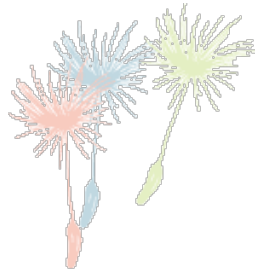
# Exploring the Senses:
# Session Three
# Sensory tools and strategies for children

Bethany Brewin, M.Sc. OT
(Occupational Therapist)

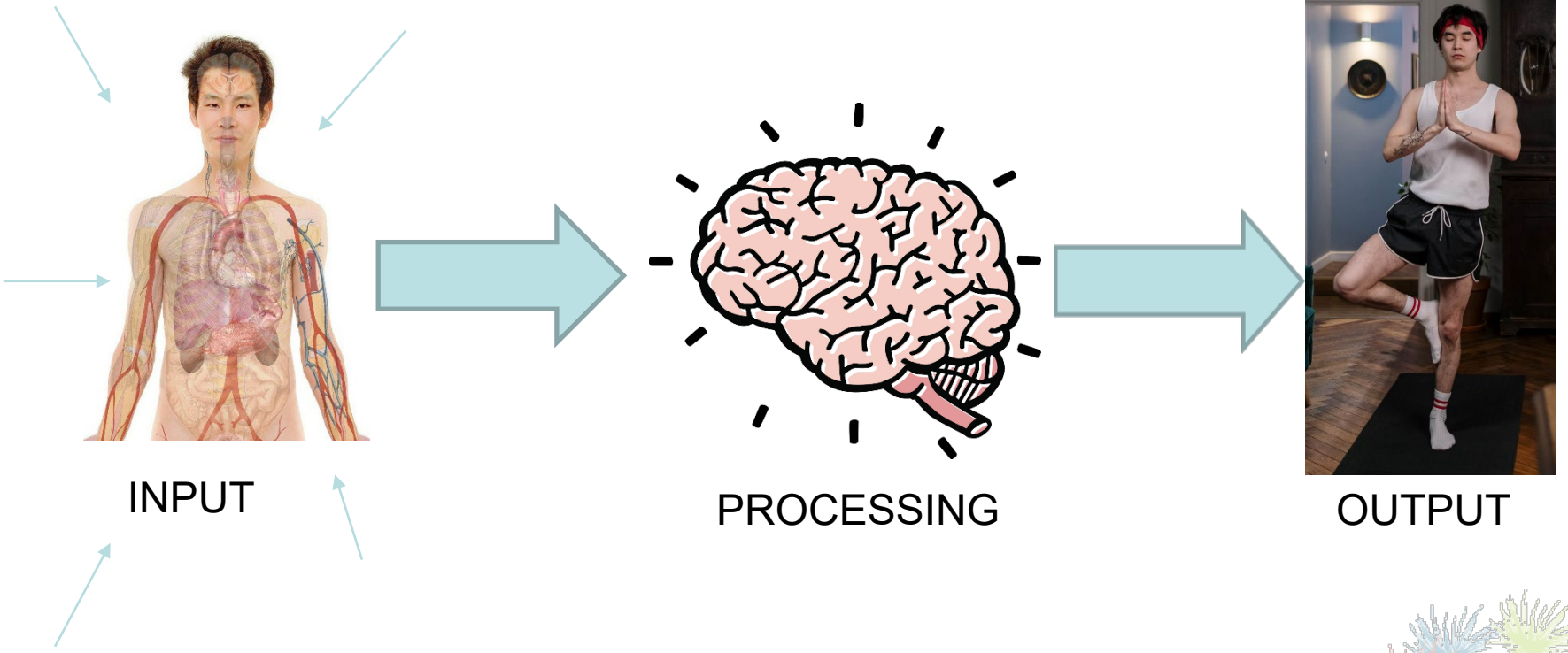
Autism ONTARIO

# Outline

1. Sensory review
2. Sensory strategies:
    1. Smell
    2. Taste
    3. Touch
    4. Hearing
    5. Vision
    6. Proprioceptive
    7. Vestibular
    8. Interoception
3. Sensory Scavenger Hunt



# Review: Sensory Integration



# Review: Sensory Challenges

Some people are under-responsive to sensory stimulation, and others are over-responsive.

We call this having a “high threshold” or a “low threshold” for sensory input.



