



# AN INTRODUCTION TO SENSORY PROCESSING DIFFICULTIES



FREE DOWNLOAD

Inspired by the webinar delivered by

VICTORIA ROBINSON (OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST)  
AN INTRODUCTION TO  
SENSORY PROCESSING DIFFICULTIES

The PDA Space Portal 2024  
([www.thepdaspace.com](http://www.thepdaspace.com))

Created by Helen Edgar





# Sensory Processing

Our sensory systems help to keep us safe. When we are balanced and regulated our senses can bring feelings of joy and enable us to live our lives in the ways we want with out too many difficulties. However, for many neurodivergent people, the sensory system can often be dysregulated and some senses may be more heightened than others and have a bigger impact on your day to day life.

A better understanding of the sensory system and how it works will help us and our children regulate and manage our day better.

A better understanding of your child's sensory needs will help you feel less confused and stressed as you will learn new ways to support your child. We hope this will lead to a smoother family life for you so you can spend more quality time together.





# Dispelling Sensory Processing

## Myths

### Myth

Children do not 'grow out' of sensory processing difficulties



### Fact

Children can learn ways to manage their sensory system in ways that work better for them

Sensory processing difficulties are not down to any problems with your parenting



Sensory processing difficulties are a real neurological difference

You don't need specialist equipment for your child's sensory diet



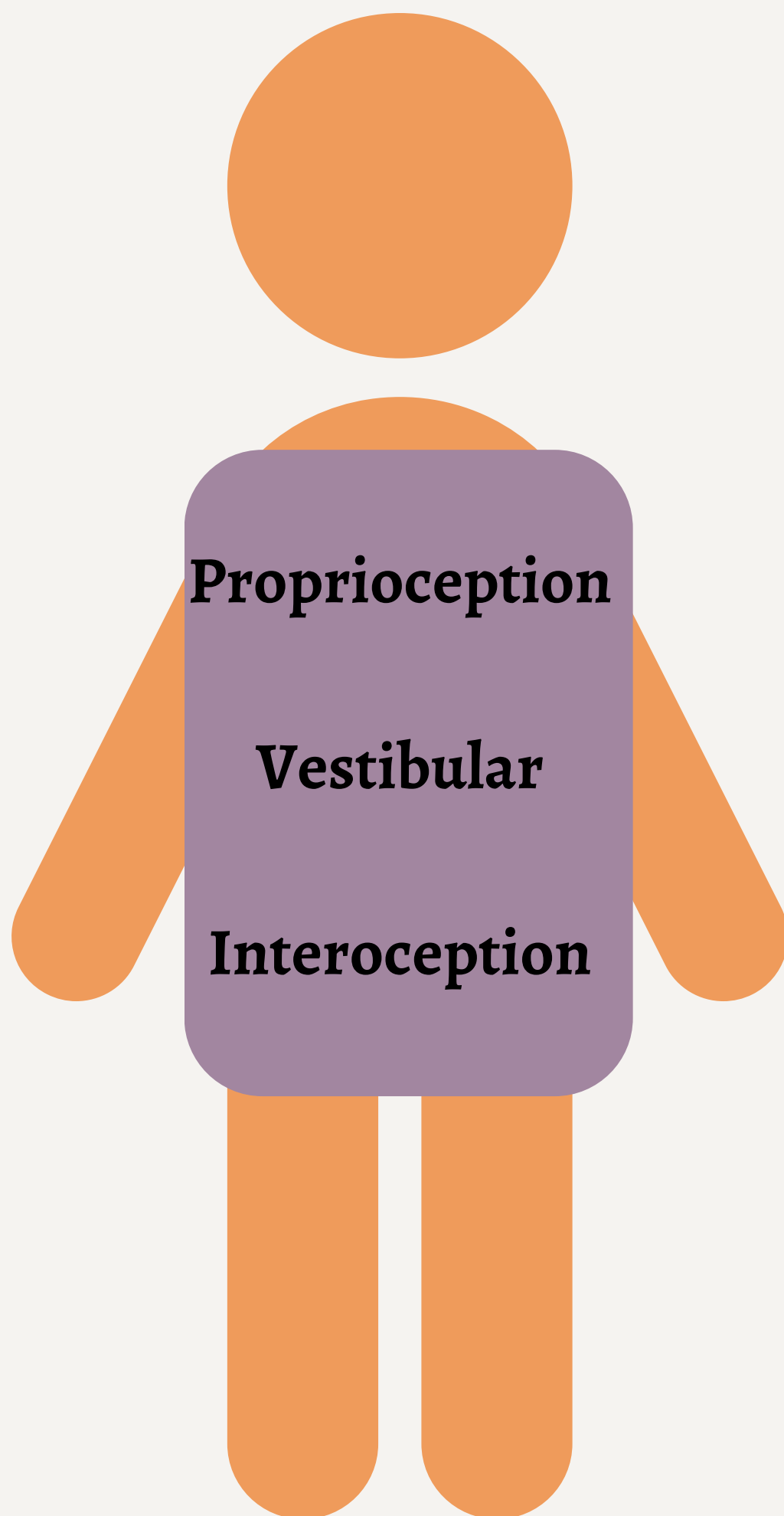
You may just need to think outside the box a bit to support your child!



