

Occupational Therapy Week 2026

Participation Changes Everything

2nd - 6th November

A week of practical ideas, learning and conversation about how occupational therapy supports participation in everyday life.

Sessions will be via Teams.
7.30pm-8.30pm, Monday to Friday
during Occupational Therapy Week.



Led by Jennifer Beal

Occupational therapist with over 30years experience in enabling participation in many contexts within NHS and Independent healthcare settings.

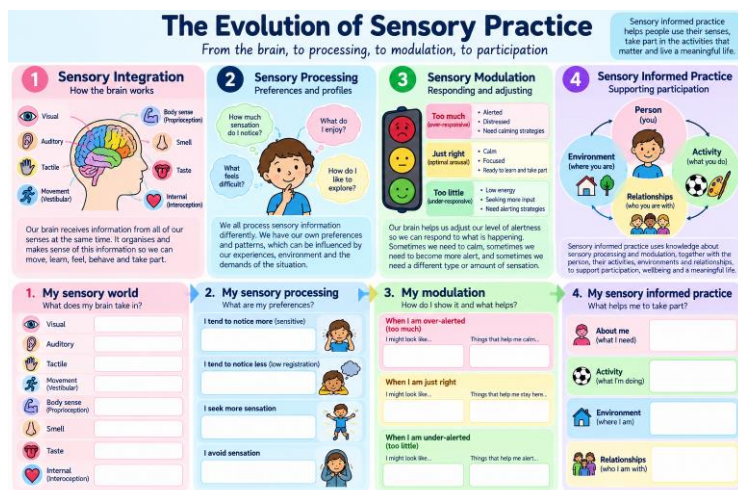
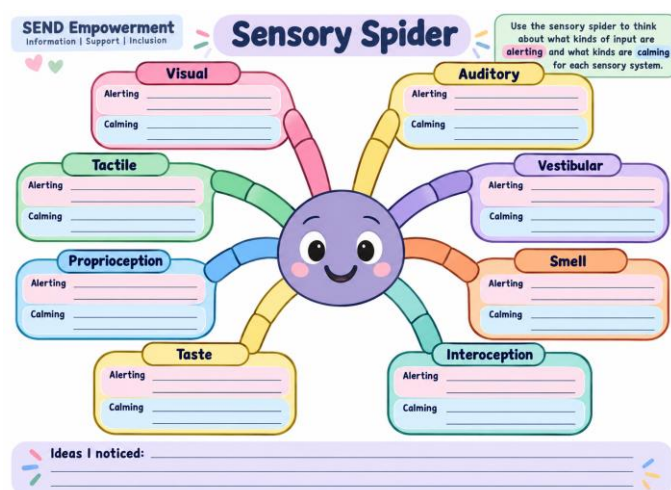
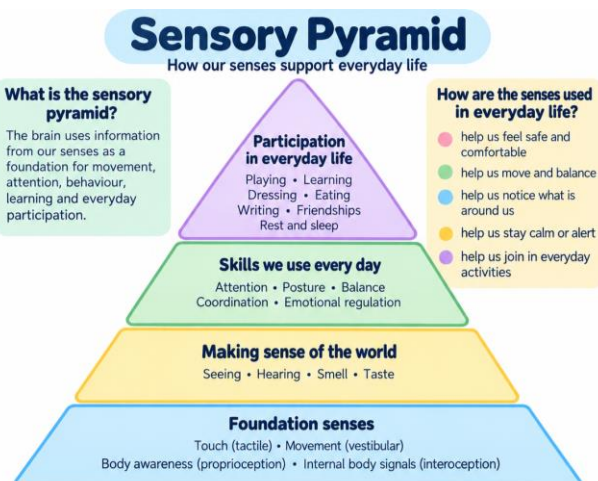
Professional doctoral researcher exploring sensory informed practice in adult mental health.

Daily Themes –

Monday	Occupation matters Exploring how participation in self-care, play, learning and daily routines supports health, wellbeing, and identity.
Tuesday	Understanding our sensory world Understanding sensory processing, sensory preferences and how sensation affects regulation and participation.
Wednesday	Creating environments for participation Adapting home, and school environments to reduce barriers and enable engagement.
Thursday	Anxiety, regulation and participation Practical strategies to notice overwhelm, support regulation, and build participation.
Friday	Trauma informed occupational therapy Using safety, choice, connection, and empowerment to support meaningful engagement.

Each session includes:

- information sharing • an interactive activity • tips and tricks • Q&A



Notice • Think sensory • Strategies to think about

Use the table to notice behaviours, think about possible sensory systems involved, and consider helpful activities or resources.

Notice Behaviours	Think sensory The sensory systems	Strategies to think about Activities and resources
Fidgeting	Vestibular / proprioception	Need to increase arousal: walk, movement break, wobble cushion
Covers ears	Auditory	Reduce sound: ear defenders, quiet space, warning before noise
Chews clothes or pencils	Oral / proprioception	Chewy tube, crunchy snack, water bottle, heavy work
Crashing, jumping, rough play	Proprioception / vestibular	Heavy work, trampoline, wall pushes, carrying jobs
Avoids messy play	Tactile	Start with dry textures, use tools, hand wipes nearby, go slowly
Seems tired or slumped	Vestibular / interoception	Alerting movement, stretch, standing task, cold drink
Upset by clothes or labels	Tactile	Soft clothing, remove labels, choice, comfortable fabrics
Overwhelmed in busy places	Visual / auditory / interoception	Reduce clutter, headphones, quiet break, visual schedule

Ideas to think about

- What do you notice?
- Which sensory systems might be involved?
- Is the young person needing more input, less input, calming or alerting support?
- What activity, movement, resource or environmental change might help?

Regulation Ladder

Notice the signs, identify the stage, and match helpful strategies

What is a regulation ladder?

A regulation ladder helps us notice how a child may look and feel when settled, beginning to struggle, or overwhelmed. It supports us to match the right strategies to the right stage, so we can respond in a way that meets the child's needs and helps them to feel safe, supported and ready to participate.

How to use it

1. Choose one child or situation.
2. Notice what the child looks like at each stage.
3. Think about what may be triggering or affecting regulation.
4. Match helpful strategies to each stage.
5. Focus on small, practical supports.

3 Overwhelmed

Shut down, tearful, angry, panicked, bolting, unable to think or engage.

What might I notice?

What might help?

2 Beginning to struggle

Fidgeting, restless, distracted, worried, avoiding, louder or quieter.

What might I notice?

What might help?

1 Settled / ready

Calm body, engaged, able to listen, playful, focused.

What might I notice?

What might help?

Possible triggers or demands

What might be affecting regulation?
Transitions, noise, waiting, hunger, tiredness, sensory overload, change, task difficulty.

Helpful strategy bank

Ideas to try at different stages.

To stay settled

- Predictable routine
- Movement break
- Offer choice
- Choice
- Positive attention
- Engaging activity
- Sensory support
- Calm environment
- Time to process

When beginning to struggle

- Reduce demands
- Offer choice
- Movement break
- Reassurance
- Adjust the environment
- Sensory support
- Time and space
- Simplify instructions

When overwhelmed

- Keep the child safe
- Reduce demands
- Quiet space
- Co-regulation
- Calm, reassuring language
- Sensory support
- Time (no pressure)
- Allow recovery time