# Review: What are the Senses?

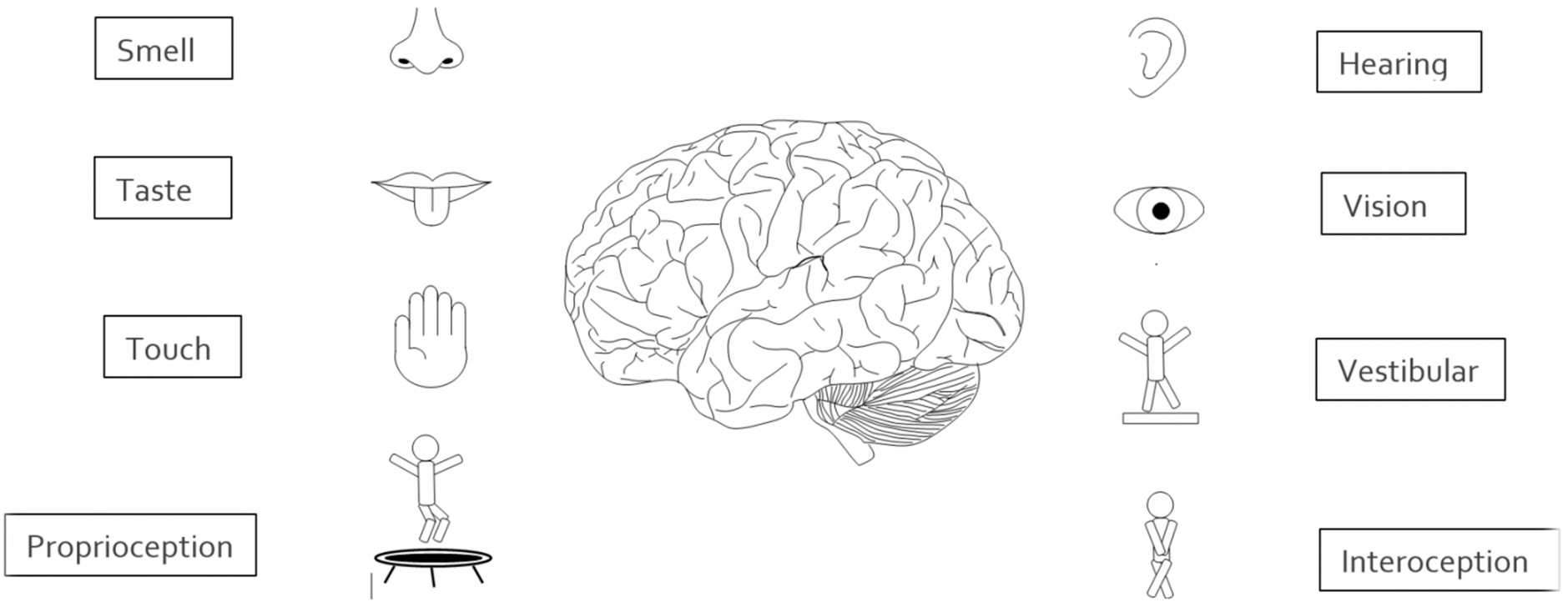
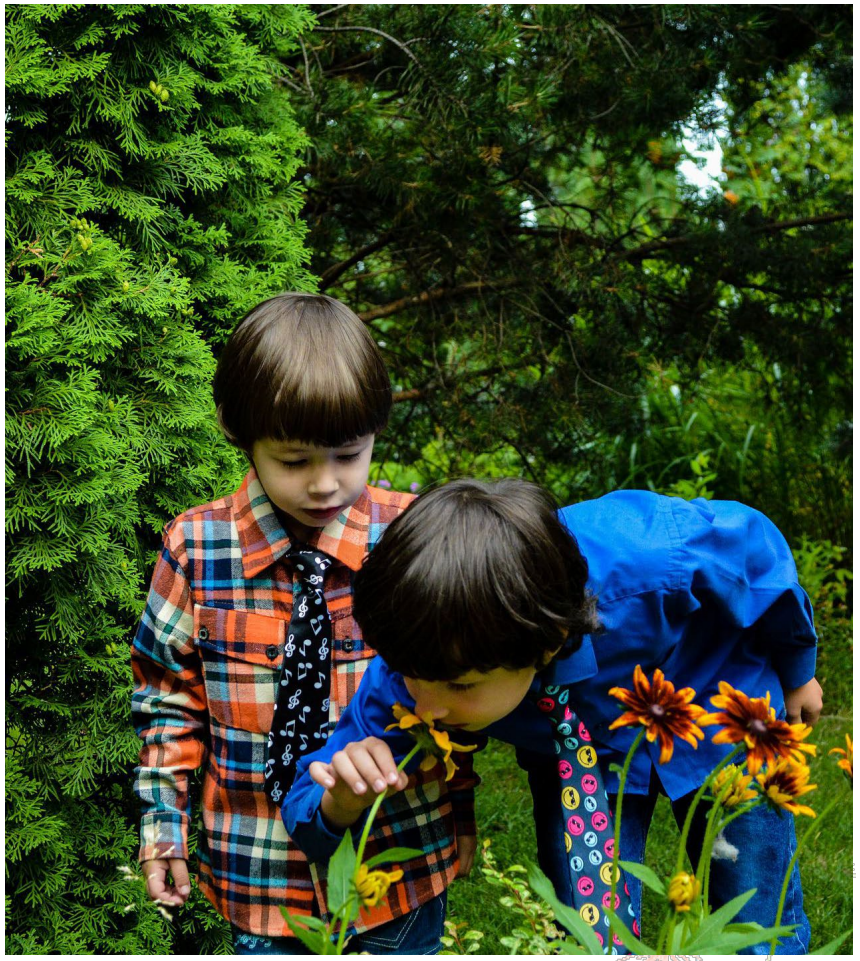



