

Neurodiversity, Food and Hydration.

Sensory Needs, Eating Disorders and Wellbeing



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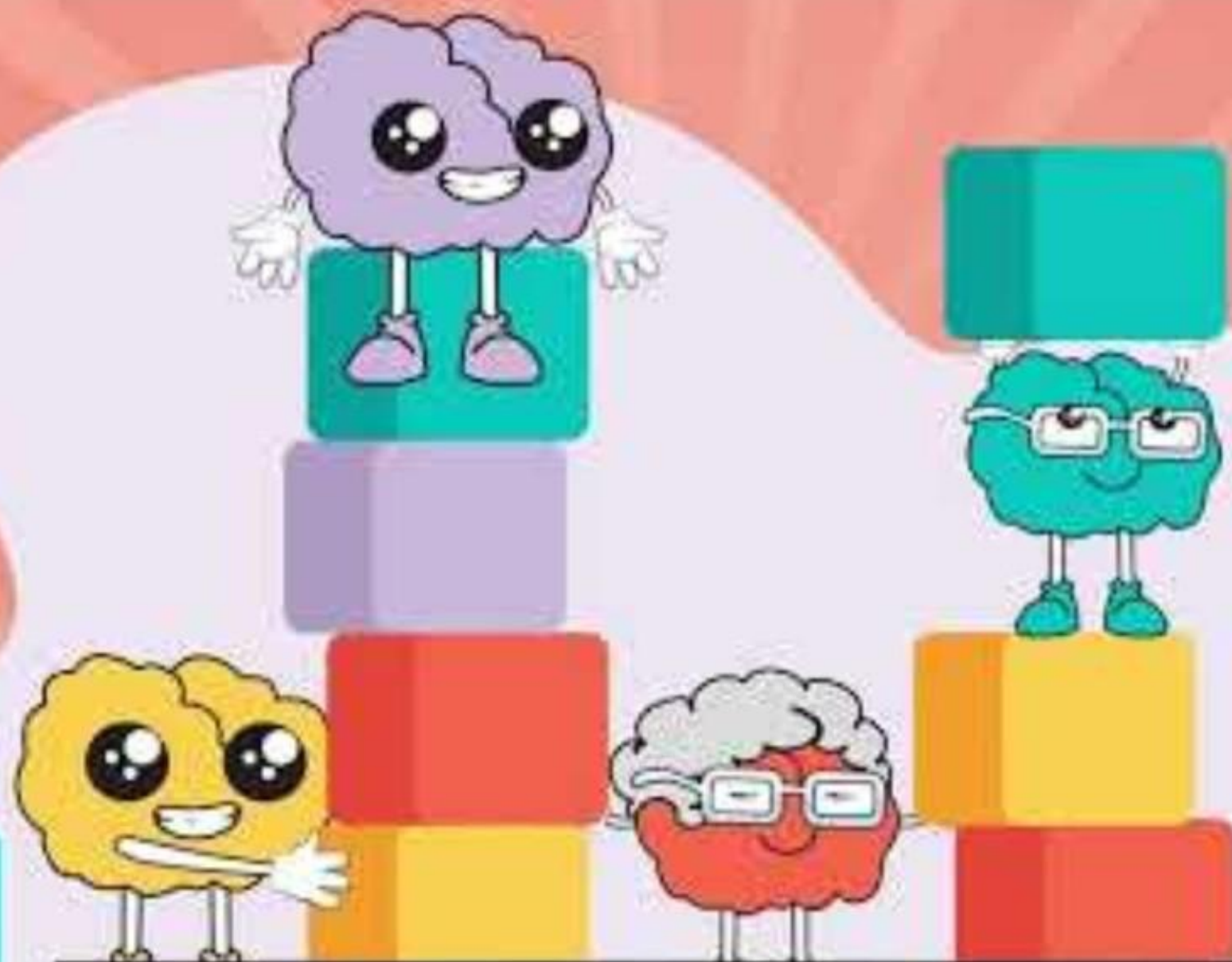


Aims and Objectives

- Understand Neurodiversity and sensory processing
- Understanding sensory processing issues within neurodiversity, common challenges and preferences that may be experienced.
- Explore eating disorders, in the context of neurodiversity, and the impact of nutrition and hydration, on well-being.
- Practical strategies for support and inclusion
- Promote inclusive mealtime environments

Understand Neurodiversity and Sensory Processing

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It's normal and should be celebrated. These differences lead to creativity, problem solving and thinking outside the box.



