

Sensory Awareness Presentation | Haden Boliek & Rachel Beaver

Event Review / Education | The Working Therapist Podcast

- I. Intro
 - a. Welcome
 - i. Haden introduces herself
 - 1. “Welcome to The Working Therapist podcast, I’m Haden Boliek, your host..”
 - ii. Haden thanks the listener for joining her today
 - b. Introduction of guests
 - i. I am very excited to have Rachel Beaver here today
 - ii. Rachel is an occupational therapist here with PDT. We’re glad to have her joining us today.
 - 1. Haden asks Rachel to introduce herself
 - a. Occupational Therapist with Pediatric Developmental Therapy
 - b. Purple Team Member
 - c. Mention where you see and treat patients
 - c. Haden thanks Rachel for joining her
 - i. Haden reference that Rachel has joined her previously for a podcast recording on Visual Perception Deficits
 - ii. Excited about being able to record together today
- II. Introduction of Topic
 - a. Rachel is joining us today to discuss a recent presentation she did on sensory awareness at Manna Church
 - i. Haden gives context about our relationship with Manna Church
 - 1. Manna Church recently launched a special needs ministry for children called the V.I.K. or Very Important Kids
 - 2. PDT has had the opportunity to partner with them to be a resource as well as help them get materials for setting up their sensory rooms
 - 3. V.I.K. is a great program that is having a positive effect on the community
 - a. Check out the podcast we did with Debbie Hume, director of Manna Church’s special needs ministry, and Alyson Nance, our project manager
 - ii. Haden explains that as part of our partnership with Manna Church, Rachel did this presentation
 - 1. It was a fantastic presentation – it was informative, creative and engaging
 - b. Rachel explains how she got involved with the presentation
 - i. Alyson Nance, project manager, sent out a request about someone doing a presentation for Manna
 - 1. She volunteered to do it
 - ii. Haden comments that Rachel primarily treats in the Southern Pines area and Manna Church is close to an hour away
 - 1. Haden asks Rachel why she wanted to do this presentation even though it was further away (ex. “What caused you to want to do this?”)

- a. Rachel explains that she has always wanted to work with this population of children with disabilities and found a great outlet in working as an occupational therapist, but she was excited to combine this background with her faith to help children be successful in all their environments throughout the community.
 - c. Haden explains that the presentation that Rachel did at Manna Church was not just a small training for the staff at Manna
 - i. It was entire event that was promoted throughout the community
 - ii. Open to anyone who wanted to attend, especially those who work with children in a church such as parents & church children’s ministry volunteers / workers
 - iii. Haden asks Rachel why she felt it was so important that these people understand sensory awareness

(Rachel replies)

- 1. No matter what your context of interacting with a child is... parent, teacher, church worker... we have a common goal, and that is to enable each child to engage with the information being presented to them.
 - a. From a faith standpoint, the goal is that every child is able to hear the gospel and develop a relationship with God.
 - b. If children being served are in a place of dysregulation with their body, they are unable to engage or participate in the cognitive and academic activities of the children's ministry. By learning how these children function and strategies to help them stay regulated, parents & teachers can provide a way for them to hear the message we want all of our children to learn.

III. Rachel’s Presentation

- a. Haden asks Rachel what the name of her presentation was

(Rachel replies)

- i. “Tigger or Eeyore: Sensory awareness and finding balance between the extremes”
 - 1. Rachel explains that she put this presentation together in collaboration with Patti Zoellner
- ii. Haden asks Rachel to give a brief overview of what her presentation was about.
 - 1. Rachel explains that the presentation included information on sensory processing disorder and the various sub-types, explanations on each sensory system, and practical strategies for supporting children who display issues with each system
 - 2. Rachel explains that the format of the presentation included group lecture and then small group discussion.
 - a. For each sensory system I wanted to provide some hands on experience to understand how deficits in that system can affect a child and then a case study example where attendees could discuss the information shared during that section to determine how they could support a child displaying issues with that system.

