



The Sensory Form Webinar

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Background

- Sensory processing involves taking in and processing information from the senses (Bundy & Lane, 2012), an issue for typical children, ASD, ADHD (Dunn et al, 2016).
- Difficulties with sensory processing can negatively affect play, ADLs and participation (Dunn et al, 2016) school participation for children with autism. (Ashburner et al, 2008).
- Disagreement in literature about the best approach (Bodison & Parham, 2018; Barton et al, 2015), little to guide practice (Case-Smith et al, 2015).
- Issues with defining intervention (Case-Smith, et al, 2015) and intervention fidelity (Schaaf et al, 2018).

What's the Plan?

1. Quick review- sensory processing
2. Meet “Tahlia”
3. Complete a sensory processing assessment and intervention plan for Tahlia using the sensory form

Sensory Processing-

“Taking in and organising sensory information for use”

Eight Senses

- Outside senses- touch, taste, smell, hearing, vision
- Inside senses- Proprioception, vestibular, interoception

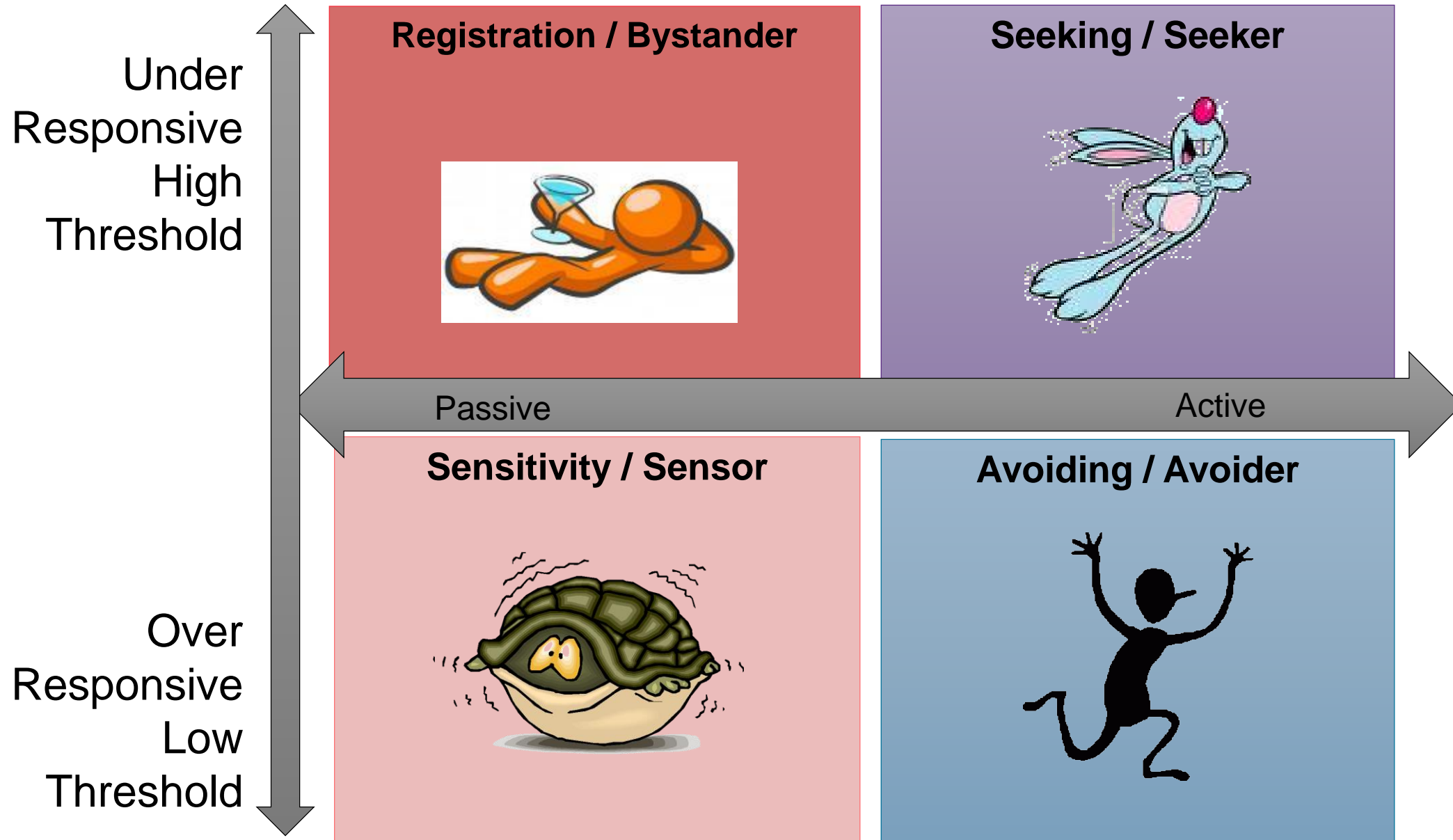
Why do we have senses?

