

Lesson Two: Teacher Sheet

Lesson Synopsis

Students learn about sensory issues. By engaging in discussions and enrichment activities, students practice advocating for themselves around sensory challenges.

Lesson Objectives

1. Explain in an introductory way how the sensory systems of the body work.
2. Describe the types of sensory problems that can pose challenges at school, at work, and in the community.
3. Demonstrate use of the Sensory Checklist tool inside and outside of the classroom to identify sensory challenges, to plan for these challenges, and to advocate regarding these challenges.
4. Explain how identifying, preparing for, and advocating for one's sensory needs and challenges is a core part of self-advocacy.

Lesson Activities

1. Introduce lesson concepts.

The teacher leads and guides the students on their initial exploration of the sensory systems of the body. The teacher should define sensory issues and give some examples. The teacher can foster discussions about times that students had sensory issues in the past, how they advocacy around these issues, and how important it was to try. Note: Some students may state they have no sensory issues, and some students may be resistant to the idea that they have sensory issues. These students can still be encouraged to think about sensory issues generally, or could be directed to brainstorm with a peers who does have sensory issues on how these issues might impact the peer's life and strategies the peer could use to advocate for him or herself. A Teacher PowerPoint with supportive points and ideas for teaching about sensory issues and self-advocacy is included. Occupational therapists working with the individual students in your school may have additional resources and learning materials on sensory issues.

2. Student Centerpiece

Distribute and engage the students in using the *Lesson 2 Block 2: Student Centerpiece*. Students practice using the sample Sensory Checklist. Have them fill out checklists for the classroom, independently or cooperatively. Students can also draw the different senses and something that might cause a problem for that sense, e.g. an ear, and a rotating rattling fan.

3. Enrichment Activities

Once basic lesson concepts have been introduced and the students have tried filling out a Sensory Checklist, refer to the *Lesson 2 Block 3: Enrichment Activities Sheet* to engage the students in meaningful activities that practice and reinforce what they have learned about sensory issues and coping with sensory challenges.

Lesson 2 Block 2: Student Centerpiece



Hidden Social Rule:

Adults are expected to deal with sensory issues cooperatively.

Discussion: Read Out Loud Together

The Sensory System

Your brain takes in lots of information about the world every single second. This is your sensory system. Can you give an example for each of your five senses? The body also has a proprioceptive sense and a vestibular sense. The proprioceptive sense has to do with spatial awareness. Your vestibular sense keeps you balanced.

Sensory Issues

Sometimes people with disabilities, and even people without disabilities, have sensory issues. Real and ordinary sensory information is too strong or too weak for the brain, or the brain does not know what to do with all of the signals coming in.

Sensory issues can be very uncomfortable. If ordinary lights hurt your eyes, it might be very difficult for you to sit in a classroom or to work all day in an office. Sensory issues can make regular life very difficult.

Exploring Your Own Sensory Issues

Have you ever had a sensory issue? What happened? What do you do when you have a sensory issue? Do your classmates have any sensory issues? What do your classmates do?

Dealing with Sensory Issues Is Part of Self-Advocacy

Lots of people have sensory issues, but sensory issues don't have to slow you down. Just asking to turn down the music or asking for permission to dim the lights can make the difference between giving up and succeeding.

Do you think that knowing about – and managing – your sensory issues can improve your life?

The Sensory Checklist

The Sensory Checklist is a self-advocacy tool that helps you find sensory problems. Your class is going to practice using a Sensory Checklist. Learning how to use the Sensory Checklist will help you advocate around sensory issues wherever you go.

Sensory Checklist

LOCATION: _____

Sense	Potential Problems	Strategy
Hearing		
Sight		
Taste		
Smell		
Touch		
Proprioception		
Vestibular		

Your 5 Senses: • Hearing • Sight • Taste • Smell • Touch

Also: • Proprioception (physical space) • Vestibular (balance)

Lesson 2 Block 3: Enrichment Activities

Sensory Challenge Game

Students search for every single possible sensory issue in a certain location. The location could be the classroom or a location outside the classroom. Students could work individually, as a group, or in teams. The Sensory Challenge Game can be competitive, with teams trying to find the most sensory issues in a set amount of time (1 minute or 5 minutes). Or the game can be played untimed and cooperatively. The game helps increase a student's ability to spot sensory issues that could pose a problem either for himself or herself or for a peer.