Smell



Hearing

The 5 Sensory Systems



Vision



Touch



Vestibular



Interoception

Including 3 Hidden ones!



Proprioception



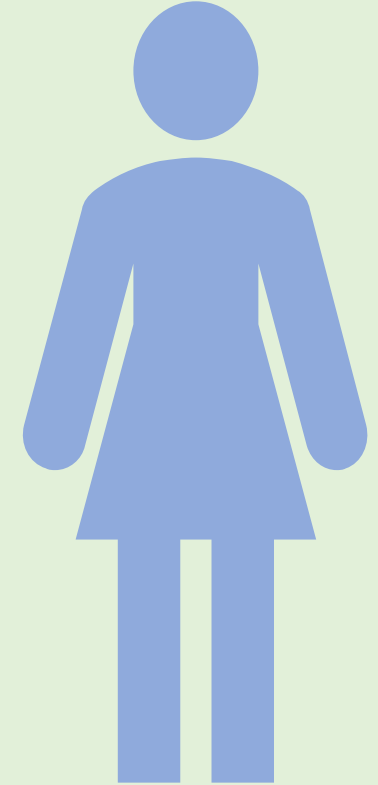
Taste

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What is Sensory Processing?



Where the Brain and Body Connect
Sensory processing is the **neurology** of how
we feel.



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SENSORY RECEPTORS: pick up signals from the environment

stimuli (stimulus)

