down during stressful times. Pocket Pond displays a very realistic looking animated pond at full screen resolution. The water ripples gentle and the Koi in the pond swim around in a very authentic way. The nature sound effects that accompany Pocket Pond are beautifully soothing, from the twittering of the many different birds, to the sound of the water lapping the edge of the pond.

MeMoves

MeMoves and MoreMeMoves are sensorimotor multimedia programs that transform the mind and body. They are based on a patented system that was designed to activate the parasympathetic nervous system, providing the user with a quick and effective tool for self-regulation. Each sequence is a patented combination of music, movement, and images, utilizing simple, geometric shapes. Organized into three categories: Joy, Calm, and Focus, users select one of the video sequences and follow along (imitate) the actions on the screen as they are able. The program's compelling multisensory design sets up the nervous system for calm chemistry and active, alert attention, resulting in emotional regulation and behavioral change.

E-mail your comments or suggestions to:
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Disability Resources

Understood

Understood is a website that was established as an innovative digital resource where parents could come together and feel understood. The site provides personalized resources, free daily access to experts in the disability education field, updated research, tips, strategies, interventions, and support services.

Upcoming Webinars

➢ Service Animals and Assistance Animals in the Job Corps Program

➢ Effectively Using IEPs in the Creation of Accommodation Plans

Please check the Event Registration page on the Job Corps Community Web site for dates/times

The Out of Sync Child Grows Up

The "Out of Sync Child Grows Up" is a book that offers practical advice for coping with Sensory Processing Disorder in the tween, teen, and young adult years. As a generation of kids with SPD enters young adulthood, this guide will help them navigate the world that seems too loud, bright, fast, close, or otherwise overwhelming and confusing to the senses.

Accommodation by Disability Resource Handouts

Have you seen the new **Accommodation by Disability Resource Handouts**? They are located on the Job Corps Disability Website in the New Items and Tools sections on the Home page. There are a total of **twenty** individual resource sheets providing basic accommodation suggestions for several common disabilities in the Job Corps population including learning, ADHD, behavior/conduct, anxiety, and psychotic disorders.

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