Protection- “*Will it hurt me?*” (fight flight fright- protects the body from damage)

Discrimination- “*What is it?*” (more detailed information about objects and people)

Habituation- “Do I need to keep paying attention?” (screening out irrelevant stimuli)

Winnie Dunn's model of sensory modulation (Dunn, 2014)



Sensory Processing- The Controversy

- Not enough evidence to warrant the use of sensory intervention (Barton et al, 2015)
- Should not be used for children with autism (Lang et al, 2012)
- Important to differentiate between Sensory Integration (fidelity measure- Parnham, et al, 2007) and Sensory Based Interventions (Case-Smith et al, 2015), Sensory Specific Techniques or Sensory Environmental Modification (Bodison & Parnham, 2018).
- Evidence is inconclusive (Watling & Hauer, 2015)
- Some evidence for SI with children with autism (Schaaf, Dumont, Arbesman & May-Benson, 2018)

If all you have is a hammer,
everything looks like a nail.



Providing Sensory Support

Universal Supports benefit all students:

- Structure
- Routine
- Predictability
- Information sharing
- Good Autism practice

Individualised Supports are needed for some students

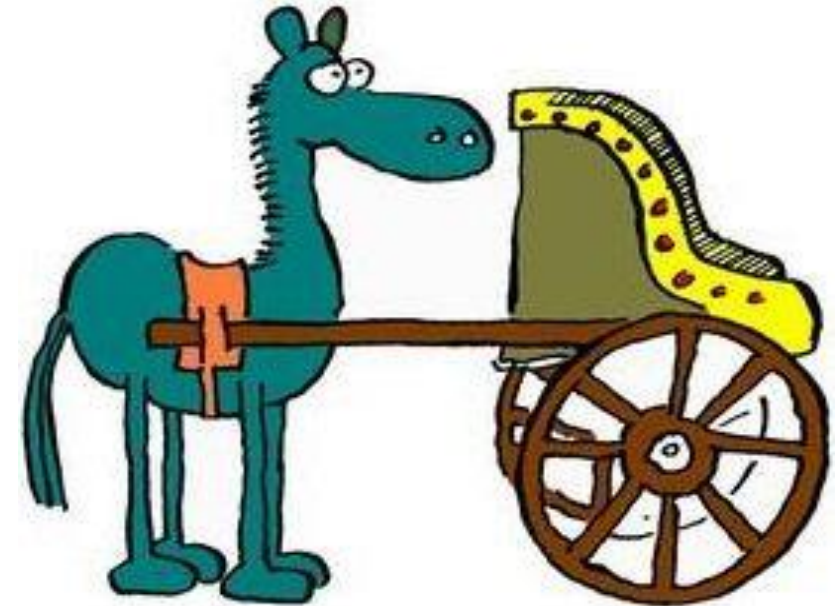
- Gather information
- Understand sensory needs
- Provide specific sensory supports

Individualised Supports

Universal Supports

Sensory Processing Assessment and Intervention

- Do an assessment first! (AOTA, 2018)
- Then you can target strategies- do not use individual sensory interventions without assessment



<http://www.choosingwisely.org/aota-offers-choosing-wisely-list-of-practices-to-question/>

