

WELCOME EVERYONE TO *WEEK 4* OF THE CREATIVE SUBSTITUTE FOR “BUILDING CIRCLES OF SUPPORT!”

Hello Everyone!

We are now entering Week 4 of school closure in Manitoba and by now I am sure many of you have some interesting stories to tell! We are hearing both very heartwarming stories of what is going on in some homes and some cries for help in other homes. Rest assured that this will eventually pass and then we can get back to “normal” again. Please take advantage of the FASD Coordinators in your region or at the Manitoba FASD Centre in Winnipeg if you have any specific questions or concerns about your child. Their names and contact information are listed at the end of this email.

For those of you living with individuals with FASD who also have sensory issues, this can be an especially challenging time. This learning module will focus on

Sensory Processing and FASD.

- 1. To start this session off we recommend that you watch the YouTube video entitled “[How to be a Sensory Investigator](#)”. This gives you some good foundational information explaining what Sensory Processing means and how this can impact an Individual’s behavior, learning and every day functioning.*
- 2. Another important part of Sensory Processing is a term referred to as “Fight Flight or Freeze” (FFF). Please refer to this [Fight, Flight, or Freeze Video](#) to learn more about this physiological response, which we all experience in our bodies when we are threatened or feel anxious.*
- 3. To learn more about what might happen when our children’s/adolescents’ sensory systems get overwhelmed, and their brain goes into a Fight, Flight or Freeze response, check out this video titled “[Why Do We Lose Control of our Emotions?](#)”. This might be a video that you could share with your child or adolescent to help them understand what is going on in*

their brains during a meltdown or a “shut down”. At the end of the video it also suggests some good strategies which can help the child/adolescent when they have an FFF response. It is important to note that an FFF response is a physiological response that happens quickly without conscious thought. It is a brain based bodily response that is meant to protect us. The individual with FASD might need a helper or mentor to help them utilize these strategies, rather than be expected to do this independently.

- 4. For educators, (parents you can look at it too!) check out the [short clip on sensory processing challenges in the classroom as described by Myles Himmelreich](#).*
- 5. One way to support children and youth who have sensory processing challenges is to develop a “Calming Space” that they can use when they are becoming overwhelmed in their environment. A Calming Space is a designated space that the child or youth can retreat to when they are starting to feel overwhelmed or could use a break. It is not intended as a punishment space, and may include some sensory tools or calming activities that the child or youth can utilize in the space. Check out this [handout for more ideas and information on Calming Spaces](#).*
- 6. Kellsey Scheepers, the OT at the Manitoba FASD Centre, has put together some information on sensory processing that has been included at the bottom of this document (“Becoming a Sensory Detective and Reframing Your Child’s Behaviour”). This handout provides information on sensory processing difficulties and breaks down each of the senses, explaining what behavior might look like if the brain is having difficulty processing information from that particular sense. She then gives some good sensory strategies or “Sensory Tools” to respond positively to that behavior and prevent it from occurring again. Additionally, she also challenges you as a teacher or caregiver to find the positive aspects in the child’s unique sensory differences.*

We hope that some of these tools may help those of you who parent or support children and youth with FASD who may have sensory processing challenges. Again, please feel free to reach out to the Coordinator or designated contact in your area if you have any questions and concerns at this time:

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>In Winnipeg</u></p> <p>Dorothy Schwab (FASD Educator) Phone: 204-258-6604 Email: dschwab@rccinc.ca</p> <p>Yumna Gill: (MB FASD Center Social Worker) Phone: 204-258-6611 Email: ygill@rccinc.ca</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Interlake Eastern RHA</u></p> <p>Devon Ungurain (Beausejourer) Phone: 204-268-7434 Email: dungurain@ierha.ca</p> <p>Andrea Dell (Selkirk) Phone: 204-785-7789 Email: adell@ierha.ca</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Prairie Mountain Health</u></p> <p>Dawn Milne Phone: 204-578-2487 Email: dmilne@pmh-mb.ca</p> <p>Twyla Gilroy (Dauphin) Phone: 204-622-6223 Email: tgilroy@pmh-mb.ca</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Southern Health</u></p> <p>Ashley Darling (Portage La Prairie) Phone: 204-856-2044 Email: adarling@southernhealth.ca</p> <p>Marijke Vonderbank (Steinbach) Phone: 204-346-7039 Email: mvonderbank@southernhealth.ca</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Northern RHA</u></p> <p>Joanne Wyman (The Pas) Phone: 204-623-9649 Email: jwyman@nrha.ca</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Norway House Cree Nation</u></p> <p>Lucy Muswagon (Norway House) Phone: 204-359-6704 Email: lmuswagon@nhcn.ca</p>

We look forward to sharing more resources with you next week!

