

Observation

Becomes upset when touched or when others get too close. Avoids getting too close to people and is selective about what he/she will wear

Possible Sensory Interpretation

Person is 'tactilely defensive' (Very sensitive to touch). Can cause anxiety, fear, pain and avoidance

- **Ask for permission to touch or enter space**
- Promise not to touch
- If you must touch, prepare the person. Explain (words/pictures, etc.) exactly what you are planning to do.
- Offer different options of clothing type: Tighter? Looser? Different Fabric?
- Under-clothing that is close-fitting to reduce tactile input on skin
- Heavy blankets / weighted blankets
- Chair that has sides (Boundaries and Support)
- Boundaries of personal space marked with furniture, tape
- Look for locations in community settings that allow the person to be out of high traffic, but not 'trapped'. (example: booth in the back of the restaurant on the end or one entire side to self)
- Swimming, hot tubs, baths, showers (depends on the type of spray)
- Provide a variety of items that the person can use to hold, squeeze, twist. Experiment with different textures.
- Provide communication (words, pictures, gestures, etc.) that the person can use to ask for space. Honor the request
- Break area. Place to retreat for a time to calm and organize. Access to this place and a way to indicate he/she will be 'taking a break'.
- Use a visual tool, such as Five Point Scale, to help the person remember what to do when starting to get anxious in order to reduce stress and regulate sensory system.
- Provide predictability and embed routines in the schedule
- *Refer to specialist for Sensory Assessment*

<p style="text-align: center;">Observation</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Covers Ears and can become upset with sounds.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Possible Sensory Interpretation</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Sensitivity to certain types and amount of sounds. Can cause pain, confusion, anxiety and stress</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine the type and features of sounds are that cause the person difficulty or pain <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li style="width: 33%;">• Pitch? <li style="width: 33%;">• Loudness? <li style="width: 33%;">• Complexity? <li style="width: 33%;">• Predictability? <li style="width: 33%;">• Tone? <li style="width: 33%;">• Everything? • Limit exposure to the sounds that are the most difficult to tolerate. • Help the person predict if possible when the sounds will occur in order to prepare • Have the person engage in physical activity before needing to tolerate loud/noisy environments • Offer space away from windows or doors • Headphones – Noise reduction • Ear-buds/earphones – Music • Assist to access breaks away from noisy area to quiet, calm area • Snug fitting baseball cap or a knit cap (even weighted cap) • Chewing gum • When unable to adjust for noise/sounds, reduce the auditory processing demands (provide visual communication, directions, information instead) • Acknowledge that you understand how difficult it is for the person. Be Patient! • <i>Refer to specialist for Sensory Assessment</i> 	

Observation

Constantly pacing, moving, jumping

Possible Sensory Interpretation

Could be a variety of issues including: Needs movement/input to stay alert or focused. May be trying to avoid being touched. May be trying to calm sensory system. May be disorganized and unable to make decisions.

- Proactively place movement in the person's day. Provide activities, tasks, jobs, etc. that involve movement.
 - Functional, purposeful movement activities are preferred. Avoid lengthy, aimless, intense pacing, jumping, spinning, etc. Create purpose.
- Pair 'heavy work' (lifting, pushing, push-ups etc.) with movement for calming and organizing.
- Provide optional seating that allows to move – therapy ball as a chair, rolling stool or chair, rocking chair.
 - Consider ways to do the work, assignment or task by standing rather than sitting.
- Create regular movement activities as part of a health routine : Running, walking, swimming, bike riding, roller skating, trampoline, gymnastics, basketball, etc.
- Experiment with lighting. Some people respond well to low-lighting or indirect lighting such as lamps. These tend to be calming. Others prefer brighter lights. Many avoid fluorescent lighting
- Trampoline with regular access. Place in schedule. Or, create a 'jumping spot' that is in a safe, preferred location
- Use visual schedules that show the flow of the day. Include the sensory activities on the schedule and when they will occur.
- Unsure exactly what type of movement activity the person might need? Provide choice of activities. Provide them visually with pictures, words, photos.
- Place a movement activity BEFORE a task that requires concentration or is a difficult situation. **Do not make a person earn the movement activity** if they need it in order to be successful.
- *Consider the suggestions for 'tactile defensiveness'*
- *Refer to specialist for Sensory Assessment*

Observation

Difficulty focusing, attending, engaging, and responding

Possible Sensory Interpretation

May be overwhelmed and unable to focus and respond. OR May alert state may be so low unable to engage

- Consider previous suggestions for embedding movement throughout day. The person may need that type of input to raise alertness.
- Add stretching routines to the day. Create tasks in a way that the person must stretch up and down to accomplish the task (ex: putting things on a high shelf, cleaning out a deep cupboard)
- Add music to the environment. Experiment with different types of music. Some may alert.. some may calm.
- Consider fragrances. Some can alert some can calm. Natural scents, such as lavender, vanilla, pine tend to calm. Scents such as citrus, peppermint and coffee tend to alert.
- Reduce the amount of verbal input and prompting and use the visual modality instead.
 - Provide information visually using pictures, objects, works, symbols, etc.
 - Try gestures and object cues (example: showing car keys when time to leave, handing the person a broom when time to clean up, pointing using no words)
- Give time to process. One direction/question and wait up to 10 seconds before repeating or changing request.
- Provide choices in a visual/simple manner.
- When speaking, reduce verbal information. Provide the most essential information and eliminate extraneous chatter.
- Use routines. Be predictable. Be prepared. Help the person know what to expect.
- Provide scripts for responding in frequently encountered situations. Practice. Video tape and have the person watch themselves or others use the scripts multiple times.
- On days when the person is having the most difficulty, reduce demands, increase support. For example, assist to complete several steps of a task and have the person finish... even though he/she is able to complete the entire task independently on the 'good days'.
- *Refer to specialist for Sensory Assessment*