

Sensory Modulation Approaches to Mental Health Interventions for Adolescents and Adults

Outline and Workshop Agenda

Pre-recorded lecture (1st half) (4 hours) To be viewed on your own.

- Discussion of the components and efficacy of sensory modulation approaches
- Evolution of the stress response and social engagements theory of Stephen Porges and how it informs practice
- Examination of external, interoceptive and internal senses along with breathing and awareness strategies
- Exploring the co-creation of intervention plans by helping clients identify sensory preferences and helpful sensory strategies to support occupational performance
- Integrating sensory interventions into individual and group practice
- Fostering sensory exploration and the traumatic relationship using sensory spaces and rooms

Homework (1 hour)

Week 1 Interactive Webinar – Lab A (1.5 hours)

- Exploring the power of proprioception, acknowledging the value of multi-sensory approaches
- Participants will learn about and practice bean bag tapping (a simple sensory strategy providing proprioceptive input which can support self-regulation), and take turns leading peers through this approach
- Facilitators will describe (and when possible, demonstrate the use of) sensory rooms, sensory carts and common sensory tools
- Participants will be invited to consider what "tools at hand" may serve as effective sensory strategies, and will be guided through the creation of a personal sensory toolkit

Week 2 Interactive webinar – Lab B (1.5 hours)

- Sensory preferences will be examined: What works for you?
- Participants will identify and discuss individual sensory preferences and ways in which such preferences may influence personal choices for self-regulation
- Participants will engage in a brief "sensory session" which will be used to highlight ways in which sensory strategies may be effectively utilized for both individuals and groups
- Polyvagal Theory will be briefly explained

Pre-recorded lecture (2nd half) (4 hours) To be viewed on your own.

- Exploring sensory processing patterns pertinent to mental health
- Discussion of sensory issues interfering with occupational performance and safety

- Exploring formal and informal adult/adolescent sensory assessments and screenings in order to give therapists, as well as clients, a deeper understanding of individual sensory processing patterns and how they impact occupational performance and inform intervention strategies and the development of sensory diets
- Using sensory perspectives and approaches to augment trauma informed care
- Developing crisis intervention/safety plans and person-centered alternatives to restraint and seclusion
- Ideas for integrating sensory approaches into various clinical settings

Homework (1 hour)

Week 3 Interactive webinar – Lab C (1.5 hours)

- Deeper exploration of the polyvagal theory
- Description of ways in which polyvagal theory can be directly applied by occupational therapists working in mental health
- Guided exploration of the use of several 'hands-on tools' which participants can expect to immediately utilize in their work setting
- Learning ways in which sensory strategies and improved awareness of neurophysiological cues (our own, and our clients') can enhance safety and increase somatic awareness when working with a client in crisis

Week 4 Interactive webinar – Lab D (1.5 hours)

- Discussion of the clinical applications and challenges of sensory assessments, and provide examples of ways in which such assessments may be used in a variety of work settings
- Participant discussion of the best (and most realistic) sensory approaches for their clinical settings, and set concrete and achievable goals for continuing to utilize and develop sensory approaches
- Participants will be invited to form 'common interest groups' to provide ongoing support and engagement

Q and A Interactive Webinar Lab E (2 hours) One month after last lab.

- Webinar will be presented by Megan Flood, Peggy Ninow and Karen Moore
- Participant Questions to be submitted ahead of time.
- Additional questions will be welcomed during interactive Q and A webinar.

Expected Time Commitment 18 hours total