

Transcript



Welcome to Meeting your child's sensory needs Strategies for teenagers.

The onset of adolescence is a very challenging time for both teens and their parents. It is a time that is marked with rapid changes, and it is also when many expectations are placed onto teenagers – academic and sporting responsibilities, social pressures, the development of self-identity and emerging freedoms. With increased independence come increased responsibility and the pressure to fit into social groups.

Teenagers have different views on what they like compared to when they were younger. Teens may develop different sensory preferences and may need different sensory activities presented to them.

This video will outline strategies that are more age appropriate for your teenager: -

- Creating Sensory Strategies
- Social considerations
- Specific Strategies
- Sensory equipment

They need to understand

- In addition to all the challenges they face, teenagers also need to be aware of the impact of the environment on their sensory systems.
- They need to understand how their sensory systems work and why it matters in their day-to-day functioning.

- Not understanding the effect of sensory overload and responses to sensory overload may result in one or more of the following:
 - Inability to focus.
 - Easily irritable
 - Disorganisation
 - Lethargy
 - Impulsivity
 - Risk taking
 - Forgetfulness
 - Adopting bad habits
- A sensory diet is a carefully planned and personal activity plan that provides the sensory input a person needs to stay focussed and organised throughout the day.



Don't expect big changes overnight. It can take several months for sensory strategies to be used effectively.

You are likely to need to use the strategies you think work best, for you and your child, consistently for around 3 months before knowing for certain that they work.

Be prepared for them not to work each and every time so have a few sensory strategies that can be used in these situations.

Use A SECRET by Lucy Jane Miller (2006)

We introduced "A SECRET" by Lucy Jane Miller in our video "meeting your child's needs".

This is a problem-solving tool for parents, teenagers and even for children themselves to think about the seven elements in sensory and motor challenges and to come up with some ideas of things to change to lead to smoother functioning for the child. "A SECRET" is an acronym for these seven elements: attention, sensation, emotional regulation, culture, relationship, environment and task. "A SECRET" is not a rigid formula for what to do, but a flexible format helping you to consider each of these important elements in turn.

The sensation element is only one part of "A SECRET". Think about how each of these elements could be influencing the behaviour and how or if these could be manipulated to allow your child to function smoothly.

Creating sensory strategies

If you have not watched our other videos, it may be helpful to watch our “meeting your child’s sensory needs” series to help you further understand sensory processing difficulties.



When coming up with sensory strategies for teens, it is important to take into consideration their specific interests as well as their individual sensory profile.

Teens do not want to stand out from their peers so it is most important with this age group to figure out how to fit sensory strategies into their daily activities and make these strategies part of everyday life.

Social Considerations for Teens and Young People

- Many teenagers with sensory regulation difficulties struggle with social interactions with their peers. The environment and the individuals in the environment can be unpredictable.
- You can help your teens and young people with sensory differences join in with their peers and build awareness about social nuances using some of the following strategies.

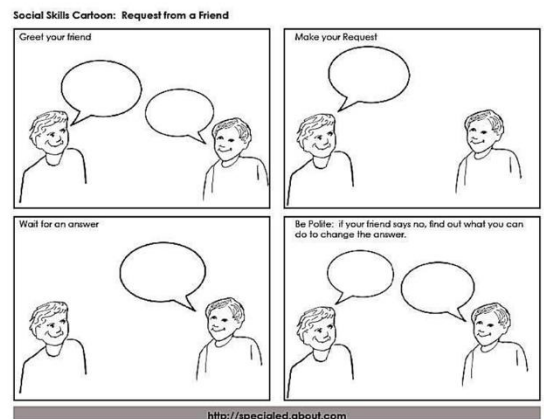


Social strategies to try

- Create a positive comment jar where everyone in the house or classroom writes 1 nice thing about someone else. At the end of the week, read all of the comments out loud (this helps teach your teen both how to give compliments and how to receive them).



- Look into community groups/extracurricular activities to inspire involvement and participation. Some that tend to be popular with this age group include skateboard parks/camps, martial arts classes, Lego classes, robotics/engineering classes, cooking classes, gymnastics or dance groups, and indoor trampoline playgrounds
- Try engaging your teen in a game of charades where they need to act out different emotions/feelings. Many teens struggle with reading nonverbal social cues and this can be a big hindrance to social interactions.
- Make mini movies by acting out different social scenarios (i.e. inviting a friend over to your house to hang-out, introducing yourself to a new kid at school, etc.).
- If your teen enjoys drawing, draw out cartoons with different social scenarios
- Look into **Asperger's Experts** on YouTube; they are 2 males with Asperger's diagnoses that talk about strategies that have worked for them and it may help your teen to be able to see others who are facing similar challenges.



Age-appropriate sensory strategies for teens

When working with your teen it is important to understand what appeals to them, and then work this into their sensory strategies. Some appealing activities and strategies for teens include the following:



- Anything video game or technology-related! Teens could work toward earning extra screen time each weekend for participating in sensory strategies during the week. Try apps or websites with yoga or other **workouts** that incorporate needed sensory input.
 - Use charts to track and show progress. Posting a chart that shows an increase in repetitions of specific activities each day/week helps teens see that they are making progress and gives a "why" to what they are doing.
 - Incorporate sports into sensory strategies; look into joining a team or getting your teen involved in an independent sports activity (running, tennis, or swimming)
 - Incorporate competition! For some reason, teens seem to be more cooperative when they are in some type of competition (i.e., Who can do the most push-ups in 1 minute? Who can hold the plank the
- NHS Borders Children and Young People's Occupational Therapy Service



longest?). This is a great way to increase participation in exercise and other sensory activities.