Sincerely,
 -Manitoba FASD Center and FASD Network

Becoming a Sensory Detective and Reframing Your Child's Behavior

"A child's behavior is a form of communication"



Find the positive in your child unique sensory differences!

Needs to touch everything
Climbs on whatever they can
Always covers her ears
Always talking
Plays too rough
Takes excessive risks
Oblivious to messy hands
Seems lazy

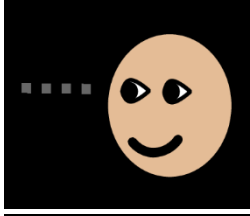
He likes to explore with his hands
Great explorer
Attentive to detail
Story teller
Strong muscles, loves to engage
Great partner for different activities
Can have fun in the dirt and sand
Super chill, reads/plays a game for forever!

Sensory processing differences are not "good/bad, right/wrong they just are." When caregivers and teachers can understand a child's brain based differences they can start to identify triggers and subsequently prevent some fight, flight and freeze responses.

When you are identifying triggers consider the following and document

- (1) What was happening right before the behavior (who was there, what were the expectations, what was going on in the environment in terms of their senses - seeing, hearing, smelling etc.)*
- (2) What was the specific behavior observed from the child*
- (3) How did you or others respond to the behavior and what was the response from your child*
- (4) It is very important to realize that sensory differences can have a different impact on behavior due to a variety of thing such as: the time of day, are they hungry, anxious about something else etc.*

Becoming a "Sensory Detective" and Tools to Try



Visual Sense (Eyes)

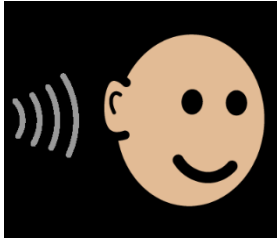
- *Prefers to play or work in low lighting*
- *Bothered by bright lights, clutter/messiness*
- *Enjoys looking at visual details in objects or books*
- *Needs help finding things in busy/messy spaces*
- *Craves or loves flashing bright lights or frequent changes (iPads, watching sports, video games)*
- *Prefers or dislikes colors and patterns of clothing*
- *Watches people as they move around the room*
- *May miss written information*
- *Difficulty reading*



Visual Tools

- Limit distractions: table divider, study carrel, curtains, hat, sun glasses, hoodie
- Turn off the T.V., music during periods of concentration
- Use natural light
- Be creative with spaces to work in (calming space, under a table, in a tent, in the library, outside)
- Keep spaces organized and free of clutter
- Use calming colors (e.g., blues, greens, pastel yellow, neutral tones)
- Slow moving objects are calming like lava lamps, bubble lamps, sand timers
- Use visual schedules and timers for better transitions
- Puzzles, Looking at photo books, looking at pictures in a book (e.g. Guinness World Record)
- Where's Waldo, Dot-to-Dots, Color by Numbers, Ball Mazes
- Glow in the dark sticks/bracelets, these can be lots of fun in the bath too
- Try not to shop during peak hours (less people = less visual stimuli)

Becoming a "Sensory Detective" and Tools to Try



Auditory Sense (Ears)

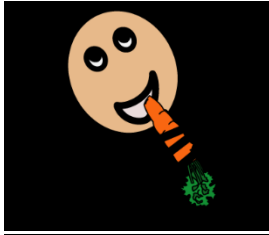
- Gets upset with loud or sudden noises
- Covers their ears a lot
- Tells others to be quiet, turn the T.V. off or down
- Notices sounds others can ignore; easily distractible (e.g., clock ticking, hum of florescent light) making it really hard to be productive in a meaningful task
- Shuts down or gets upset in a loud or busy places, assemblies, large gatherings
- Oblivious to some sounds
- Has a difficult time working in groups when there is lots of talking



