

Module 4: Video 1 Transcript, Multisensory Learning

Autism and Sensory Impairment

Many learners who have autism can find the everyday world really confusing.

This is because their sensory systems might be overwhelming them with information or not be sensitive enough.

A learner with autism might have a very 'spiky' sensory profile, so they can be over responsive in some senses and under responsive in others.

So, they may show apparent indifference to pain or temperature, have adverse responses to different sounds or textures, excessive smelling or touching of objects, or visual fascination for lights or movement.

Learners with autism might be hyper or hypo sensitive to sensory input. This may be particularly noticeable in the areas of vision and hearing. It's too loud, it's too bright. This is called hypersensitivity.

Sensory sensitivities can work both ways. We have seen what it might be like to be hyper sensitive but a learner can be hyposensitive which means that they are not detecting some stimulus around them. So, they might not be detecting the most powerful sensory event.

Many people who have autism are sensory seekers. Movement can help them focus or block out unwanted sensory stimulus. This is a really positive activity which really helps our learners to regulate sensory information.

This sensory aspect and autism are so universally linked, that it has now become part of the diagnostic criteria for autism.