



But First, Sensory! How to Optimize Client Participation Using a Nervous System Lens

Presented by: Laura Petix, MS, OTR/L

Delivery method: On-Demand

Instruction level: Introductory

Sponsored by: NCS Pearson, Inc.

Course Description

Autistic individuals often communicate stress and safety through their bodies long before they can put it into words. In this practical, neuro-affirming course, you'll connect the "why" behind behavior to the nervous system and sensory processing—so you can respond with confidence in real time. You'll learn how the sympathetic and parasympathetic systems shape regulation, attention, and participation; how to recognize common behavioral clues of atypical vestibular, proprioceptive, and interoceptive processing; and how to choose sensory strategies that support smoother sessions. Walk away with an actionable toolkit for managing in-session challenges—meltdowns, low energy/low engagement, and tricky transitions—while preserving dignity, autonomy, and felt safety for autistic clients.

Learner Outcomes

After completing this learning track, the participants will be able to:

1. Describe the way both sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems directly shape behavior
2. Articulate at least three behaviors that may indicate atypical vestibular, proprioceptive or interoceptive processing
3. List at least three sensory strategies that may be useful when managing in-session/classroom issues such as meltdowns, low energy/low participation, or difficulty transitioning in/out of session

Time-Ordered Agenda

5 minutes	Introduction and defining what we mean by sensory processing
10 minutes	The neurophysiology of sensory processing
10 minutes	The vestibular, proprioceptive, and interoceptive sensory systems
10 minutes	Behavioral observations of sensory over- and under-stimulation
20 minutes	Practical strategies to enhance participation
5 minutes	Q&A



About the Presenter

Laura has a Bachelor of Science in Neuropsychology from University of California, and a Masters in Occupational Therapy from San Jose State University. Known to her many thousands of followers on social media as The OT Butterfly, Laura is a pediatric occupational therapist, sensory consultant, and author of *A Kids Book about Neurodiversity*. She also hosts the Sensory W.I.S.E. Solutions Podcast for Parents. Laura's mission is to help parents, teachers and kids understand neurodiversity and explore nervous system and sensory tools for self-regulation.

Disclosure

Financial: Laura Petix is receiving an honorarium for this presentation.

Non-financial disclosure: There is no relevant non-financial relationship to disclose.

NCS Pearson, Inc., the sponsor of this learning track, develops and distributes assessments and intervention tools for speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, and psychologists.

References

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