

Sensory Integration

Sensory integration is the process by which the brain organises and filters all the information received from the senses (Ayres 2006). Sensation feeds the developing brain in order for the body and mind to be directed in a purposeful way.

A pupil or student who has difficulty organising and making sense of their senses may have difficulty learning in School, (For example feeling tired, anxious, having difficulty with remembering and following instructions, paying attention and maintaining focus).

The initial aim of the Sensory Circuits programme is to facilitate sensory processing and sound sensory integration to allow children to be in the optimum state of alertness, ready for learning (Horwood 2013)

Sensory Circuits

How does Sensory Circuits Work?

The sensory circuits structure is simple. A circuit runs in three sections which are based on theories of sensory processing and sensory integration.

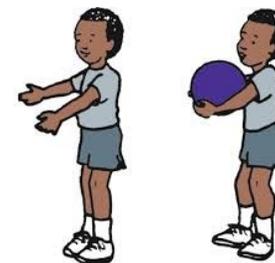
Alerting section:

The aim is to provide vestibular stimulation (providing the brain with sensory information every time the position of the head moves in relation to gravity) within a controlled environment. Alerting activities including skipping, trampette bouncing, using a bouncing sphere and star jumps.



Organising section:

This includes activities that require multi-sensory processing and balance. The individual needs to organise their body, plan their approach and do more than one thing at a time in a set sequential order. Organising activities including climbing, hopping, balancing, and throwing.



Calming Section:

The calming activities provide input to ensure that as the pupil/student leaves the circuit they are calm and centred, ready for the day ahead. Calming activities include : press-ups, crawling through a lycra tunnel, or an exercise ball squash.



The benefits of Sensory Circuits

The initial aim of the sensory circuits programme is to facilitate sensory processing and effective sensory integration, allowing children to be in the optimum state of alertness, ready for learning.

Longer term benefits can include:

- Improvements in self-esteem
- Development of physical skills
- Differences in focus and attention and improved ability to settle down
- Some quiet, unresponsive children appear to have 'woken up' and are more readily engaging with other children in their class.
- Quicker, more efficient dressing skills have developed as children are keen to take shoes and socks off to join the circuit.
- Opportunities to engage in specific learning e.g. counting or multiplication whilst bouncing on a trampette.
- Improved communication skills for children working at all levels and with a variety of additional needs.

(The information for the Sensory Circuits part of this leaflet was taken from 'Sensory Circuits—A Sensory motor skills programme for children' by Jane Horwood, 2008)

What St Mary's School and College offers

St Mary's School & College provides residential and non-residential education, care and therapy for children aged 7-19. Our pupils and students have speech, language and communication needs and may also have associated physical and learning difficulties.

Our therapy, health and personal development teams and on-site facilities enable us to deliver provision across the waking curriculum. Our model of integrated therapy means that the pupils' and students' needs are planned, provided, and assessed in natural and functional settings. There is the opportunity to develop high levels of trust and familiarity leading to strong therapeutic relationships. We work as a multidisciplinary team to maximise independence levels and the development of 'tools for life'.

The ultimate aim is for every pupil and student to achieve as much independence as possible so that they can live a fulfilled life.

St. Mary's School & College, *Part of The Talking Trust*
Wrestwood Road, Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex TN40 2LU
Tel: +44 (0)1424 730740 | Email: admin@stmarysbexhill.org



Sensory Circuits