Name: _____

Date: / /

Who is in the team? _____

| | | | | | | |
|---------------|--------------|--------------|---------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <u>VISION</u> | <u>SOUND</u> | <u>TOUCH</u> | <u>ORAL SENSORY</u> | <u>SMELL/TASTE</u> | <u>MOVEMENT (VESTIBULAR)</u> | <u>BODY (PROPRIOCEPTION)</u> |
| | | | | | | |

Problems with Participation

Are you sure it's sensory? YES / NO

If YES, approach with a sensory lens, If NO, alternative assessment or intervention

| | | | |
|------------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| <u>Bystander</u> | <u>Seeker</u> | <u>Avoider</u> | <u>Sensor</u> |
| | | | |

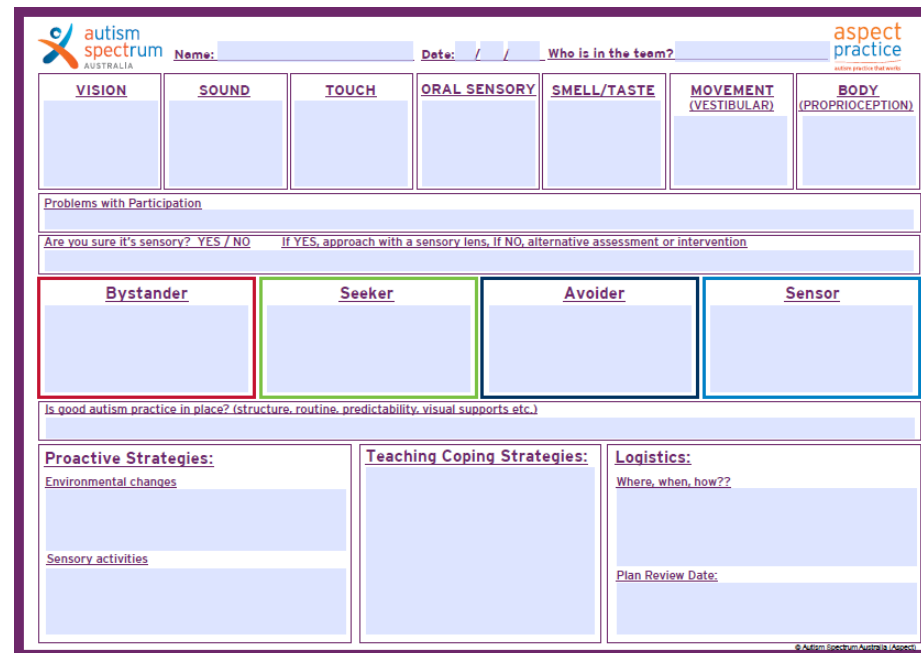
Is good autism practice in place? (structure, routine, predictability, visual supports etc.)Proactive Strategies:Environmental changesSensory activitiesTeaching Coping Strategies:Logistics:Where, when, how??Plan Review Date:

The Sensory Form

You can access The Sensory Form for free here:

<https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/content/sensory-processing-difficulties>

Click on the Sensory Form box:



The image shows a screenshot of a 'Sensory Form' used for assessment. At the top left is the 'autism spectrum AUSTRALIA' logo, and at the top right is the 'aspect practice' logo with the tagline 'where practice that works'. The form includes fields for 'Name:', 'Date: / /', and 'Who is in the team?'. Below these are seven columns for sensory categories: VISION, SOUND, TOUCH, ORAL SENSORY, SMELL/TASTE, MOVEMENT (VESTIBULAR), and BODY (PROPRIOCEPTION). A section titled 'Problems with Participation' contains a text box and a question: 'Are you sure it's sensory? YES / NO. If YES, approach with a sensory lens. If NO, alternative assessment or intervention'. Below this are four columns for sensory profiles: Bystander, Seeker, Avider, and Sensor. Another text box asks 'Is good autism practice in place? (structure, routine, predictability, visual supports etc.)'. The bottom section is divided into three boxes: 'Proactive Strategies:' with sub-sections for 'Environmental changes' and 'Sensory activities'; 'Teaching Coping Strategies:'; and 'Logistics:' with sub-sections for 'Where, when, how??' and 'Plan Review Date:'. A small copyright notice '© Autism Spectrum Australia & Aspect' is visible at the bottom right of the form.

