

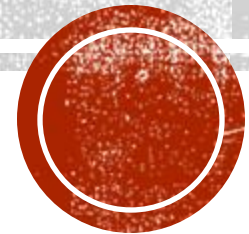
SUPPORTING SENSORY NEEDS

Parent Counseling & Training Workshop

Carmel Central School District

Amanda W. Doll, Ed.M., BCBA/LBA, SDL

adoll@carmelschools.org



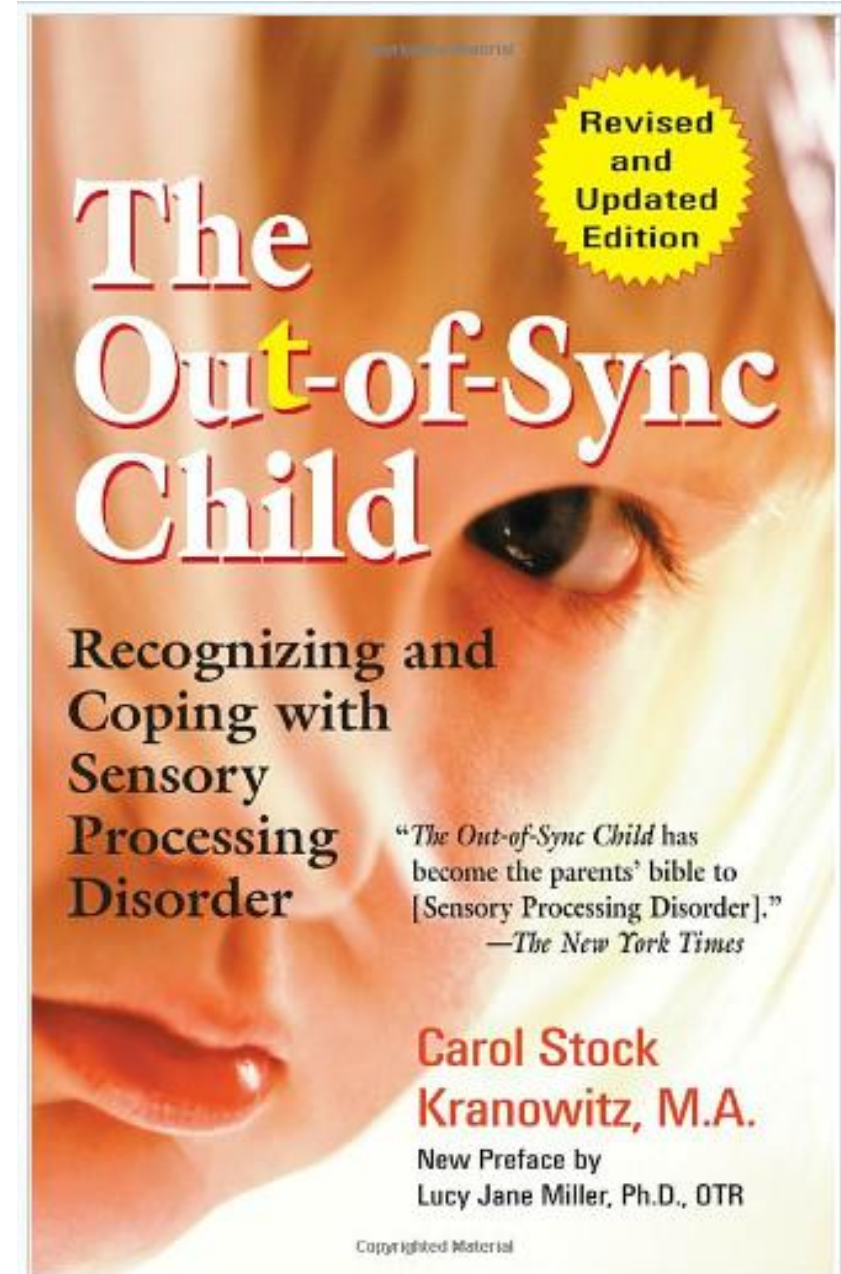
AGENDA

- Definition and common symptoms of Sensory Integration (SI) dysfunction
- Undersensitive and oversensitive profiles in seven sense areas
- Common behavior problems with SI dysfunction
- Coping with Sensory Integration Dysfunction
- Promoting your child's success at school
- Coping Do's and Don'ts



THE OUT-OF-SYNC CHILD

CAROL STOCK KRANOWITZ



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DEFINITION OF SENSORY INTEGRATION DYSFUNCTION

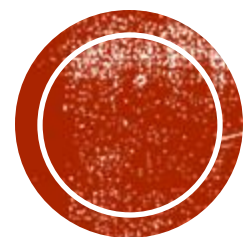
The inability to process information received
through the senses



TYPES OF SENSORY INTEGRATION DYSFUNCTION

- Oversensitive child – seeks less stimulation
- Undersensitive child – seeks more stimulation
- Seven sense areas:
 - Touch
 - Movement
 - Body Position
 - Sights
 - Sounds
 - Smells
 - Tastes





UNDERSENSITIVE AND OVERSENSITIVE PROFILES IN THE SENSE AREAS



TOUCH



The Oversensitive Child

- The child avoids touching or being touched by objects and people. She may react with a fight-or-flight response to getting dirty, to certain textures of clothing and food, and to another person's unexpected light touch.