- Try a chair ball for extra movement during homework time.
- Use lavender scented sheets, a heavy blanket and/or a body pillow to help with sleeping.
- Experiment with foods that change arousal levels; crunchy, sour, and spicy tend to be alerting and warm foods are often calming.

Explaining the “why” behind the strategies we’re using is important for teens and often helps with compliance i.e., “*we are doing this to help calm your body so you can sit and focus for your homework*”.

Sensory Strategies to Accommodate Growing and Changing Bodies

Teens are at one of the most difficult life stages. Their bodies are changing and although some are looking more and more grown-up, teens are still just older children.

Provide teens with a safe space to exercise and work out; set up a small space where they can do this privately.

Have teens help pick out personal items that they can try/smell such as lotions, shampoos, soaps and deodorants, etc.

Use of tight, Lycra clothing tends to help with regulation. Girls may like tight Camis under their shirts and boys may like sport compression tops and leggings that could be worn under their typical clothes.



Periods are a tricky thing to navigate for any young girl, ensure that they are prepared prior to their period starting so it's not a surprise to them, there are lots of new products out there now like period pants and sanitary products so get them to try them on to see what is most comfortable prior to their period starting. Once they start, introduce painkillers and hot pads for cramps.

Shaving – prepare by choosing how your young person wants to shave so wet or dry then introduce the razor if using gel or foam try it on their hands and face first before shaving a few times to see if they can tolerate this. There is a good you tube video you can show your teen on how to shave in the description box below.

<https://www.wXgmMp2youtube.com/watch?v=ZFtE>

Age-appropriate sensory strategies

Create a sensory space Have your teen help you organize a sensory space where they can get needed input. This will vary depending on your teen's needs but could be a space with a bean bag chair, some **stress balls**, a pack of gum, headphones with music, and an eye mask (all tend to be good for sensory-sensitive kids). Or it may be a space with a **trampoline**, music, **strobe lights** and tennis balls they can throw against wall and catch (all great for sensory-seekers).

Add Small weights or toys to back packs to provide heavy work.

Use essential oils to promote calm and relaxed behaviour (some examples include peppermint or basil to improve concentration and using lavender or cedar wood to promote relaxation).



Try carrying small items in pockets for fidgets such as rubbers, blue tac , squeeze balls, **bean bags** or keys.



Chewy necklaces for boys and girls or scented necklaces could be used to increase or decrease levels of alertness.

Fidgets

You can also use things from around the house like piece of ribbon, smooth buttons, you can sew little bags and fill them with things like lentils or rice, scent them with lavender or other oils.



Lots of Jewellers are doing Anxiety rings there are lots of different designs that are very effective and discreet.

Pocket ball clips onto your waist band and it's like a yo-yo you can bounce the ball on ground and still attached to your trousers or skirt.



- https://www.etsy.com/uk/market/adult_fidget_toys
- [Amazon UK](https://www.amazon.co.uk/)
- <https://anxietyrings.co.uk/>
- <https://www.multi-sensoryworld.co.uk/collections/fidget-toys>
- <https://pockyball-uk.com>

Chewlery ideas

There are lots of subtle things Teens can use as chewlery. Not on the high street do lovely Teether necklaces for Mums but they would equally do as chewlery for an older child.

- https://www.etsy.com/uk/shop/MunchablesSensory?ref=simple-shop-header-name&listing_id=761085169
- <https://www.notonthehighstreet.com>
- <https://www.tinknstink.co.uk/chewelry-and-oral-therapy>

Other Sensory Equipment



Ear defenders also provide deep pressure over ears.



If your teen is feeling self-conscious these ear plugs work well for older children who don't want their peers to know they are wearing them, you can get lots of different makes and colours. And they block out the noise just like ear defenders. <https://www.flareaudio.com/collections/calmer>



Weighted equipment



Beanbag chairs. Alternative seating e.g. rocking chair.



Resistance bands



Compression sheets



Lava lamps. Colour changing lights

Remember

Everyone has different sensory responses to stimuli. By thinking of your child's sensory systems and observing how they react to small changes, you can gain a better understanding why your teen may be feeling, thinking or behaving differently to sensory feedback.

Work with your teenager to explore what works best for them.

There will likely be times when their strategy doesn't work so have a toolbox full of strategies to dip into as needed.

Give time for strategies to work. Support and guide your teen to use sensory strategies and develop their independence with these.

There are lots of books out there but here are a few to get started.

Some Books For Teens and Parents to Read

 Freaks, Geeks and Aspergers Syndrome	 The Teen guide to Sensory Issues	 Sensory Like You	 Making Sense	 Too Loud, Too Bright, Too Fast, Too Tight	
 Smile and Succeed for Teens	 The Asperkid's Secret Book of Special Rules	 The Aspie Teens Survival Guide	 The Out of Sync Child Grows Up	 Learn to have fun with your senses	 The Autism Friendly Guide to Periods

If you have tried our suggestions for a while and feel you want to talk through strategies or need support to help implement these, please contact us.




How To Contact Us...




Prior to contacting the service, we suggest you explore our resources online and on Facebook;

 www.nhsborders.scot.nhs.uk/cypot

Advice and support can be sought from the service by contacting the team directly using our Enquiry Line or via our Enquiry Email Inbox.

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We will aim to contact you within 5 working days to discuss your enquiry