Let's meet Thalia



Thalia is a 10-year-old girl who enjoys listening to music and craft activities . She loves Hello Kitty and often draws Hello Kitty. Thalia has autism and an intellectual disability and attends a support class in a mainstream school.

Thalia's mother has seen her dance to her favourite music when it comes on, but at other times she gets very upset by sound and puts her fingers over her ears. Her teacher at school has noticed this more than her mother at home.

Recently, the school have participated in an organised dance program with visiting dance instructors, but Thalia is reluctant to participate and hold hands with her partner. Thalia will go on a swing at the local park and seems to enjoy this, but is reluctant to participate in an organised soccer game at school. Her teacher reports that she's quite clumsy, and becomes upset at times when she bumps into other people when moving around the school.

Thalia



Thalia is an only child from a Greek Background who lives at home with her mother and her grandmother. Thalia lives in a three-bedroom house so Thalia has her own room. Thalia eats a variety of foods and enjoys cooking traditional Greek food with her grandmother.

Thalia will wear her school uniform but she complains to her mother that the tags cause itching and distract her at school sometimes. Thalia's mother says she likes to choose her own clothes.

Thalia



Imagine you are Thalia's occupational therapist. Recently you've noticed that she's having some difficulties at school. Her previous teachers and her mother have reported that Thalia is very different at home and school. She's in a smaller class with 15 students in total and she's having difficulties doing her independent work. Work time usually happens after playground time in the morning and after recess. Thalia says she can't concentrate with all the noise and she is worried about not being able to complete her work and then missing her 'fast finishers' craft activity. Her teacher has noticed that she fidgets with her hair and her pencil case and this affects her ability to complete the task within the time frame. Thalia has a visual schedule on her desk reminding her of the tasks she has to do. Thalia is able to communicate verbally with the teacher but she hasn't been doing this during work time.

Who's in the Team?

 **Name:** **Date:** / / **Who is in the team?** 

- Important to consider the important people in the student's life.
- Insights from different environments- 'context' is very important (Ismael et al, 2018).
- Thalia, Mum, grandma, teacher.



Name: _____

Date: / /

Who is in the team? _____

VISIONSOUNDTOUCHORAL SENSORYSMELL/TASTEMOVEMENT
(VESTIBULAR)BODY
(PROPRIOCEPTION)Problems with Participation



Are you sure it's sensory? YES / NO

If YES, approach with a sensory lens, If NO, alternative assessment or intervention

BystanderSeekerAvoiderSensorIs good autism practice in place? (structure, routine, predictability, visual supports etc.)Proactive Strategies:Environmental changesSensory activitiesTeaching Coping Strategies:Logistics:Where, when, how??Plan Review Date:

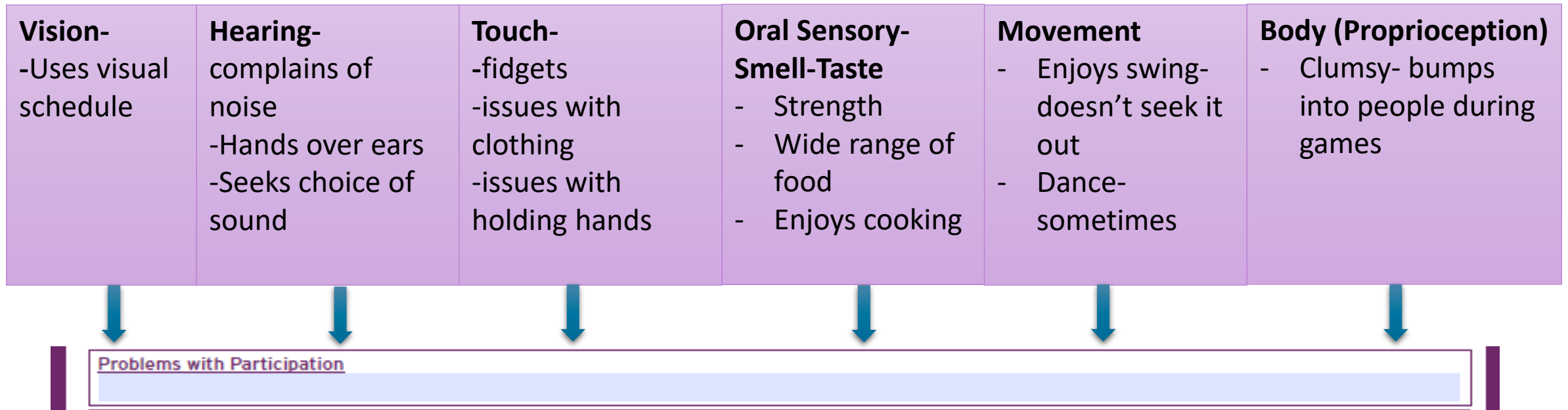
The Sensory Form

Thalia's Sensory Processing

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--------------|--------------|---------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|---|--|
|  | | Name: _____ | | Date: / / | | Who is in the team? _____ | |  | |
| <u>VISION</u> | <u>SOUND</u> | <u>TOUCH</u> | <u>ORAL SENSORY</u> | <u>SMELL/TASTE</u> | <u>MOVEMENT (VESTIBULAR)</u> | <u>BODY (PROPRIOCEPTION)</u> | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| Vision- -Uses visual schedule | Hearing- -complains of noise -Hands over ears -Seeks choice of sound | Touch- -fidgets -issues with clothing -issues with holding hands | Oral Sensory- Smell-Taste - Strength - Wide range of food - Enjoys cooking | Movement - Enjoys swing- doesn't seek it out - Dance- sometimes | Body (Proprioception) - Clumsy- bumps into people during games |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|

Thalia's Sensory Processing



Thalia's Problems with Participation:

Doing school work- touch and noise, fidgeting in class- does this help or hinder?

Difficulties after playground play, Different in different environments

“A problem isn't a problem until it's a problem”

Are you sure it's sensory?

Are you sure it's sensory? YES / NO If YES, approach with a sensory lens, If NO, alternative assessment or intervention

- Specific sensory observations and reports from Thalia- touch and noise
- There may be issues with a “**build up**” of sensory input- needing to focus on work after playground play
- Consider sensory aspects of the **playground**- noisy, unpredictable touch, social demands
- **Differences in different environments** suggests that Thalia is prone to notice a lot in the environment
- Differences observed when given **choice** and **control** of sensory input- eg. music and dance
- There is probably a **social** aspect to Thalia's participation difficulties (not all sensory!)

| | | | | | | |
|---------------|--------------|--------------|---------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <u>VISION</u> | <u>SOUND</u> | <u>TOUCH</u> | <u>ORAL SENSORY</u> | <u>SMELL/TASTE</u> | <u>MOVEMENT (VESTIBULAR)</u> | <u>BODY (PROPRIOCEPTION)</u> |
|---------------|--------------|--------------|---------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|

Problems with Participation

Are you sure it's sensory? YES / NO If YES, approach with a sensory lens, If NO, alternative assessment or intervention

| | | | |
|------------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| <u>Bystander</u> | <u>Seeker</u> | <u>Avoider</u> | <u>Sensor</u> |
|------------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|

Is good autism practice in place? (structure, routine, predictability, visual supports etc.)

Proactive Strategies:

Environmental changes

Sensory activities

Teaching Coping Strategies:

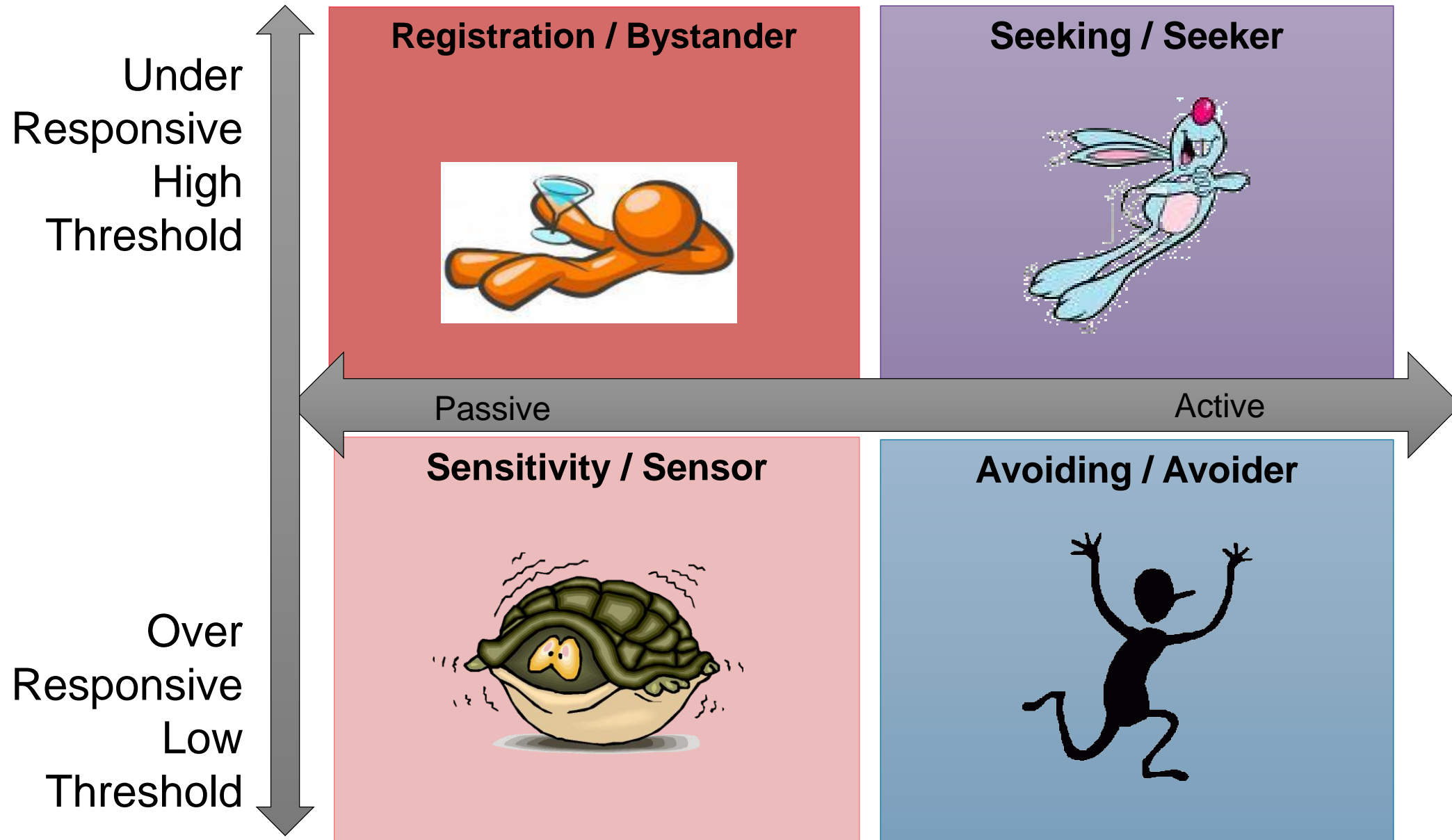
Logistics:

Where, when, how??

Plan Review Date:

What type of sensory style does Thalia have?

Winnie Dunn's model of sensory modulation (Dunn, 2014)



Winnie's Dunn's model- Four Sensory Styles

- People don't fit neatly into these categories!
- Children can fit into more than one style.
- Thalia- Avoider
- Distress- noise, noisy environments, avoids activities
- Seeker- fidgeting-
- Coping mechanism?
- Active Sensory styles



| | | | | | | |
|---------------|--------------|--------------|---------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <u>VISION</u> | <u>SOUND</u> | <u>TOUCH</u> | <u>ORAL SENSORY</u> | <u>SMELL/TASTE</u> | <u>MOVEMENT (VESTIBULAR)</u> | <u>BODY (PROPRIOCEPTION)</u> |
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Problems with Participation

Are you sure it's sensory? YES / NO If YES, approach with a sensory lens, If NO, alternative assessment or intervention

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|------------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|
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| | | | |

Is good autism practice in place? (structure, routine, predictability, visual supports etc.)

Proactive Strategies:

Environmental changes

Sensory activities

Teaching Coping Strategies:

Logistics:

Where, when, how??