Sensory Checklist Real World Practice

Have the students continue to fill out Sensory Checklists for their classroom, other classrooms at school, the hallway, gym, or the cafeteria as part of ongoing practice utilizing the Sensory Checklist. Students can practice independently or in groups. Less experienced students may want to work together to fill out one Sensory Checklist as a group, or to help each another fill out individual Sensory Checklists. Some students may say they have no sensory issues or may hesitate to share personal experiences. Students can still be encouraged to explore what aspects of the classroom could pose a sensory challenge to someone, and what that person might do to deal with that sensory problem.

Sensory Checklist Field Trip

Take the class on a field trip to a community setting. Less experienced students could go somewhere as a group and help each other use blank Sensory Checklists to build their skills in assessing the particular environment, noticing potential sensory problems and brainstorming on how they might advocate around these problems. The focus should be on accommodations and strategies to mitigate the difficulties. Students with more experience could try filling out a Sensory Checklist in advance of a planned outing so that students can bring tools and use strategies to make the trip a successful one. Students can also do Sensory Checklists at home or at other frequented locations.

Sensory Checklist

LOCATION: _____

Sense	Potential Problems	Strategy
Hearing		
Sight		
Taste		
Smell		
Touch		
Proprioception		
Vestibular		

Your 5 Senses: • Hearing • Sight • Taste • Smell • Touch

Also: • Proprioception (physical space) • Vestibular (balance)

Sensory Checklist

Name: Jim

Location: Starbucks

Sense	Potential Problems	Strategy
Hearing	Background music	Ask manager to turn down the music
Sight	Bright overhead lights	Sit by the window
Taste	Eat too many delicious donuts	None! I like them
Smell	Stinky breakfast sandwiches being cooked	Don't go during the breakfast rush
Touch	None Maybe if it is crowded if someone bumps into me	Go during slow times
Proprioception	Not sure	
Vestibular	Really tall chairs make me dizzy	Get a regular chair or just stand

Your 5 Senses: • Hearing • Sight • Taste • Smell • Touch

Also: • Proprioception (physical space) • Vestibular (balance)

Sensory Checklist

Name: Stacey


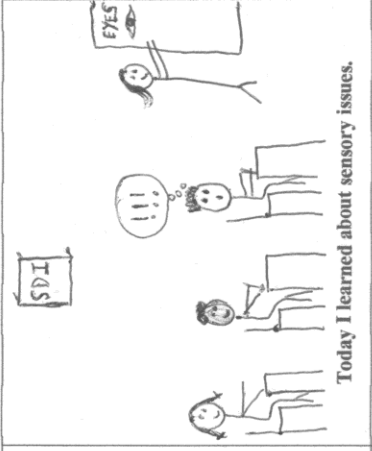

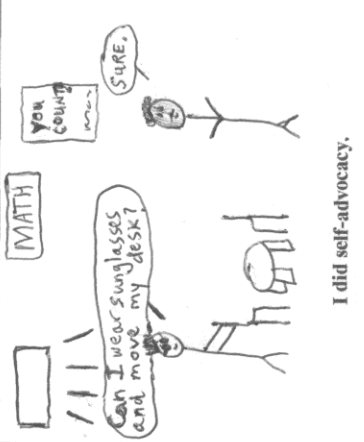


Location: Gym Class

Sense	Potential Problems	Strategy
Hearing	Kids shouting	Ask gym teacher if I can wear ear plugs
Sight	Fine	
Taste	No	
Smell	Stinky breakfast sandwiches being cooked	Don't go during the breakfast rush
Touch	Don't like balls or people hitting me	Get a pass?
Proprioception	Never hit the balls hard enough	?
Vestibular	Can't balance at all	Ask OT

Your 5 Senses: • Hearing • Sight • Taste • Smell • Touch

Also: • Proprioception (physical space) • Vestibular (balance)

Lesson Two Social Narrative: Sensory Issues In Action

 <p>Guys, the way that lights really mess my eyes.</p> <p>Howie, you're nuts!</p> <p>You counting now?</p>	 <p>SDI</p> <p>EYES</p>	 <p>MATH</p> <p>I have sensory issues with the lights.</p> <p>you count!</p>
 <p>MATH</p> <p>Can I wear sunglasses and move my desk?</p>	 <p>SDI</p> <p>What else I do can for sensory issues?</p>	 <p>MATH</p> <p>You ok Howie?</p>
<p>I did self-advocacy.</p>	<p>I got support.</p>	<p>I'm a lot more comfortable!</p>