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Authentic Social Engagement: A Sensational Proposition

Presented by Winnie Dunn PhD, OTR, FAOTA

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Learning Outcomes

- After this course, participants will be able to identify the contribution of sensory processing patterns to peoples quality of life.
- After this course, participants will be able to recognize the sensory aspects of activities and settings that might support or interfere with social engagement.
- After this course, participants will be able to describe what new professional approaches might contribute to better outcomes.

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Things to consider:

- How do sensory patterns look across the bell curve?
- How does social engagement look across the bell curve?

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Saving Normal (Frances, 2013)

- “This brings us to the question of the moment – can we use statistics in some simple and precise way to define mental normality? Can the bell curve provide a scientific guide in deciding who is mentally normal and who is not? Conceptually, the answer is ‘why not,’ but practically the answer is ‘hell no.’ ...
- ... There are just too many **statistical**, **contextual**, and **value** judgments that perplex a simple statistical solution.” (p. 7)

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Use of the Bell Curve

- Different characteristics can be placed on a bell curve like: praxis, registration, brown eyes, seeking, height, social engagement

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Saving Normal (Frances, 2013)

- “We must reconcile to there not being any simple standard to decide the question of how many of us are abnormal. The normal curve tells us a great deal about the distribution of everything from quarks to koalas, but it doesn’t dictate to us where normal ends and abnormal begins.” (p. 8)

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Use of the Bell Curve

- People are adaptable no matter where their skills and characteristics fall on the bell curve...
- The bell curve is not meant to identify dysfunction

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Use of the Bell Curve

- We need to consider what social engagement looks like on all parts of the bell curve.

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Saving Normal (Frances, 2013)

- “Human difference was never meant to be reducible to an exhaustive list of diagnoses...it takes all types to make a successful tribe and a full palette of emotions to make a fully lived life. We shouldn’t medicalize difference and attempt to treat it away...”

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Core Concepts

- Diversity in characteristics is healthy
- Adaptability is possible for everyone
- Differences do not mean dys-function to be fixed
- Everyone has the right to decide what social engagement looks like for themselves

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Prevalence of Sensory Processing Patterns in the General Population

- Winnie Dunn PhD, OTR, FAOTA
- Lauren Little PhD, OTR
- Evan Dean PhD, OTR
- Scott Tomchek PhD, OTR, FAOTA

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Sample

- Children in the standardization sample: 1,065
- Children who have ASD: 61
- Children who have ADHD: 86

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Consider

- Children in all groups have various sensory patterns
- Some children in every group have expected patterns of sensory processing

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How are sensory patterns and socialization linked?

- www.swiftschools.org

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Thematic Analysis of 5 Self Advocate Autobiographies

- The effects of personal sensory preferences on social interaction (context)
- The importance of choosing friends/peers
- A recognition of parents/family as the principal influences on social development
- The challenges related to social skills training

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The state of the science on sensory factors and their impact on daily life for children: A scoping review

Dunn, W., Little, L., Dean, E., Robertson, S., & Evans, B. (2016). The state of the science on sensory factors and their impact on daily life for children: A SCOPING review. OTJR: Occupation, Participation & Health.

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Adults with ASD have same patterns of sensory processing

- “More than others” scores
 - Avoiding
 - Sensitivity
 - Registration
-
- (Crane, Goddard & Pring, 2009)

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Positive & Negative Affect & SP

- 290 Adults 18-50 years old
 - Positive and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS)
-
- “Upset” and “jittery” had the highest relationship to Sensitivity and Avoiding

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SP & Daily Life: Play (6)

- Lower proprioception: sedentary play
- Children with ADHD and ASD have fewer play choices

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SP & Daily Life: Adaptive Behavior (5)

- In FASD, sensory processing differences are associated w/adaptive behavior (unrelated to IQ)
- Children with ASD/ADHD-
 - Low thresholds: low autonomy in self care
 - Low registration: less involved in self care & daily living

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SP & Daily Life: Activity Participation (7)

- Low thresholds SP: lower competence
- Children w/o ADHD with differences in SP: no differences in participation
- Children with ASD: SP + lower participation

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SP & Participation: Social Participation (10)

- When SP is different, same levels of enjoyment with family and small number of friends
- Children in general population with sensitivities have differences in social interactions

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SP & Family Interactions (16)

- Coaching Interventions
 - Increase parental competence
 - And less parental support needed

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Pain Experience & Sensory Processing

- Adults who are overly sensitive to sensory input continue to experience pain sensations at least 5 minutes after the sensation is over...
- What does this residue mean for participation?
 - Bar-Shalita, Vatine, Yarnitsky, Parush, & Weissman-Fogel, 2014; Bar-Shalita, Vatine, Parush, Deutsch, & Seltzer, 2012

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Atopic Dermatitis

- Higher sensitivity
- More avoidance
- Lower leisure participation

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Women & Chocolate

- Women who have higher sensitivity
 - Eat more emotionally
 - Eat more chocolate
- Naish & Harris, 2012

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Findings from Intervention Studies

- Embedding ideas into routines is effective
- Coaching with sensory processing info supports an increase in parental competence and children's participation
- Parents want information for everyday life
- Tele-health was effective

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Consider

- Everyone has sensory processing patterns
- Those sensory patterns manifest in everyday life behaviors and responses
- Sensory patterns seem to continue across time

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