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# MANAGING ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS FOR THOSE WITH TSC

MELYSSA MCDONOUGH MS, BCBA



# WHAT ARE ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

Anything that happens around you

## WHAT ARE ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

Noises

Smells

Air temperature

People

Animals

Vehicles

# HOW DO EXTERNAL FACTORS EFFECT BEHAVIOR

- External factors are things that happen to us outside of our body, and our body responds
- Positive things in our environment usually result in us doing things to move towards that positive thing
- Negative things in our environment usually result in us doing things to move away from that negative thing

## WHAT ARE ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

Noises

Smells

Air temperature

People

Animals

Vehicles

## WHAT ARE INTERNAL FACTORS

Thoughts

Feelings

Memories

Hunger

Pain

Brain Chemistry

# HOW DO INTERNAL FACTORS EFFECT BEHAVIOR

- Internal factors are things that happen inside of our body that others cannot necessarily see happening
- Positive internal factors usually lead us to seek those out more to continue to experience them
- Negative internal factors usually lead us to do things to avoid those negative experiences

## WHAT ARE INTERNAL FACTORS

Thoughts

Feelings

Memories

Hunger

Pain

Brain Chemistry



# HYPERSENSITIVITY

- When a person responds more to something
- This happens when a persons nervous system (internal factor) is more receptive to environmental factors (external factor)

# HYPOSENSITIVITY

- When a person doesn't respond as much to something
- This happens when a person's nervous system (internal factor) is less receptive to environmental factors (external factor)

# USING BEHAVIOR TO RESPOND TO EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL FACTORS

- All behavior serves a distinct purpose for that person
- When a person does something, they are doing it to meet some sort of need
  - Specifically – reaching a state of calm and wellbeing
- In understanding the need, we can understand how to address behaviors that aren't necessarily helpful in the moment
  - In other words – teaching other behaviors that serve the same function to *replace* unhelpful behaviors

# PROACTIVE APPROACHES: HYPERSENSITIVITY

*someone responds **more** to something*

External

Internal

# PROACTIVE APPROACHES: HYPERSENSITIVITY

*someone responds **more** to something*

## External

### ■ Auditory Environment

- Attend to conversations for short periods of time
- I write down everything that is said during a meeting no matter how small it may seem
- Radio in my car stays off when I'm driving
- I insist that people send me emails rather than leave me voicemails

## Internal

### ■ Auditory Processing

- I play back songs in my head that I have heard that I like the beat to, especially when I am doing something that requires a similar cadence
- I will watch/listen to the same tv show or music on repeat because it is consistent and I don't have to focus on it
- Having subtitles on during a show is a life saver!

# PROACTIVE APPROACHES: HYPERSENSITIVITY

*someone responds **more** to something*

## External

### ■ Tactile Sensitivity

- Avoid specific textures of clothing
- Avoid textures of food
- Use a barrier when you do have to touch something you cannot stand the texture of

## Internal

### ■ Tactile Sensitivity

- Sometimes just thinking about a bad texture can make my skin crawl – popsicle sticks

# PROACTIVE APPROACHES: HYPERSENSITIVITY

*someone responds **more** to something*

## External

- **Social and Emotional Constructs**
  - Masking in social environments
  - Paying attention to other people's body language and tone of voice
  - Directly asking someone what they mean if I don't understand what they are saying
  - Taking a time out

## Internal

- **Social and Emotional Constructs**
  - Imposter syndrome
  - Need for validation
  - Need for understanding

# PROACTIVE APPROACHES: HYPOSENSITIVITY

*someone responds **less** to something*

## External

- **Tactile – body sensations**
  - Having a fidget item with me
  - Lots of chapstick
  - Lots of lotion
  - Keeping my fingernails painted
  - Making sure the scald guard is on my faucets/water heater
  - Chewing gum
  - Using massage guns/rollers
  - Working out almost daily

## Internal

- **Tactile – body sensations**
  - Keeping my body busy is important for helping my mind stay calm and not fixate on things
  - When my body is not calm, my muscles jerk and I struggle sitting still and paying attention to anything
  - Anti-anxiety medications
  - Meditation and mindfulness
  - Acceptance and Commitment Therapy



# UNDERSTANDING YOUR SUPPORT OPTIONS

- TAND checklist
  - [https://www.tscinternational.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/TAND\\_checklist-2014.pdf](https://www.tscinternational.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/TAND_checklist-2014.pdf)
- Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)
  - <https://contextualscience.org/>
- Find your support system
  - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/6251389370>
  - <https://www.tscalliance.org/tscnavigator/>
- Don't ever give up