

What are senses

Our senses send information to our brain to allow us to compute what is happening in our internal and external worlds. Senses are the building blocks of perception and memory.

Sensory Integration

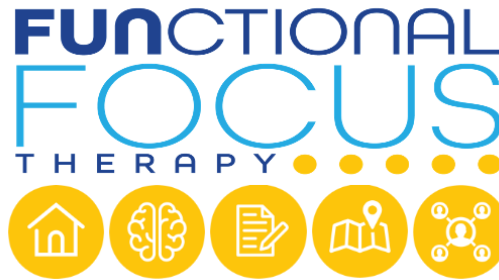
Refers to the process of a person's senses being processed harmoniously. When sensory integration works, a person's sensory world just 'makes sense' and they are able to engage in their required tasks. If integration is impacted for some reason we can see people over or under-responsive to certain kinds of sensory input.

Sensory Modulation


Is best thought of as one's ability to filter the *amount* and/or *intensity* of incoming sensory information. Sensory modulation occurs faster than discrimination to alert us to any potential threat. If someone finds modulating input difficult they may demonstrate attention challenges, rigid behaviours or emotional dysregulation.


Sensory Discrimination


Is not only the fact of recognising a sensory stimulus is present but being able to use the information to make an informed judgement or output. This is the skill that allows us to recognise a tickle on our back is someone's loving touch rather than a venomous, life-threatening spider. Good sensory discrimination allows us to refine motor skills, discern visual forms, differentiate sounds, etc.



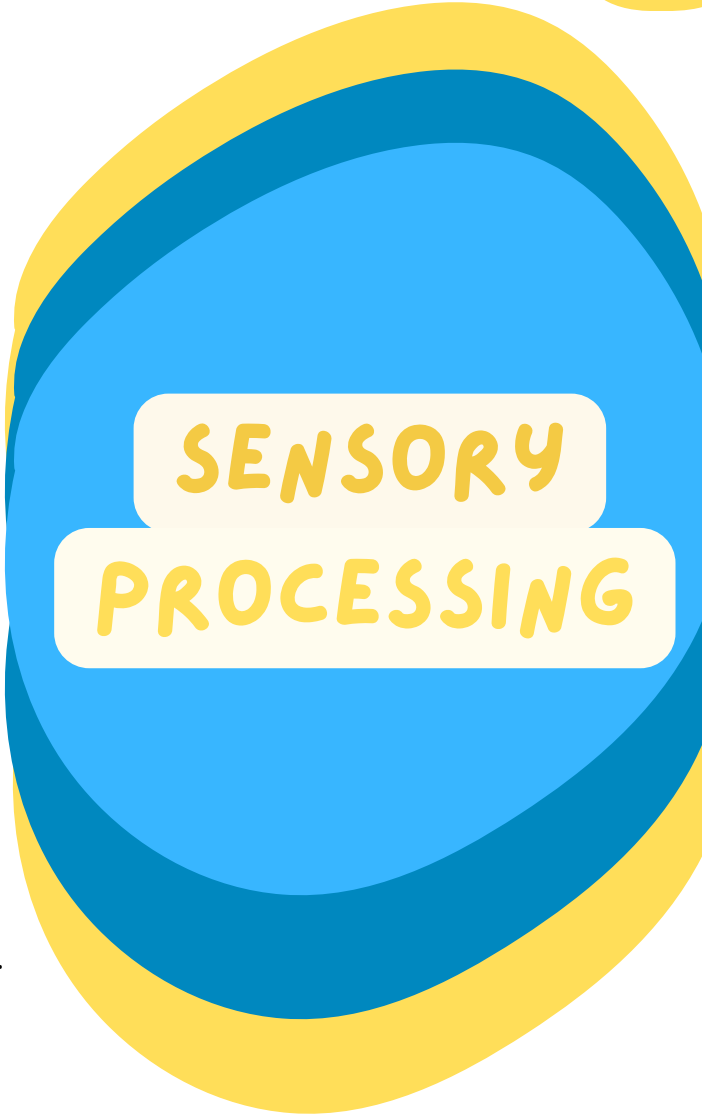
CONTACT US

 2/607-609 Pacific Highway,
Belmont, NSW, 2280

 4058 5821



 www.functionalfocustherapy.com.au

 admin@functionalfocustherapy.com.au



SENSORY
PROCESSING

The inputs that drive
our outputs





VISUAL

Our visual sense gives us information from our eyes which is processed in the brain. We see outlines, shapes, colours, contrasts, dimensions (think 3-D). Our visual sense can be more closely linked to our emotional and memory centres than other senses.



AUDITORY

One of our earliest senses in-utero, audition refers to what we hear in our world. Our auditory sense picks up changes in tone, pitch, volume, prosody and many other things. Audition is important for spatial awareness, speech development and emotional regulation



TACTILE (TOUCH)

Allows us to figure out what we are touching and/or what is touching us through receptors all over our body (including in our mouth).

Understanding and tolerating different textures allows us to make clothing choices, have food preferences, feel different surfaces underfoot, etc.



GUSTATORY (TASTE)

Our taste sense does give us information on flavour but not as much as you may think (a lot of flavour actually comes from smell). Our taste sense has a responsibility of sending messages to the brain about what kinds of chemicals or electrolytes our body may be needing.



OLFACTORY (SMELL)

A very specialised sense from an evolution point-of-view. Smell is important for flavour recognition (as mentioned) and safety (i.e. don't eat that, it stinks). Smell is also the only sense that travels directly to our emotional centres. This is why a smell can take you back to a point in time almost as if you were there again.



VESTIBULAR

One of our lesser-known senses but probably one of our most important. Our vestibular sense picks up on changes in head direction and gravity so we can feel grounded and secure in our world. Is extremely important in balance development.



PROPRIOCEPTIVE

Proprioception is the information sent to our brains from our bodies muscles and joints. It tells us where we are in space without needing to use our eyes. Proprioception is needed to figure out how to use our bodies safely and efficiently.



INTEROCEPTION

How do you know when you're full, or thirsty, or need to use the bathroom? These are all functions of the interoception sense. Interoception allows us to recognise and make sense of internal body signals such as heart rate, feelings/emotions and basic needs.

What are the potential impacts of sensory processing differences?

Sensory processing difference can be seen in many people and are extremely common. The only time they can be of concern, and may require additional support is when the person's response to sensory information is impacting their ability to participate in tasks they want, or need to do in their lives.

Generally speaking sensory processing differences may present like:

Over-responding:

- Avoidance of certain tasks.
- Rigid about how things need to be done.
- Heightened emotional responses that seem 'over the top.'

Under-responding:

- Seems to miss things like their name, items in a busy drawer or different textures.
- Can tolerate copious amount of input that may distress others (e.g. spinning).
- May be clumsy or un-coordinated.

Sensory Seeking:

- Can leave what they're meant to be doing to seek out their preference. This can seem like a person is distractible or inattentive
- A person can look like they are shifting from thing-to-thing as they can be looking for something to meet their needs.