Ear Tools

- Minimize extra noise when possible,
- Be proactive: prepare for (or avoid) fire drills, gym assemblies, shopping trips, family gatherings – have an escape plan
- Shop during less peak hours and/or do smaller shops to decrease the time spent in the store. Consider "click and collect" for groceries and online shopping when possible.
- Ear protectors or ear plugs for really loud environments or when they need to concentrate
- Soft rhythmical music with consistent beat
- Some children benefit from a constant white noise to drown out all the other unpredictable noises for e.g. a fan, air cleaner, humidifier/dehumidifier, white noise Apps
- Find natural sounds
- Offer calming spaces for "sensory breaks"

Becoming a "Sensory Detective" and Tools to Try



Oral Sense (Mouth)

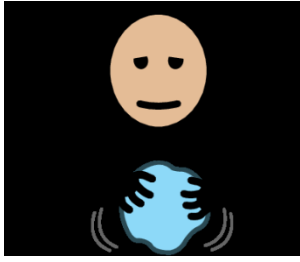
- Often chews / licks non-food items (e.g., pencils, sleeves, hair)
- Strong opinions re: taste, texture, temperature of food (e.g., sour, lumpy). Perceived as a picky eater.
- Drools more than you might expect for chronological age
- Chews, licks, smacks lips; chews on tongue
- Hates brushing teeth
- Gags easily
- Seeks out water breaks when restless
- Swallows food without chewing or overstuffs



Mouth Tools

- *Integrating mouth tools throughout the day can be calming and organizing! There are many ways to do this and some may be too intense for you but perfect for your child!*
- *Things to suck on: sugarless candies, frozen starbursts, smoothies, regular access to a water bottle with a straw, orange/lemon/grapefruit wedges, popsicles, frozen fruit bars, warheads, large sour soothers, suckers, fruit leather bars (skinny and/or thick), candy canes, lemon water, mentos*
- *Things that are chewy: gum (explore the different kinds and flavors of gum AND they may need more than one piece), granola, bagels, fruit leather, craisins/raisins, jerky, skittles, licorice/nibs*
- *Things that are crunchy: Crispers, Pretzels, carrots, celery, frozen grapes/strawberries dry cereal, nuts, popcorn, pickles, apples (alone, with cheese, with wow or peanut butter), toast*
- *Non-food items: chewlery, chew-safe tubing, coffee stir sticks, pencil toppers,*
- *Oral Activities: blowing bubbles, blowing cotton balls through a straw, harmonica, wazoo, playing "pass" with a marble by blowing it across the table or blowing the marble into a target, slide whistle, bendy/thin/thick/twisty straws, blowing a pinwheel, vibrating toothbrush*

Becoming a "Sensory Detective" and Tools to Try



Tactile Sense (Touch)

- Always needs to touch objects and others
- Craves/needs to pulls away from hugs
- Very high /low tolerance for pain (e.g. falls down hard but doesn't seem hurt vs. gently bumps something and cries hard)
- Unaware of pain, temperature, messy on hands/face
- Gets too close to others when talking
- Becomes anxious when standing too close others
- Can have an emotional response to being touched
- Chooses clothes based on how they feel
- Either prefers or hates to go barefoot



Hand/Touch Tools

These should be emphasized as a hand tool or a listening helper. Your child will need you to coach them on how to use it as a tool and provide them with feedback. Hand tools can promote self-regulation during transitions, waiting in line, when the teacher is given a lesson, class discussions, waiting at doctor's office, car rides etc.

- Firm, expected, predictable touch (e.g., massaging, rubbing back)
- Exploring different textures, temperatures through sensory play (kinetic sand, play-doh, shaving cream, bins of uncooked rice/beans, beads, sequence, fleece, Velcro)
- Objects to touch, manipulate, fidget with (i.e., listening helpers). Sometimes our hands need to be busy so our brains can listen and focus. Items to pull, twist, squeeze etc: elastics, squishy, tangle fidget, putty, rubix cube, key chain, lego guy, twisting pipe cleaners, paper clips, smooth rocks, rubber bands, tape
- Games that involve our hands: simon says, playing catch, water balloons, zoom ball, Velcro and ball catching set, beading, finger painting