

Sensory Processing Disorder: Frequently Asked Questions

What is Sensory Processing Disorder?

Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD) – is a complex disorder of the brain that affects developing children, and adults. Sensory signals do not get organized into appropriate responses.

Does SPD only occur in those with autism?

No, Sensory Processing Disorder can be diagnosed in anyone. In fact, at least one in twenty people in the general population may be affected by SPD. The prevalence of SPD in those with ADHD and Autism is much higher.

How is Sensory Processing Disorder treated?

Once diagnosed, those with SPD benefit from Occupational Therapy (OT) treatment program with a sensory integration approach. The goal is to help develop appropriate responses to sensations. OT therapy is done through fun activities in a sensory rich environment.

What are some of the symptoms?

They may overreact, or dislike touch, noise, smells, etc.

Are often distracted, or have a hard time staying still and appear fidgety

They may be easily overwhelmed at recess or in a crowded place such as the cafeteria

May have difficulty reading

Fine motor activities, such as handwriting, may be difficult to perform

Have difficulty with transitions and can easily get “stuck” on one task

Is SPD difficult to diagnose?

Yes. Sensory Processing Disorder may co-exist with many other disorders. For example: OCD, Autism, Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, language disorders, Post-traumatic stress disorder, and learning disabilities.

These co-occurring disorders may lead to SPD being undiagnosed, and if untreated can cause an individual much impairment in their daily living.