The Undersensitive Child

- The child may be unaware of pain, temperature, or how objects feel. She may wallow in the mud, paw through toys purposelessly, chew on inedible objects like shirt cuffs, rub against walls and furniture, and bump into people.



MOVEMENT



The Oversensitive Child

- The child avoids moving or being unexpectedly moved. Insecure in regard to gravity, he may be anxious when tipped off balance. He may be earthbound and avoid climbing, sliding, or swinging. He may feel seasick in cars or elevators.

The Undersensitive Child

- The child may crave fast and spinning movement, such as swinging, rocking, twirling, and riding merry-go-rounds—without getting dizzy. The child may move constantly, fidget, enjoy getting into upside-down positions, and be a daredevil.



BODY POSITION



The Oversensitive Child

- The child may be rigid, tense, stiff, and uncoordinated. She may avoid playground activities that require good body awareness.

The Undersensitive Child

- The child may slump or slouch. His actions may be clumsy and inaccurate. He may bump into objects, stamp his feet, and twiddle his fingers.



SIGHTS



The Oversensitive Child

- The child may become overexcited when there is too much to look at – words, toys, or other children. He may often cover his eyes, have poor eye contact, be inattentive when drawing or doing desk work, or overreact to bright light. He may be hyper-vigilant—on the alert and ever watchful.

The Undersensitive Child

- Although able to see, the child may touch everything to learn about it, because her vision is not sufficiently coordinated. She may miss important visual cues such as another person's facial expressions and gestures, as well as signposts and written directions.



SOUNDS



The Oversensitive Child

- The child may cover his ears to close out sounds or voices. He may complain about noises, such as vacuum cleaners and blenders, that don't bother others.

The Undersensitive Child

- The child may ignore voices and have difficulty following verbal directions. He may not listen well to himself and speak in a booming voice. He may want the TV and radio to be loud.



SMELLS

The Oversensitive Child

- The child may object to odors, such as a ripe banana, that other children do not notice.



The Undersensitive Child

- The child may ignore unpleasant odors like dirty diapers. She may sniff food, people, and objects.



TASTES

The Oversensitive Child

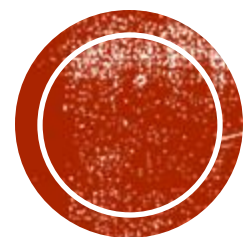
- The child may strongly object to certain textures and temperatures of foods. He may often gag when he eats.



The Undersensitive Child

- The child may lick or taste inedible objects, like playdough or toys. He may prefer very spicy or very hot foods.





COMMON BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS WITH SI DYSFUNCTION

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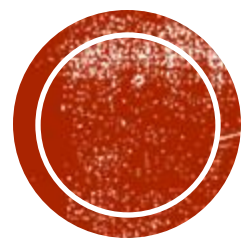
- Unusually high activity level
- Unusually low activity level
- Impulsivity
- Distractibility
- Problems with muscle tone and motor coordination
- Problems with motor planning
 - Ability to conceive of, organize, sequence, and carry out complex movements in a meaningful way
- Lack of a definite hand preference by age 4 or 5



COMMON BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS WITH SI DYSFUNCTION

- Poor eye-hand coordination
- Resistance to novel situations
- Difficulty making transitions from one situation to another
- High level of frustration
- Self-regulation problems
- Academic problems
- Social problems
- Emotional problems





COPING WITH SENSORY INTEGRATION DYSFUNCTION



DIFFERENT THERAPIES, DIFFERENT APPROACHES*

- Occupational therapy
 - Body awareness, tactile discrimination, tactile defensiveness, balance, bilateral coordination, motor planning, fine motor skills, gravity, flexion, visual and oculomotor perception
- Speech and language therapy
 - Sound production, monitoring pitch, strengthening oral-motor control, monitoring volume
- Auditory integration training
 - Sound stimulation designed to improve listening and communicative skills
- Vision therapy
 - Integrate visual information with intake from the other senses, such as hearing, touching, and moving
- Psychotherapy
 - To help students who are depressed, have a poor self-image, or behavior problems
- Physical therapy
 - Strengthen muscular control and motor coordination, especially of the large muscles

* Not all of these approaches have a strong scientific evidence base



A BALANCED SENSORY DIET

Definition: a planned and scheduled activity program that an occupational therapist develops specifically to meet the needs of the child's own nervous system

- **Alerting** activities benefit the Undersensitive child, who needs a boost to become effectively aroused. Examples:
 - Crunching dry cereal, popcorn, chips, crackers, nuts, pretzels, carrots, celery, apples, or ice cubes
 - Taking a shower
 - Bouncing on a therapy ball or beach ball
 - Jumping up and down on a trampoline



A BALANCED SENSORY DIET

- **Organizing** activities help regulate the child's responses.

