

## NHOTA Spring Event 2009

April 4, 2009

Lake Opechee Inn, Lakeport, NH



### From Self Care to the Care of Our Clients!

This spring I had a second rewarding opportunity to present an all day workshop for the NHOTA Spring Event. The focus was the use of sensory activities for our own self-care as a way of developing a better understanding of the ways they can benefit and enrich the lives of our clients. Participants had a great time exploring sensory items and sharing ideas.



*The Sensory Connection Self-Regulation Workbook* was used to guide individual and group activities that focused on recognizing sensory preferences and the use of sensory strategies to facilitate relaxation, healthy lifestyle choices, and well being. As therapists related to the use of these activities in their own life, it translated to an understanding of how to use sensory approaches to decrease tension and stress, promote self-regulation, improve comfort and function and increase participation in clients across all ages and disciplines including early intervention, school settings, geriatrics, home health, physical disability settings and mental health.

When workshop participants tried out various sensory items they completed the "I Tried It" Activity which you can download as a PDF from this website. Items included the heavy "therapy dog," the "spandex hug," colored glasses, aromatherapy scents, the Lolo Ball, various massagers, and the Bosu Ball. The favorite activity turned out to be making a Mandela. If participants checked off each item on the "I Tried It" sheet they put their name in a drawing for a CD of the *Sensory Connection Program Games*.



It was a day of fun and laughter and self-exploration as well as a fabulous learning opportunity as evidenced by all of the ideas that surfaced in lab activities. A majority of the participants work in school systems and these are some of their ideas: schedule sensory breaks, work with the teacher to create a comfort corner, offer "crash pads," remove clutter and keep environments organized, minimize irritating stimuli in the environment such as crackling intercoms, offer sensory tips in a newsletter, and educate staff regarding individual signs and triggers of potential meltdowns and to come up with a repertoire of personalized strategies for these crisis situations.



### **Feedback from Spring Event Participants**

*“Karen is awesome-great fun, real, human, warm presenter, great hands on stuff! I loved it that I could leave with her workbook!”*

*"It was a great day, I left knowing how I can support my clients AND better support myself..I feel ready to make connections in my life to promote self regulation!"*

### **Feedback from NHOTA**

Participants had a wonderful time learning how our senses influence our ability to self regulate, improve function, and increase participation across all environments. Everyone enjoyed Karen's presentation, honesty and her sense of humor. We left that day feeling soothed, rejuvenated and reorganized.

Please visit the NHOTA Website: [www.nhota.org](http://www.nhota.org)