Plan Review Date:

Complete this section with Thalia's sensory style

★ You don't need to fill in every box

Good Autism Practice

Is good autism practice in place? (structure, routine, predictability, visual supports etc.)



What is currently in place?

- Visual Schedule
- Routine
- Is this meeting Thalia's needs?

Today's Schedule

| | | |
|---|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | <input type="text"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 | <input type="text"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 | <input type="text"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 | <input type="text"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 | <input type="text"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

The Bottom of The Sensory Form: Intervention

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| <p><u>Proactive Strategies:</u></p> <p><u>Environmental changes</u></p> <p><u>Sensory activities</u></p> | <p><u>Teaching Coping Strategies:</u></p> | <p><u>Logistics:</u></p> <p><u>Where, when, how??</u></p> <p><u>Plan Review Date:</u></p> |
|--|---|---|

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Intervention Strategies matched to Thalia's needs.

- Environmental Changes- help or hinder participation
- Sensory Activities- safe and appropriate way to access sensory input
- Coping Strategies- What strategies can we teach Thalia to help her?
- Logistics- How are we going to pull it all together?

Environmental Changes

| Proactive Strategies: | Teaching Coping Strategies: | Logistics: |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <u>Environmental changes</u> | | <u>Where, when, how??</u> |
| <u>Sensory activities</u> | | <u>Plan Review Date:</u> |

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- Break space- take a break from sensory input
- Structure this- break cards (3 breaks per session)
- Headphones

Sensory Activities

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| <p>Proactive Strategies:</p> <p><u>Environmental changes</u></p> <p><u>Sensory activities</u></p> | <p>Teaching Coping Strategies:</p> | <p>Logistics:</p> <p><u>Where, when, how??</u></p> <p><u>Plan Review Date:</u></p> |
|--|---|---|

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- Fidget toys- trial of different toys to see which work best for Thalia and for the environment



Teaching Coping Strategies

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| Proactive Strategies: <u>Environmental changes</u> <u>Sensory activities</u> | Teaching Coping Strategies: | Logistics: <u>Where, when, how??</u> <u>Plan Review Date:</u> |
|---|--|--|

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- Feelings chart/thermometer- *How am I feeling? What can I do when it's all too much...?*
- Social/Sensory Story- *When the environment is too noisy I can...*

| | | |
|------------------|---|---------------------|
| | 5 | |
| | 4 | |
| | 3 | |
| | 2 | |
| | 1 | |
| How do you feel? | 0 | What are you doing? |



But those strategies aren't sensory??

- ✓ It's ok to address sensory issues using non-sensory strategies!
- ✓ The aim is to increase participation

Logistics: Where, When, How?

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| <p>Proactive Strategies:</p> <p><u>Environmental changes</u></p> <p><u>Sensory activities</u></p> | <p>Teaching Coping Strategies:</p> | <p>Logistics:</p> <p><u>Where, when, how??</u></p> <p><u>Plan Review Date:</u></p> |
|--|---|---|

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- School and home- available space- Breakout space
- Team meeting- allocate tasks:
- What to buy- Fidget toys, headphones
- Creating thermometer, writing social story, making break cards
- Get Thalia's input and buy in

Logistics- Make a Plan- The Checklist

| Tasks | Who? | When? |
|--------------------------------------|------|-------|
| Meet with home and school | | |
| Review classroom and school supports | | |
| Scope out breakout space | | |
| Shop for fidget toys to trial | | |
| Buy Headphones | | |
| Create thermometer | | |
| Create Break cards | | |
| Write social story | | |

Reviewing the Plan

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| <p>Proactive Strategies:</p> <p><u>Environmental changes</u></p> <p><u>Sensory activities</u></p> | <p>Teaching Coping Strategies:</p> | <p>Logistics:</p> <p><u>Where, when, how??</u></p> <p><u>Plan Review Date:</u></p> |
|--|---|---|

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- Important to review your plan!
- 4-8 weeks
- Go back to ‘Problems with Participation’
- What’s the goal?
- Is it time to call in an OT?



| | | | | | | |
|---------------|--------------|--------------|---------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <u>VISION</u> | <u>SOUND</u> | <u>TOUCH</u> | <u>ORAL SENSORY</u> | <u>SMELL/TASTE</u> | <u>MOVEMENT (VESTIBULAR)</u> | <u>BODY (PROPRIOCEPTION)</u> |
|---------------|--------------|--------------|---------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|

Problems with Participation

| | | | |
|------------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| <u>Bystander</u> | <u>Seeker</u> | <u>Avoider</u> | <u>Sensor</u> |
|------------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|

Has this problem been solved?