Image from AIDE Canada: “Sensory Processing Toolkit”: Sensory Processing Differences Toolkit (aidecanada.ca)

# Olfactory (Smell) Strategies

- Avoid strong scents/perfumes.
- Be aware of different smells in different environments (stores, restaurants, outside).
- Allow for the windows to be open for fresh air when possible.
- “Experiment” with aromatherapy if tolerated: essential oils, calming vs. alerting smells.



# Gustatory (Taste) Strategies

- Allow children to be exposed to a variety of tastes, temperatures and textures of food, without the expectation that they must EAT anything.

- Be aware of strong tastes and smells that may cause distress in sensitive children.



# Gustatory and Tactile Strategies

- Food play
- Food preparation



# Tactile (Touch) Strategies

- Provide “fidget” tools/objects to manipulate during story/ circle time to provide organizing touch input (as needed).



www.schoolspecialty.com

# Tactile (Touch) Strategies

- Provide opportunities for new/novel tactile/texture experiences
  - *sensory, sand and water tables*
  - *play dough, play foam, "slime"*
  - *food prep*

- Whole body sensory experiences
  - *brushing*
  - *sensory "obstacle course'*



# Tactile (Touch) Strategies



# Auditory (Hearing) Strategies

- Be aware of the noise level in each environment.
- Experiment with sounds.
- Use music mindfully.
- Offer a quiet “calm down” space to take a break if needed.



# Visual Strategies



# Visual Strategies



# Visual Strategies

- Reduce clutter
- Minimize distractions on walls
- Provide ways to organize toys and materials
- Use visuals/pictures to help communicate
- Prioritize where to sit to see better and/or minimize distractions
- Practice drawing, printing on a vertical surface to keep work in visual plane



# Proprioceptive Strategies: Deep Pressure

- pushing?
- pulling?
- lifting?
- squeezing?



# Proprioceptive Strategies: Deep Pressure

- chair push ups
- wall push offs
- ball squeezes
- hand squeezes
- working on tummy
- “heavy work”: e.g. pushing a heavy cart



# Proprioceptive Strategies: Deep Pressure

- weighted animals
- compression clothing
- body sox
- weighted backpack





*Pictured:*
- *body sox (amazon.ca)*
- *Weighted animal (school specialty.ca)*

# Vestibular (Movement) Strategies

- spinning?
- swinging?
- climbing?
- sliding?
- going upside down?
- bouncing?



# Vestibular (Movement) Strategies

## No equipment:

- “follow the leader”
- “simon says”
- Yoga and gymnastics type programs and activities

## Minimal equipment:

- therapy balls
- tunnels and play tents
- mini trampoline



# Movement Strategies: Seating Options

Seating options that allow for changes in position, movement input (bouncing swinging legs).





