

## > CONNECTING ABILITIES

# Group 4: Sensory Challenges

A sensory challenge or disability affects an individual's senses. This can be their sight, hearing, smell, touch, taste or spatial awareness. A sensory challenge can cause severe functional impairment, which can disrupt daily life, routines and learning process. Sensory challenges can be varied for each individual and can be part of more complex learning disability.

There are two main types of sensitivity.

Hypersensitivity, meaning an overreaction and avoiding sensory stimulation, or Hyposensitivity meaning an under reaction and seeking sensory stimulation.

Strand	Suggestions to Adapt	Tips
<b>Hazards and Personal Safety</b>	<p>Rather than simply talking about hazards and personal safety engage students in active learning by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Utilising visual aids and place them into groups or play a flip card memory game with them.</li> <li>2. Create activities where parts of the pool represent other hazards or personal safety of the discussion for a lesson.</li> </ol> <p>For example, the other end of the pool might be referred to as "bucket", after a discussion that full buckets of water are dangerous. The instruction may be "Kicking with the board to the Bucket now"</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. The teaching of "never swimming alone" create a lesson of activities where students have to help each other to perform and complete each activity in pairs.</li> </ol>	<p>Be creative in this strand and move away from just having a discussion with students.</p> <p>Develop activities that create a memory for everyone involved.</p>
<b>Entry and Exit</b>	<p>Understanding that some students may need more time to comprehend their environment in order to feel comfortable is very important. Different entries and exits may take time/need to be adapted or abandoned in some instances to account for sensory challenges.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Always ask a student if you can assist, as sensory challenges expand to human contact.</li> <li>2. A wade in entry may be the more practical choice for a student who is nervous or needs some more time.</li> <li>3. Utilise a foam mat to limit contact with the pool edge for other entries.</li> <li>4. Be ready to support at any moment. If a student is overconfident and does get into trouble in the water a teacher's duty of care overrides a student's range of comfortable/safety.</li> </ol>	<p>If a parent or carer is being clear about a student's condition open the discussion to see if there is a preferred Entry and Exit, they would like to use in order to introduce them to the water.</p>
<b>Flotation</b>	<p>Flotation can be a very challenging skill for students with sensory issues as water near or around the ears or even face can be unsettling and uncomfortable.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understand any prior experiences and progress slowly (especially if you are unsure of how the student may react or if they may react negatively).</li> <li>2. Clearly communicate the activity and if possible, have another student perform the activity first.</li> <li>3. If a student requires assistance and they can communicate the preferred assistance they would like supplied to them, have the options available.</li> </ol> <p>For example, a large soft foam mat vs assistance from the teacher. Only provide 2 or 3 options. Multiple options can "over stimulate" a student.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Utilise songs if you know this will help. Always stay low and close to a student as this will provide security when they are a beginner.</li> </ol>	<p>Some students may be wearing swimming caps, ear bands and ear plugs as well so their hearing may be limited due to additional medical conditions or having to wear additional ear/headwear.</p> <p>Refer to "Provide the Boundaries" Effective Teaching Strategy to create expectations.</p>

<p><b>Swimming</b></p>	<p>For students who have not been in the water before it is important to associate the water with actions, they are familiar with on land.</p> <p>This means actions such as walking, hopping, skipping or through the water. Other movements in the water can include sitting on the platform, an inbuilt step or the side of the pool. Progression can then be moved to walking side ways and paddling, sitting on the edge and kicking.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. If students are younger encourage the whole class to bring along a favourite small waterproof toy to provide comfort and for the teacher to use as a prop during the class.</li> <li>2. Utilise songs, games and fun concepts for introductory skills such as dog paddle, for example “tiger arms” or painting the sky and painting the bottom of the pool, allowing students to choose the colour they would like to use.</li> <li>3. Observe if skills such as Butterfly or Breaststroke are possible as these can involve some manipulation and quite different movement to what some students are used too. It might be a consideration to abandon them.</li> </ol>	<p>Refer to the “Call and Respond” Effective Teaching Strategy to improve communication and trust.</p>
<p><b>Underwater</b></p>	<p>Students can have 3 categories of being underwater. These can be prominent with students with sensory challenges.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students who will learn at a mainstream pace. These students will follow the instructions provided to the rest of the class and submersion will not be too challenging.</li> <li>2. Students who enjoy going underwater and are constantly under the water can be challenging.</li> <li>3. Adverse to going under water - Sometimes moving toward a horizontal position can be scary and you may find the person reacting in grabbing, hitting or panicking. This is a clear sign that they aren’t ready to submerge. Change to another activity that they already know.</li> </ol> <p>Reflect on your strategy for submerging and consider other ways to prepare them. Being consistent and building up trust will be critical.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Be prepared to go under water with your students. Show them it’s enjoyable.</li> </ol>	<p>Refer to “First and Then” Effective Teaching Strategy to create expectations.</p> <p>Never force a student underwater if they are not displaying signs of readiness.</p> <p>Refer to “Assess, Adapt, Apply” Teaching Strategies.</p>
<p><b>Lifesaving</b></p>	<p>As the lifesaving strand can be more of a process skill it is important to prepare students for the task ahead.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Clearly communicate the activity. If any equipment is required explain the use of each and have other options available.</li> <li>2. If there are different tasks involved in a group activity or pairs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Explain that each student will receive a turn.</li> <li>- Ensure each student has a turn in each position of the group or pairing.</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Demonstrate and provide students with cards and steps to follow through the process of the skill or activity. Providing a visual reference will assist students in referencing the steps they need to accomplish.</li> <li>4. Provide appropriate breaks. Whether these are attention, sensory or physical to allow for students to regroup and refocus.</li> <li>5. If possible, have another student perform the activity first.</li> </ol>	<p>Refer to “Provide the Boundaries” Effective Teaching Strategy to create expectations.</p> <p>Being prepared and preparing students for any change is crucial for a successful lesson. It will not create a “risk free” lesson however putting the time in to prepare for student in this group will dramatically improve their ability to learn and enjoy</p>

<p><b>Rescue</b></p>	<p>As the rescue strand can be more of a step-by step learning process it is important to prepare students for the task ahead.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Clearly communicate the activity. If any equipment is required explain the use of each and have other options available.</li> <li>2. If there are different tasks involved in a group activity or pairs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Explain that each student will receive a turn.</li> <li>- Ensure each student has a turn in each position of the group or pairing.</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Demonstrate and provide students with cards and steps to follow through the process of the skill or activity. Providing a visual reference will assist students in referencing the steps they need to accomplish.</li> <li>4. Provide appropriate breaks. Whether these are attention, sensory or physical to allow for students to regroup and refocus.</li> </ol>	<p>Refer to “Provide the Boundaries” Effective Teaching Strategy to create expectations.</p> <p>For more advanced students provide the instructions using the “Call and Respond” Effective Teaching Strategy.</p>
<p><b>Sequencing and Survival</b></p>	<p>The sequencing and survival strand can have more learning processes therefore it is important to prepare students for the task ahead.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Clearly communicate the activity. If any equipment is required explain the use of each and have other options available.</li> <li>2. If there are different tasks involved in a group activity or pairs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Explain that each student will receive a turn.</li> <li>- Ensure each student has a turn in each position of the group or pairing.</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Demonstrate and provide students with cards and steps to follow through the process of the skill or activity. Providing a visual reference will assist students in referencing the steps they need to accomplish.</li> <li>4. Provide appropriate breaks. Whether these are attention, sensory or physical to allow for students to regroup and refocus.</li> </ol>	<p>Refer to “Provide the Boundaries” Effective Teaching Strategy to create expectations.</p>