

Conference

The Essence of well-being: How our senses, from both inside and out, determine our identity and our interactions

Sensory processing is the neurological process that allows us to use sensory stimulation in an organized manner. It involves a coordinated action of our senses (tactile, proprioceptive, vestibular, auditory, visual, olfactory, gustatory) and our brain thus allowing us to perceive what is happening in our bodies and in our environment, to interpret it and to respond with an appropriate action (emotion, physical action, reflection, communication).

Sensory processing is essential for a harmonious global development as well as the sense of well-being. Most notably, it allows us to be well in our skin, to trust the outside world as well as to develop social skills. It is also a fundamental part of motor development which is crucial for autonomy, communication, and learning.

Difficulties processing sensory information are very common in persons with special needs. Challenges may be related to genetic factors or caused by difficult, painful, traumatic life experiences.

Even though sensory processing difficulties have been well documented for more than forty years, it remains the fact that little is known and even understood about them. This conference aims to sensitize those present and to equip them in order to deal with the challenges associated. Individual sensory needs and acceptance are at the heart of this conference.

During this conference, the following will be addressed:

- The underlying theory of sensory processing;
- The impact of sensory processing dysfunction on the child's global development, most notably social, motor, and cognitive;
- The 4 functions of the brain: regulation, sensory, pertinence, and execution

The notions addressed during the conference serve as a foundation for the following three 1-day workshops:

1. **Feeling good in your skin:** Skin, touch and feeling secure
2. **Feeling good in your body:** Body awareness, motor skills and a sense of self & others
3. **Feeling good in the neighbourhood:** Moving to better look, listen, be calm and pay attention

The conference is a pre-requisite for the aforementioned workshops, however, the workshops can be taken as you wish.

Workshop 1:

Feeling good in your skin: Skin, touch and feeling secure

Date:

“Touch is our most intimate, our most powerful form of communication.”
George Howe Cott

The conscious experience of touch occurs as a first awakening, an experience of limitations. The touch organ provides our body with a concrete awareness of our physical presence as different and separate from the rest of our environment. It is largely secondary to touch that infants develop an attachment, a sense of well-being and safety as well as establishes a relationship of trust with significant others. This bond will be the indispensable foundation to all future relationships.

This theoretical and practical workshop addresses:

- Functions and dysfunctions of the tactile system: registration (hypersensitivity, hyposensitivity), orientation and interpretation;
- Impacts of dysfunction on the child’s global development, with an emphasis on emotional and relational aspects;
- Concrete strategies to use in order to nourish the child’s sensory needs all while addressing associated challenges, whether they be motor, cognitive, social or emotional: addressing the cause rather than the symptoms;
- Emotional support to provide the child as well as favourable attitudes in order to promote availability and autonomy both at home and at school;
- Specific techniques that promote tactile registration and emotional regulation: deep pressure with various tools such as textured gloves, balls, bean bags.

Furthermore,

- Many anecdotes and real-life examples will be used to facilitate your understanding and make the material more relatable.

Please note: Wear comfortable clothing.

Workshop 2:

Feeling good in your body: Body awareness, motor skills and a sense of self & others

Date:

“Without perception, motor becomes partial movements and attempts at uncoordinated and uncontrolled movements” Karl König

The proprioceptive system provides information on the position of various body parts in relation to others. It is directly connected with the acquisition of our body schema. In conjunction with the vestibular system, it is also responsible for the development of adequate muscle tone. This system allows us to anticipate and perform complex, coordination tasks.

Proprioception is also connected to our emotional development. It promotes the development of a sense of competence that, in turn, supports our self-esteem. In addition, a pleasant, predictable, balanced proprioceptive input allows us to achieve or maintain an adequate level of arousal.

This theoretical and practical workshop addresses:

- Functions and dysfunctions of the proprioceptive system: registration (hypersensitivity, hyposensitivity), orientation and interpretation;
- Impacts of dysfunction on the child’s emotional, motor and cognitive development;
- Concrete strategies to use in order to nourish the child’s proprioceptive needs and preferences all while addressing associated challenges, whether they be motor, cognitive, social or emotional: addressing the cause rather than the symptoms;
- Emotional support to provide the child as well as favourable attitudes in order to promote availability and autonomy both at home and at school;

Furthermore:

- Many anecdotes and real-life examples will be used to facilitate your understanding and make the material more relatable.
- Numerous demonstrations on the use and safety of therapeutic equipment (protocols)

Workshop 3:

Feeling good in the neighbourhood: Moving to better look, listen, be calm and pay attention

The vestibular system has multiple functions which relate foremost to essential capacities which support our development and well being. It allows us to:

- Detect gravitational force
- Perceive the position of our heads
- Perceive the movement of our bodies in space
- Postural adaptations
- Maintain adequate muscle tone
- Support oculo-motor control
- Optimize the functioning of the auditory system as they share the same cranial nerve (the 8th cranial nerve: vestibule-cochlear)
- Optimize the functioning of the regulatory system in regards to level of arousal, excitation, attention and sleep
- Acts on the limbic system and promotes a primitive sense of security

Essentially, movement is necessary to promote development, physical and emotional health as well as attentional and relational skills.

This theoretical and practical workshop addresses:

- Functions and dysfunctions of the vestibular system: registration (hypersensitivity, hyposensitivity), orientation and interpretation;
- Impacts of dysfunction on the child's emotional and motor development as well as on their level of arousal, namely attention;
- Concrete strategies to use in order to nourish the child's vestibular needs and preferences all while addressing associated challenges, whether they be motor, cognitive, social or emotional: addressing the cause rather than the symptoms;
- Emotional support to provide the child as well as favorable attitudes in order to promote a sense of security, of self-competency and, therefore, encourage an optimal level of availability.

Furthermore,

- Many anecdotes and real-life examples will be used to facilitate your understanding and make the material more relatable.
- A workshop consisting of specialized activities which target the proprioceptive and vestibular systems, therefore, encouraging motor development and an optimal level of arousal.