Learning Objectives

MedBridge
Strategies for Sensory Modulation in Autism Spectrum Disorders
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Course Objectives:

Upon completion of this course, learners will be able to:

- Recognize hypo and hyper sensory reactions in children with ASD
- Understand the specific sensory systems and their neurological connections to behavior
- 'Play detective' to analyze disruptive behavior in an objective manner
- Apply strategies to address challenges in various sensory systems to promote sensory modulation and decrease disruptive behaviors

Chapter 1: Overview of the Sensory System

The neurology of children with autism spectrum disorders is biochemically different, resulting in differences in the way the child reacts and responds to sensory stimuli. Different sensory responses are part of the diagnostic criteria in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders DSM-5 (APA, 2013). Sensory integration (Ayres, 1979) is defined as the ability to organize sensory input in an effective way to interact with the environment. This chapter will outline the sensory system differences in autism spectrum disorder and importance of collaborating with occupation therapy to address the sensory challenges.

Chapter 2: Strategies for Modulation in Specific Sensory Systems

Disruptive behavior in autism spectrum disorders is often linked to abnormal processing of sensory stimulation. Internal biochemical changes trigger hyper and hypo sensory system reactions, throwing the system out of balance and resulting in behavioral outbursts. Strategies to address sensory challenges in specific sensory systems will be discussed.

Chapter 3: Integration of Sensory Modification Strategies

The sensory system changes over time in response to intervention and maturity. Sensory behaviors can be shaped and modified to be less disruptive while still meeting the individual's sensory need. Professionals should 'play detective' to understand when a child is overwhelmed and use items to promote sensory calming. A sensory kit of items can be collected and used to maintain a biochemical balance. Global shaping and modification ideas will be shared in this section.

Chapter 4: Q&A

This chapter includes a question and answer session to explore real world examples of sensory modification strategies.