# The Sensory System

**Internal  
Senses**

**External  
Senses**



**Sight**

**Sound**

**Taste**

**Touch**

**Smell**

**Proprioception = body positioning/awareness**

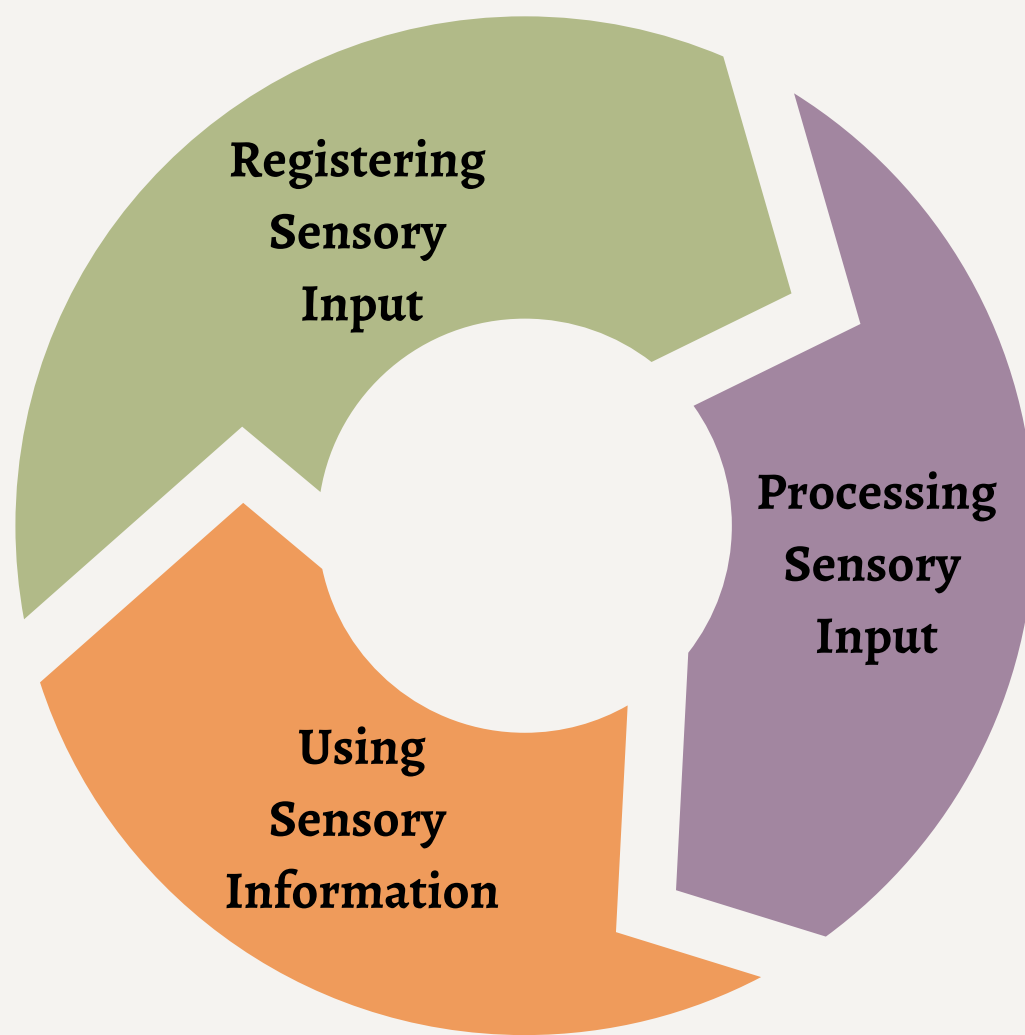
**Vestibular = movement**

**Interoception = internal sensory system**

**eg temp / pain / hunger**

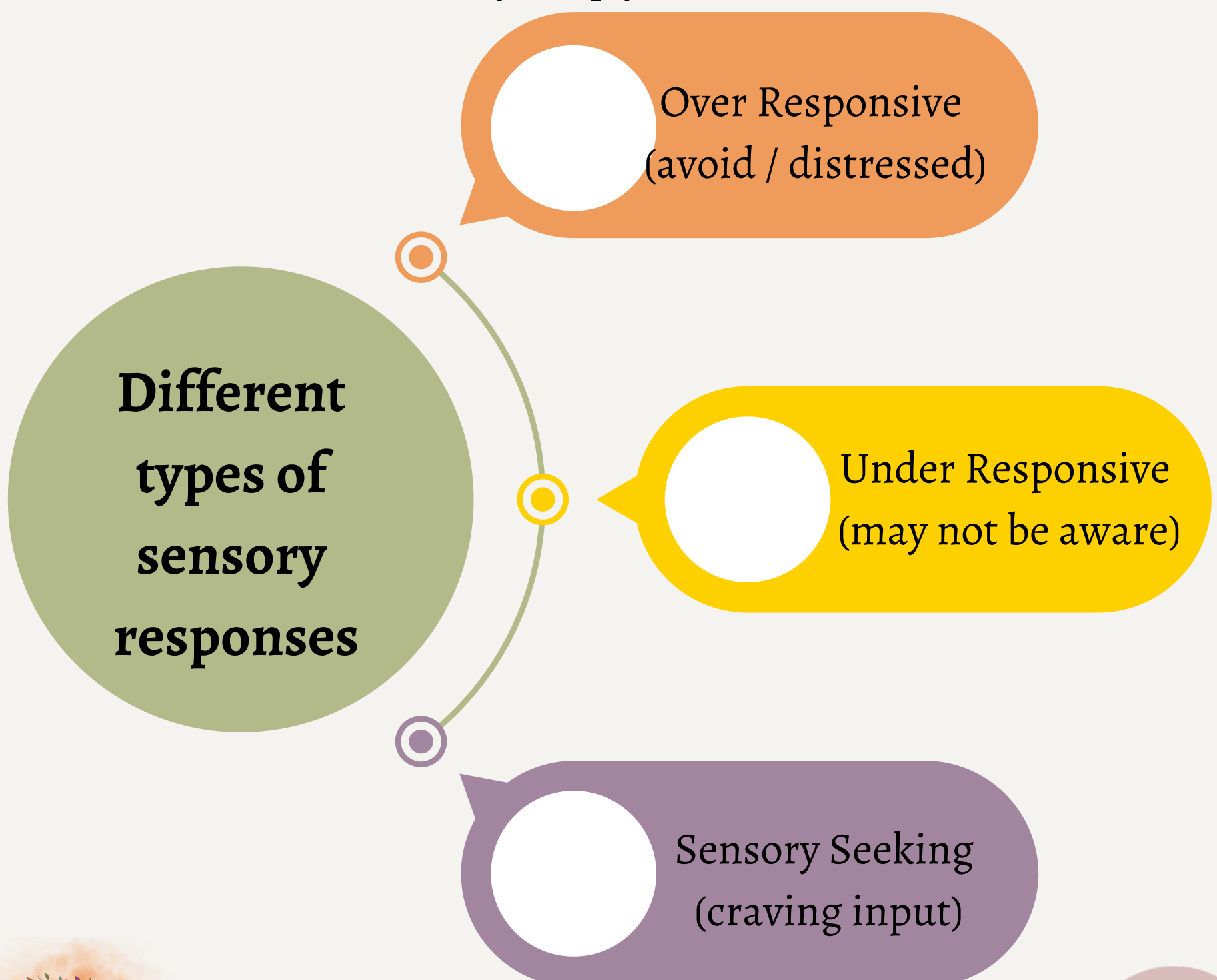


# What Is Sensory Processing?



Which part of this process does your child struggle with most? The answer will affect what type of support will work best for them.