- b. Haden asks Rachel what sensory processing is

- i. Rachel explains that sensory processing is an ability that everyone develops in order to interact with their environment
 - 1. Body-brain connection
 - 2. Normal neurological process for organizing sensations for our use in everyday life
 - a. We use sensations to survive, satisfy our desires, learn, and function smoothly
- ii. Haden comments that Rachel commented about children being in a state of dysregulation earlier
 - 1. Haden asks what causes children to become dysregulated in regards to sensory processing
 - 2. Rachel briefly explains sensory processing disorders
 - a. SPD is a complex disorder of the brain that affects children and adults.
 - i. They have difficulty regulating responses, interpreting or responding appropriately to sensory input.
 - ii. Significant difficulties organizing sensation coming from the body and environment.
 - iii. Inappropriate or problematic motor, behavioral, attentional, or adaptive responses after sensory stimulation.
 - iv. Disorder: Manifested by difficulties in the performance in one or more areas of life: productivity, leisure/play or activities of daily living.
- c. Haden asks Rachel to explain why she chose the name “Tigger or Eeyore” for the presentation
 - i. Rachel explains that this was an analogy between subtypes and certain characters in Winnie the Pooh
 - 1. Over responder aka “Sensory Defensiveness”
 - a. Over-reacts to sensations that don't bother others, associated with fearfulness or anxiety like our character Rabbit
 - i. Hyper-responsive to sensation. Most commonly to touch and sound in combination.
 - ii. Their bodies feel sensation too easily or too intensely. They respond too much, too frequently, or for too long to sensory input.
 - b. Haden asks the tell-tale signs for an over responder
 - i. These are children having meltdowns over seemingly small things. They love a routine to be able to control sensations in their environment
 - 1. Aggressive or impulsive when overwhelmed by sensory stimulation.
 - 2. Unsociable . (Trying to minimize sensation)
 - 3. Upset by transitions and unexpected changes.
 - 4. Extremely cautious and afraid to try new things (problem eaters).
 - c. These children need LOW, SLOW, and PREDICTABLE
 - 2. Under responder – Eeyore

- a. Less sensitive to and less aware of sensory stimuli than most people.
 - i. Bump on a log-seems unaware of surroundings or seems to ignore you.
 - 1. Doesn't cry when seriously hurt
 - 2. Doesn't seem to notice when touched
 - b. Tell-tale signs of an under responder
 - i. Lack of body and environmental awareness, low endurance
 - 1. Poor inner drive, uninterested in exploring games or objects or the world around them.
 - 2. Easily lost in own fantasy world.
 - 3. Under-responsivity to tactile, vestibular and deep pressure may lead to poor body awareness, clumsiness, or not grading movements appropriately.
 - c. These children need FAST BLAST
 - i. It takes lots of energy to get them engaged
 - ii. They need you to be overly animated and dramatic
 - 1. Smell is the only sensation that goes straight to brain so alerting smells like mint or citrus can sometimes be used
- 3. Sensory Craving – Tigger
 - a. Constantly on the move and probably very athletic, but take excessive risk and are disruptive with sensation seeking
 - i. “More, More, More!” Seems to need much more sensory stimuli than most people.
 - ii. Don't accept limits; insatiable desire for sensory input.
 - b. Haden asks what the typical signs of a sensory craver are
 - i. These kiddos are different from the other two in that giving them more input actually increases their energy because they don't have a sense of being "full".
 - 1. Overly “affectionate”; not understanding what is “their space” vs. “other's space”
 - 2. Constantly want control over every situation.
 - 3. Does not wait turn, interrupts constantly.
 - c. These children need goal oriented tasks
 - i. Give physical boundaries cues to help with staying in own space-not restraint
 - ii. Helping them with body awareness and attention

IV. Attendee response

- a. Haden talks about the response that was given by those who attended
 - i. Seemed very engaged and interested in the content
 - ii. Everyone enjoyed the case studies and hands on break out portions of the event
- b. Haden asks Rachel what kinds of response and questions she seemed to get from the those who attended

- i. Rachel reviews some of the prevailing comments and questions she received
 - c. Haden gives comments about some of her favorite portions / what she learned during the presentation
 - i. It was a very thorough presentation, but also fun and interactive

V. Wrap Up

- a. Haden thanks Rachel for her time
 - i. Comments that what listeners have heard in the podcast is just the surface of everything that Rachel covered in her presentation
 - 1. Listeners can find a copy of Rachel's PowerPoint from her presentation in the show notes
 - ii. Haden asks Rachel if she has any final comments or encouragement for listeners interested in learning more about sensory processing
- b. Haden thanks the listener for tuning in
 - i. Check out the show notes at www.theworkingtherapist.com and find links to Rachel's full PowerPoint from her presentation as well as a link to our "Introduction to Visual Perceptual Deficits" podcast that also features Rachel
 - ii. "Thanks everyone for joining me. I'll catch you next time on another addition of The Working Therapist Podcast."