*Pictured:*

*NeoRok NoRok stool*
*Aeromat Balance Disc (schoolspecialty.com)*

*Move N and sit cushion (amazon.com)*

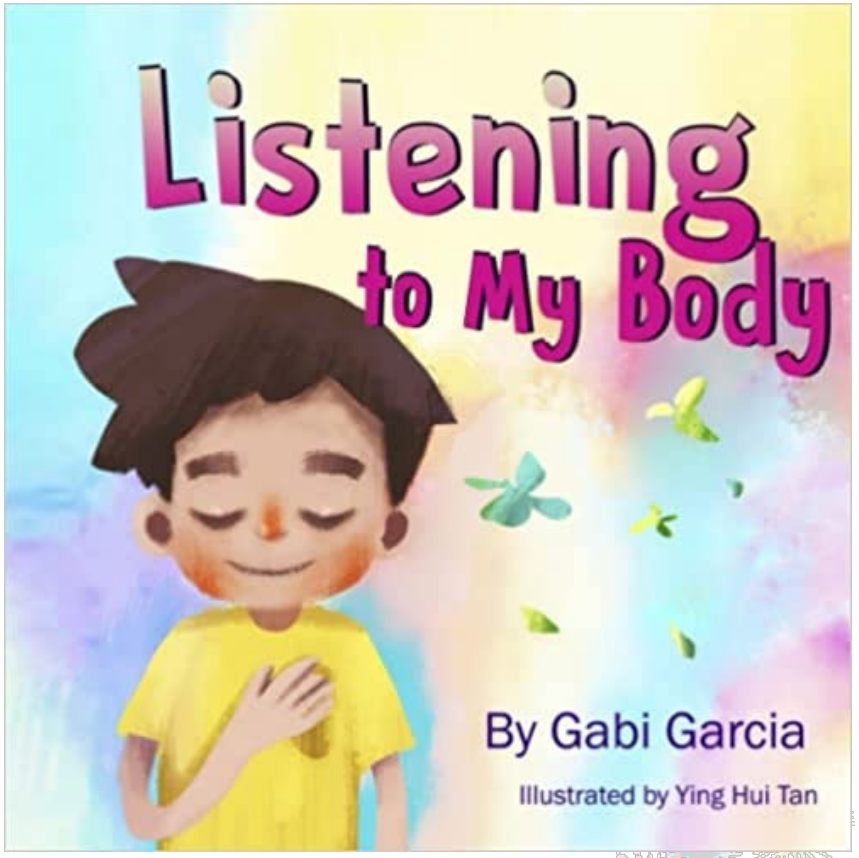
*Bouncy Bands (wayfair.ca)*





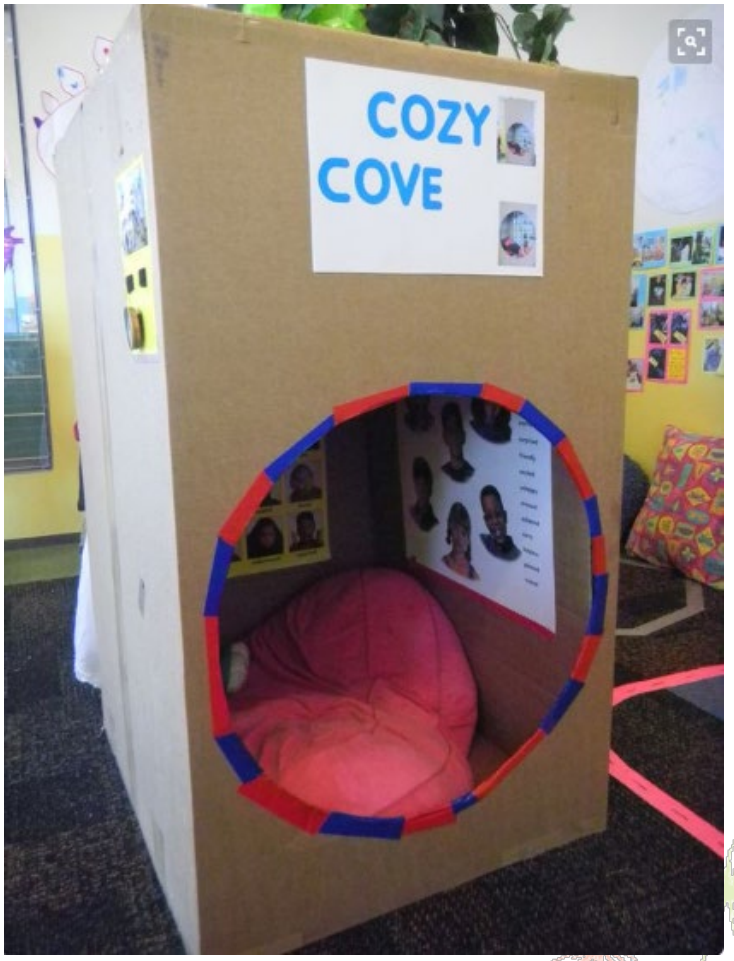
# Interoception

- bibliotherapy
- mindfulness
- breathing exercises
- emotional literacy activities



# Strategies for Every Child: "Cozy Corner"

- comfortable seating options, pillows, stuffies.
- books, fidget tools, visuals.
- adult support available as needed.



# Sensory Scavenger Hunt

- Sight: “I Spy”
- Sound: What do you hear?
- Touch: soft? hard? rough? bumpy?
- Smell/taste: Fresh fruit or vegetables?
- Movement: twirl? Spin?



# Questions?



Image from Pexels.