How does your child respond to different sensory stimuli?  
The list below may help you think about this.



# How To Identify Your Child's Sensory Needs

Neurodivergent people may have much smaller or much bigger cups for different parts of their sensory system than other people.

Everyone has a mixture of big and small sensory cups depending on how they respond to different sensory input.

In the webinar for **The PDA Space**, Occupational Therapist **Victoria Robinson** shared the fabulous idea of using cups to help understand a person's sensory capacity.

The sensory system is unique to each person, and each person will respond in their own different way. For example, some people may have a small cup for sound and get distressed by sudden or loud noises. Another person may have a large cup for sound and may even be very noisy themselves!

If a person has a small cup for touch, they may struggle to tolerate certain textures and be distressed if they get messy; they may find tags in clothing or the feel of certain types of fabric painful. A person with a large cup for touch may seek certain textures and enjoy messy activities.

Have a think how you and your child respond to different sensory input. Which senses have big cups, and which ones have small cups? If your child can understand concepts like this, it is an excellent way of explaining how the sensory system works with your child to help develop their understanding, too.





# How to Support Your Child's Sensory Needs



Calming activities will help

Stimulating activities will help

If your child has lots of small cups they may find different aspects of their sensory system over whelming. As a response and try and regulate this may mean they cry, scream, throw, hit or display other more challenging behaviour.

If your child has lots of big cups, they may not be aware of different input and they may seek extra sensory input to regulate.

Everyone has a unique mixture of big and small sensory cups. Most people's sensory needs will also fluctuate and may be different day to day but there will likely be over arching patterns you will be able to pick up on that will help you understand the best ways to support your child.



# How to Support Your Child's Sensory Needs

There are different types of **accommodations** (tools, equipment and environments) that can help your child regulate their sensory system.

A qualified Occupational Therapist will be able to carry out an assessment and write a personalised '**sensory diet**' for your child if needed to help give you some bespoke ideas to support your child balance their sensory system.

You can find out more and gain further ideas by joining in the fantastic webinar by Victoria Robinson in **The PDA Space**.

Our other FREE e-books such which accompanies the amazing webinar by Nathalie Shek (OT, Helping Kids Shine) and Dan & Kay Aldred (teachers) may also be of interest and is available in The PDA Space and also in Autistic Realms as a free download.







# Embodiment and Sensory Systems



Inspired by the webinars delivered by:

Nathalie Shek (OT Helping Kids Shine)

&

Dan & Kay Louise Aldred (Embodied Education)

October 2023

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([www.thepdaspace.com](http://www.thepdaspace.com))

Created by Helen Edgar



# Signposting

1

[www.thepdaspace.com](http://www.thepdaspace.com)  
Family support workshops, webinars,  
coaching and online peer support groups.  
(Founder: Nicola Reekie)

2

Victoria Robinson OT:  
Website: [my-sensory-hub.newzenler.com/courses/my-sensory-hub](https://my-sensory-hub.newzenler.com/courses/my-sensory-hub)  
Instagram: [instagram.com/sensory.occupational.therapist/](https://instagram.com/sensory.occupational.therapist/)

3

[www.autismunderstood.co.uk](http://www.autismunderstood.co.uk)  
Website designed by autistic young  
people, for autistic people

4

[www.autisticrealms.com](http://www.autisticrealms.com)  
Helen Edgar's website - Autism/  
education/ mental health articles and  
resources

*Please seek professional advice if needed.*



Inspired by The PDA Space Webinar 2024  
Canva Graphics







A free community resource  
to support the webinar delivered by

Victoria Robinson

Website: [my-sensory-hub.newzenler.com/courses/my-sensory-hub](https://my-sensory-hub.newzenler.com/courses/my-sensory-hub)

Instagram: [instagram.com/sensory.occupational.therapist/](https://www.instagram.com/sensory.occupational.therapist/)

Created for  
The PDA Space

By  
Helen Edgar  
Autistic Realms

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