Is good autism practice in place? (structure, routine, predictability, v

Proactive Strategies:

Environmental changes

Sensory activities

Teaching Coping Strategies:

Logistics:

When, how??

Plan Review Date:

Plan Review

Conclusion

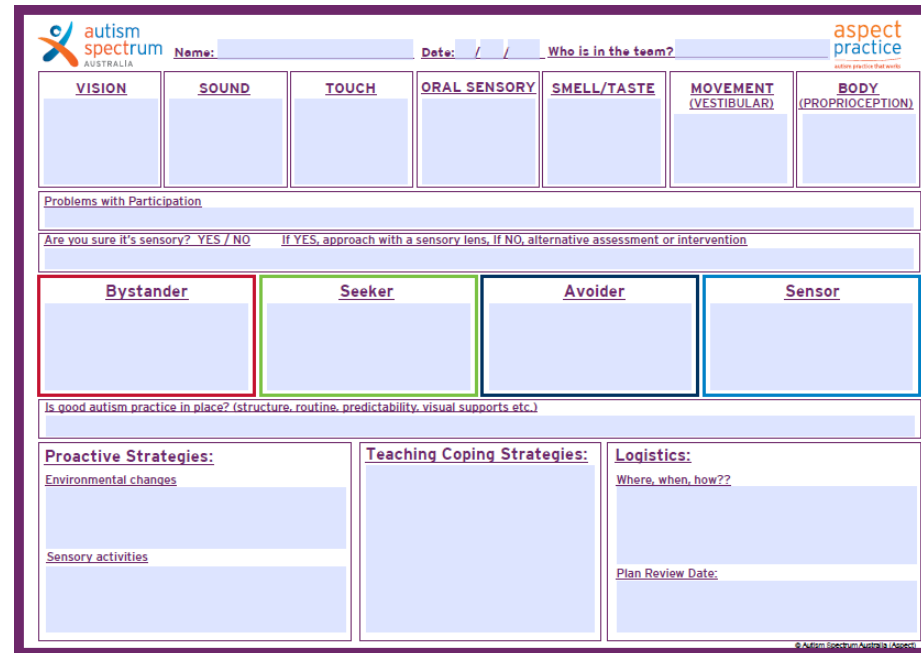
- You can work through the process of solving sensory problems to assist a person with their occupational performance and participation.
- There are no quick answers, it's a problem solving process!



The Sensory Form is Free Online!

<https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/content/sensory-processing-difficulties>

Click on the Sensory Form box:



The screenshot shows the online Sensory Form interface. At the top left is the 'autism spectrum AUSTRALIA' logo. At the top right is the 'aspect practice' logo with the tagline 'where practice meets science'. Below the logos are input fields for 'Name:', 'Date: / /', and 'Who is in the team?'. The main body of the form consists of seven columns for sensory categories: VISION, SOUND, TOUCH, ORAL SENSORY, SMELL/TASTE, MOVEMENT (VESTIBULAR), and BODY (PROPRIOCEPTION). Below these columns are sections for 'Problems with Participation', a question 'Are you sure it's sensory? YES / NO' with instructions, and four colored boxes for 'Bystander' (red border), 'Seeker' (green border), 'Avoider' (black border), and 'Sensor' (blue border). Further down is a question 'Is good autism practice in place? (structure, routine, predictability, visual supports etc.)'. The bottom section is divided into three boxes: 'Proactive Strategies' (with sub-sections for 'Environmental changes' and 'Sensory activities'), 'Teaching Coping Strategies', and 'Logistics' (with sub-sections for 'Where, when, how??' and 'Plan Review Date:'). A small copyright notice '© Autism Spectrum Australia & Aspect' is visible at the bottom right of the form.

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