Sensory processing and the brain

mechanical

involved w/
touch + hearing



chemical

involved w/
smell + taste



electromagnetic

involved w/
light



Khan Academy

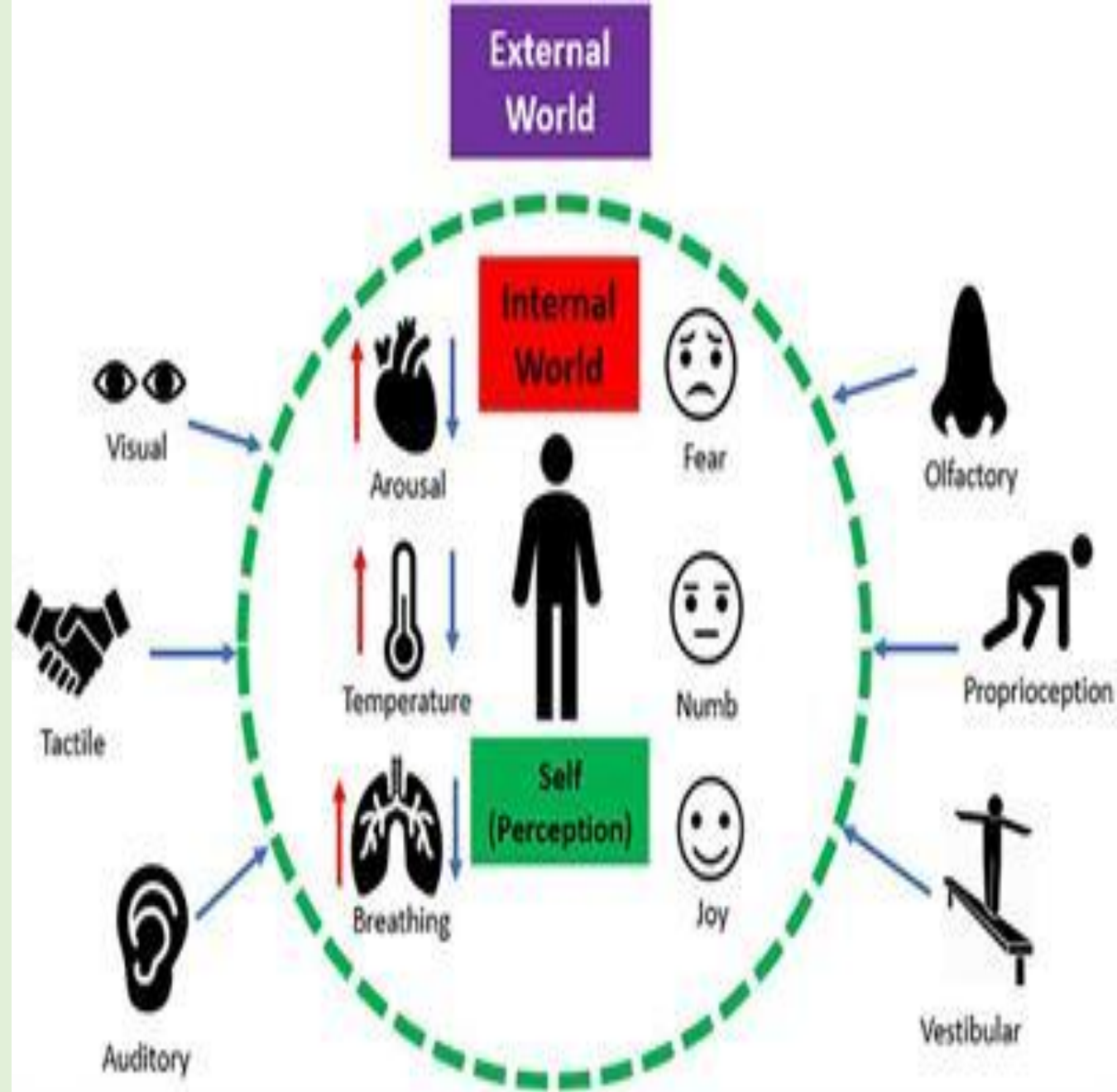
Sensory Processing Disorder

Hypersensitivity – sensory input is amplified, can be painful or uncomfortable

Hyposensitivity – dulling of sensory experiences / perception

Sensory Seeking – seeking sensory experiences

Proprioception –our body position in the space around us can be disrupted.



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Hypo-reactive nervous system



- Under-reactive to touch and may prefer heavy touch to light touch



- Under-reactive to sounds such as a mom or teacher calling his name



- Under-arousal resulting in looking lazy, open mouthed posture, may look mushy (low tone) like a teddy bear, may often appear tired



- Speaks loudly due to modulation issues with lack of proper sensory feedback system



- May appear clumsy or disorganized as body awareness may be lower

Recognize common challenges and preferences.

**Irregular Eating
Patterns**

**Extreme
Sensory Responses**

Food Anxiety

Bodily Impact

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Common challenges with children and young people

- Chewing things or mouthing
- Using food to help them focus
- Only eating foods with specific textures or tastes
- Fixed patterns of food
- Requiring the food must be presented in a specific way like peas not touching carrots
- Preferring foods to be 'wet' or 'dry'
- Preferring a specific brand of food
- Eating non-food items

NHS Bedford and Luton Children's Occupational Therapy Service

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Neurodiversity and Eating Disorder



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Eating Disorders and Neurodiversity

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) – links to eating disorder and autism. Girls with anorexia tendency to elevated autistic traits. Greater risk for PICA and ARFID (avoidant restrictive food intake disorder) – leading to limited food preferences, hypersensitive to food textures, food brand preference, non food substances (pica)

NEDA- National Eating Disorders Association

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A U T I S M

Sensory Sensitivities



Food aversion or selective eating

Food Preferences and Food Routines



**Sameness and food predictability –
change can cause distress and
avoidance**

Food Structure and Rules



**Items not touching each other on the
place, colours of food. Potential impact
upon nutrition.**

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Eating Disorders and Neurodiversity

Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) – higher rates of binge / purge behaviours, correlations between attention, functioning, impulsivity and emotional dysregulation links and increased prevalence of ARFID.

