



The Sensory Connection Program Conference:

All on Board: Using Sensory Approaches for Emotional Regulation and Crisis Intervention

**Best Western Executive Court Inn and Conference Center
Manchester NH**

Friday September 16th - Saturday September 17th 2011



The focus of this conference was on practical ideas for the implementation of sensory approaches. Participants came from a variety of settings including psychiatric care, VA hospitals, school systems and private practice. Participants learned how the research of Stephen Porges and the Social Engagement System informs more effective approaches for crisis intervention. Activities such as making an individual sensory kit, games and the *Sensory Connection Self-Regulation Workbook* were used as interactive examples of group and individual treatment.

Conference Feedback

JoAnn Wrobel from Westborough MA writes, "Thank you so much for the most useful conference I may have ever attended! Thank you so much for being so generous with sharing your knowledge and materials!"

Traci Gilman from Nashua NH says, "Course content was clearly research based but focus was on application. Your positive nature was contagious."

Bobbi Ross from Fairbanks Alaska writes, "I really liked all the hands on/experiential portions. It gave lots of useful ideas. I also appreciate your engaging approach which was very easy to learn from."

Conference highlights included:

- ❖ Self-regulation tools for each of the senses.
- ❖ Opportunities to “see, touch, and try” a variety of sensory activities
- ❖ Crisis intervention using the SCP “Pause, Connect, Plan” approach based on the research of Stephen Porges and the Social Engagement Theory
- ❖ Application Lab to role-play crisis intervention.
- ❖ Group activities including the *Sense-ability Group* and the *Ball of Responsibility Game*.
- ❖ “What Helps?” activity using mini-pictures to make an individual poster identifying helpful strategies for various situations.
- ❖ Creation of a personal sensory kit including making a beaded bracelet and identifying personal mantras.
- ❖ A Conference CD with a copy of the SCP Workbook along with multiple other resources for implementing and teaching sensory approaches.

Special thanks to:

Kristi Langset from *Sommerfly* for sharing her innovative weighted products. Learn more about Sommerfly <http://www.sommerfly.com/>

Lori Boelig for helping Beth, sharing information about her *Sense-ability Group Wagon* and for demonstrating her “*Stuffing Bee*” weighted animals.

Traci Gilman for taking notes for us on new ideas and resources that surfaced as the conference progressed.

Nikki Munro for coming all the way from Australia and for helping with setup and pictures.

Beth Moore for being such a supportive and detail oriented conference manager. I would not have been able to do this conference without her help.



Course Description

This course is designed for occupational therapists and multidisciplinary professional staff supporting the use of sensory approaches to treatment. When all disciplines including therapists, nurses, psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, teachers and administration work together, sensory approaches have the best chance of being successful.

The focus of the conference will be on the use of sensory strategies for comfort, function, self-regulation and crisis intervention. It will include information on the development of sensory rooms and sensory sensitive environments. Participants will learn how *The Sensory Connection Self-Regulation Workbook* can be used for individual treatment and to develop a Self-Regulation Group. The conference will include a CD of worksheets from the workbook and participants will be given exclusive permission to copy these worksheets for use in their own facilities.

A hands-on and activity based approach will be used to explore the use of sensory related strategies for many treatment settings and age ranges including mental health settings, substance abuse programs, adolescent units, school settings, geriatric facilities, and outpatient treatment programs. Practical ideas using sensory strategies will be presented for self-awareness, self-regulation, skill building, restraint and seclusion reduction and trauma informed care. Participants will learn to recognize their own sensory preferences and styles and learn to appreciate the sensory needs and responses of their clients. The latest research will be presented on topics including sensory modalities, trauma interventions, geriatric fall prevention, concerns of the veteran population, and evidenced based mental health practice.

Training CD of Key PowerPoint Slides will be available for a nominal fee upon special request.

Occupational therapists attending the conference can make arrangements to obtain a CD of key slides from the SCP Conference to use for trainings and in-services in their own facilities or programs. Educating all staff is very crucial for implementation of sensory approaches.

Objectives

Participants will be able to:

1. Understand the calming, alerting and grounding characteristics of different types of sensory stimulation and how each of the senses, including the powerful internal senses, can be used for self-awareness, self-control and a higher level of function.
2. Identify sensory preferences and styles and understand how they impact emotions, relationships and work performance and contribute to comfort in the environment.
3. Describe how sensory issues relate to symptoms of PTSD, dissociation, flashbacks, suicidality, substance use, cognitive problems, hyperactivity, and behavioral problems.
4. Understand how sensory approaches are used to decrease the need for restraint and seclusion and contribute to Trauma Informed Care.
5. Describe ways to use activities from the Sensory Connection Self-Regulation Workbook for individual and group treatment and for the development of personal crisis intervention plans.
6. Identify ways sensory rooms and sensory sensitive environments can be used to support self-regulation

Schedule Day One

8:30 - 9:00 Registration/Continental Breakfast
9:00 - 10:15 Self-Regulation and the Sensory Connection Program
10:15- 10:30 Break
10:30 - 11:30 The Senses and Abdominal Breathing
11:30 - 12:00 Application Lab: Exploring Sensory Activities - Identifying Preferences
12:00 - 1:00 Lunch on your own
1:00 - 2:00 Using Worksheets for Stress Management, Identifying Aversive Stimuli and Grounding
2:00 - 2:30 Sensory Activities, Kits, Carts, Baskets and Individual Treatment
2:30 - 3:30 Application Lab: Developing Sensory Kits
3:30 - 3:45 Break
3:45 - 4:10 Developing a Self-Regulation Group
4:10 - 5:00 Application Lab - Group Planning and Wrap-up

Schedule Day Two

8:30 - 9:00 Continental Breakfast
9:00-10:00 Stress and Trauma - the Sensory Connection and supporting research
10:00 - 10:30 Crisis Intervention Plans
10:30-10:45 Break
10:45 - 11:30 Environment - Sensory Sensitive Environments, Sensory Rooms and Spaces
11:30 - 12:00 Application Lab: Brainstorming ideas for Sensory Room development and effective use.
12:00- 1:00 Lunch on your own
1:00 - 3:00 Demonstration and Application Lab: Exploring the possibilities of sensory related treatment including the Sense-Ability Group, ROM Dance, Infinity Walking, and use of music and videos like Calmer by Nature.
3:00 - 3:15 Break
3:15 - 4:00 Safety, Cognitive and Diagnostic Concerns
4:00-4:30 Application Lab: Integrating Sensory Approaches and Goal Setting
4 :30 - 5:00 Wrap-up and Q and A.

Credits: 13.5 PDUs

Upon Completion of the two days of the conference, participants will be provided a certificate for 13.5 hours of Professional Development Units towards re-certification for NBCOT or verification of attendance for other professionals.