Examples:

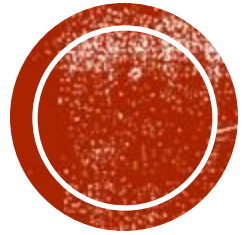
- Chewing granola bars, fruit bars, licorice, dried apricots, cheese, gum, bagels, or bread crusts
- Hanging by the hands from a chinning bar
- Pushing or pulling heavy loads
- Getting into an upside-down position



A BALANCED SENSORY DIET

- **Calming** activities help the oversensitive child decrease hyper-responsiveness to sensory stimulation. Examples:
 - Sucking on a pacifier, hard candy, frozen fruit bar, or spoonful of peanut butter
 - Pushing against walls with the hands, shoulders, back, buttocks, and head
 - Rocking, swaying, or swinging slowly back and forth
 - Cuddling or back rubbing
 - Taking a bath





PROMOTING YOUR CHILD'S SUCCESS AT SCHOOL



PROMOTING YOUR CHILD'S SUCCESS AT SCHOOL

- Controlling the environment
 - Reduce sensory overload
 - Look out for tactile distractions
 - Reduce visual distractions
 - Dampen or muffle auditory distractions
 - Consider olfactory distractions
 - Provide comfortable furniture
 - Keep displays and worksheets visually “clean”



PROMOTING YOUR CHILD'S SUCCESS AT SCHOOL

- Managing the Classroom
 - Develop a consistent routine
 - Plan transitions as carefully as lessons
 - Plan movement breaks between and during activities
 - Devise team or club efforts



PROMOTING YOUR CHILD'S SUCCESS AT SCHOOL

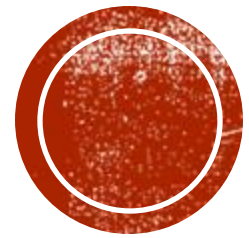
- Helping Children Become Better Organized
 - Encourage students to become active rather than passive learners
 - Give children time
 - Simplify instructions
 - Provide a choice of writing implements
 - Respect the child's needs
 - Give the child alternatives



PROMOTING YOUR CHILD'S SUCCESS AT SCHOOL

- Adapting Your Own Behavior
 - Emphasize the positive
 - Keep your voice low
 - Provide physical feedback
 - Keep your expectations realistic





COPING DO'S AND DON'TS



DO'S AND DON'TS FOR COPING

- Please DO:
 - Build on a child's strengths
 - Build on the child's interests
 - Suggest small, manageable goals to strengthen your child's abilities
 - Encourage your child to develop self-help skills
 - Let your child engage in appropriate self-therapy
 - Offer new sensory experiences
 - Touch your child in ways the child can tolerate and enjoy
 - Encourage movement
 - Encourage your child to try a new movement experience
 - Offer physical and emotional support
 - Allow your child to experience unhappiness, frustration, or anger



DO'S AND DON'TS FOR COPING

- Please DO:
 - Provide appropriate outlets for negative emotions
 - Reinforce what is good about your child's feelings and actions, even when something goes wrong
 - Praise
 - Give the child a sense of control
 - Set reasonable limits
 - Understand
 - Put yourself in your child's shoes
 - Recall how you behaved as a child
 - Respect your child's needs, even if they seem unusual



DO'S AND DON'TS FOR COPING

- Please DO:
 - Respect your child's fears, even if they seem senseless
 - Say "I love you"
 - Follow your instincts
 - Listen when others express concerns
 - Educate yourself about normal child development
 - Seek professional help
 - Keep your cool
 - Take care of yourself



DO'S AND DON'TS FOR COPING

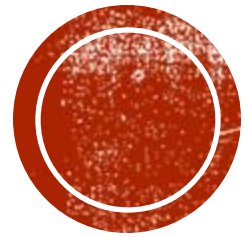
- Please DON'T:
 - Try to persuade your child that he or she will outgrow his or her difficulties
 - Tell your child he or she is bound to get stronger, better organized, or more in control if he or she applies him- or herself
 - Joke about the child's difficulties
 - Plead
 - Shame
 - Threaten
 - Talk about your child in demeaning ways in front of him or her
 - Talk about your child in demeaning ways behind his or her back



DO'S AND DON'TS FOR COPING

- Please DON'T:
 - Compare, aloud, one child with another
 - Do for your child what he or she can do for him- or herself
 - Expect consistency
 - Make your child do things that distress him
 - Overload your child with multisensory experiences
 - Be afraid of “labeling” your child





IF YOU SUSPECT YOUR CHILD HAS SENSORY NEEDS, COORDINATE INTERVENTION WITH AN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST

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