NEDA- National Eating Disorders Association

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A D H D

Impulsivity and Eating



ADHD differences in impulse control and executive functioning

Executive Function – Can Impact Planning



Impact upon meal preparation, organisation and choices

Dopamine impact upon choices



Seeking foods with immediate satisfaction / manage cravings

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Eating Disorders and Neurodiversity

Learning Disability – issues with feeding such as chewing, sucking or swallowing, selectivity of texture or temperature, food pickiness, behavioural disruption at mealtimes. Association with PICA and ARFID and higher rates of Rumination Disorder.

NEDA- National Eating Disorders Association

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ARFID (avoidant / restrictive food intake disorder)	Anorexia Nervosa	Bulimia Nervosa and Binge eating Disorder	Role of Interoception and Alexithymia
Sensory based avoidance or restriction of certain foods due to texture, smell, temperature or appearance. Can result in nutritional deficiencies and interfere with psychosocial functioning.	Can involve distorted body image, weight restriction, food restriction and overexercise, vomiting or using laxatives.	Losing control of how much you are eating over a short period of time (binge eating) ridding your body of the extra food (purging) can include body image distortion, fear of weight gain, mood changes, feelings of no control of eating. Binge eating disorder is 3x more common than BN and AN combined.	Interoception is an internal sensory system in which the physical and emotional states of the person are consciously or unconsciously noticed, recognised and responded to. This includes hunger and thirst signals and impacts upon emotions and self-regulation.. Alexithymia our ability to identify and describe the emotional experience – Both -can play a role in disordered eating patterns.

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Explore the impact of nutrition and hydration on well-being

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Hunger and Fullness	Sensitivities and Aversions	Anxiety and Restrictive Eating	Nutritional Needs	Flexibility and Calmness
Interoception – the body's ability to recognise internal signals. Missing signs of hunger leading to irritability or fatigue Missing satiation cues – leading to overeating or discomfort.	Textures Flavours Smells Try to change the way things are eaten – i.e. blended into other textures	Higher levels of anxiety with neurodiversity Stress has an impact upon digestion – brain to stomach links Refocus on nourishing foods rather than restriction	Focus on foods needed for nutrition Bodily requirements and how to incorporate the necessary vitamins and minerals	Understanding links between neurodiversity and food Small changes can lead to improvement and confidence to try more Without judgement and with compassion

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Practical strategies for support and inclusion and promoting inclusive mealtime environments.

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Eating Strategies for Sensitive Children

Communication

Consistency

Adjust Expectations

Food Preparations

Sitting at a Table

Play with Food

Prepare for
mealtimes

The 'Just Right'
Challenge.

Change
expectations and
equipment to help

Resources

How do I help –Oxford Health -<https://youtu.be/XFetI75hRLY>

What is ARFID - <https://youtu.be/JK9r14D4d-k>

Neurodiversity UK -[About Us - Neurodiversity UK](#)

NHS Eating strategies for sensitive children -[Strategies to help sensitive children eat](#)

Eating Disorder for neurodiversity – 8 fact sheets -[Information Sheets | New Site](#)

Interoception Kit -[Ready to Learn Booklet](#)

**Please place into chat one
or two things you will take
away with you from today's
session and any feedback**

Thank You.



Scan the QR code to see upcoming Webinars and events.
You can also let us know if you would like to join our mailing list to find out more!

You will find details for;

- Our Mental Health Hub, provided by Vivup
- Menopause Support
- Resources and information
- Menopause Support Line details.



South Yorkshire
Integrated Care Board



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Thank you



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