CONSCIOUS CARE & SUPPORT

CCS

Making Sense of the Senses

Session 8 – Resource 1

Land Acknowledgements

Australia

We start by acknowledging the Traditional owners of the land, air and sea on which we meet, the First Peoples of the Butchulla land where I live and work and all the lands on which you sit. We pay our respect and acknowledge their Elders past, present and emerging. We recognise that the lands of Australia were never seeded. Always is, always will be Aboriginal Land.

United States

Where I sit is on occupied ancestral Ho-Chunk land, a place their nation has called De-Jope since time immemorial. We now on this land acknowledge the circumstances that led to the forced removal of the Ho-Chunk people, and honor their legacy of resistance and resilience.

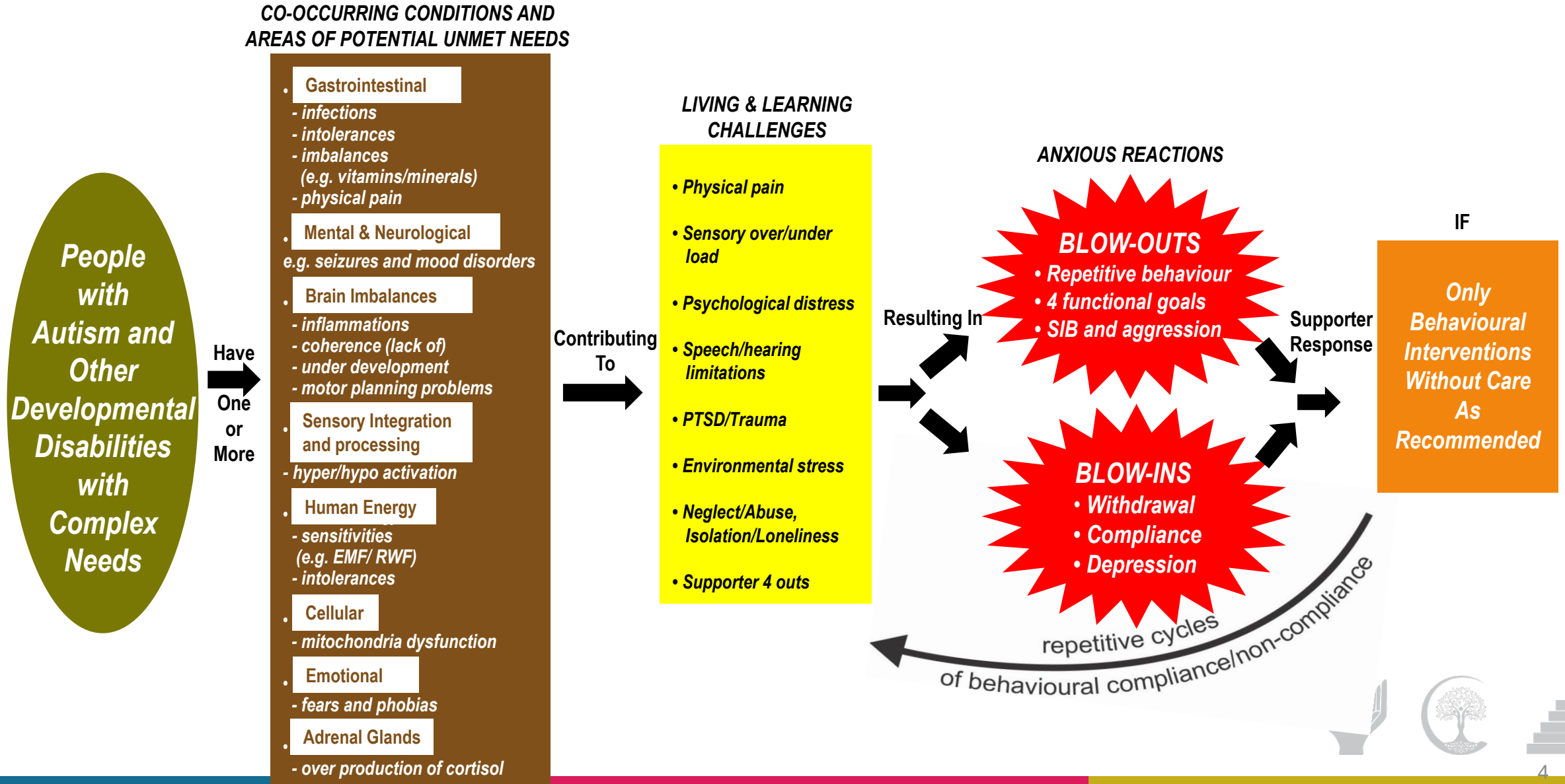
Canada

We acknowledge that this territory is within the lands honoured by the Wampum Treaties; agreements between the Anishinaabe , Haudenosaunee , Lenny Lenopee and allied Nations to peacefully share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. Specifically, we would like to acknowledge the presence of the Three Fires Confederacy (including the Ojibwe , Odawa , Potawatomi) and Huron/Wendat Peoples. We respect the longstanding relationships with First Nations people in this place and we are dedicated to honouring Indigenous history and culture while remaining committed to moving forward respectfully with all First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

Making Sense of the Senses

- Everyone's 'reality'/life experience comes through 8 senses
- Our sense doors are:
    - Taste
    - Smell
    - Hearing (Auditory)
    - Seeing (Visual)
    - Touching (Tactile)
    - Balancing (Vestibular)
    - Body Awareness (Proprioception)
    - Intero-ception (sensing pain or too hot/cold
- If any sense door isn't fully developed and operational, it can be overly sensitive (hyperactive) or under sensitive (hypoactive).

The Recurring Cycles



Hyperactive Senses Lead to Challenging Behaviours

Hyperactive Senses
means that people, objects and places can be:
e.g.

- **too loud**
- **too fast**
- **too scratchy**
- **too tight**
- **too bright**
- **too off balance**
- **too confusing**
- **too chaotic**

=

ANXIETY

=

Agitation, Anger and/or Aggression

e.g.

- **repetitive behaviour**
- **challenging behaviour**
- **Injury to self or others**

Hypoactive Senses Lead to Challenging Behaviours

Hypoactive Senses
means that people, objects and places can be:

e.g.

- **too quiet**
- **too slow**
- **too dark**
- **too loose**
- **too tickly**
- **too confusing**
- **too chaotic**

=

ANXIETY

=

Agitation, Anger and/or Aggression

e.g.

- **low energy**
- **low motivation**
- **quiet/withdrawn**

***Eventually* -**

- **repetitive behaviour**
- **challenging behaviour**
- **Injury to self or others**

Prevalence of Sensory Problems

- People with autism and other developmental disabilities are at a much higher risk of having sensory integration problems (approximately 80% of this population have sensory integration problems).

Prevalence of Sensory Problems (cont'd)

- **Startle Response**
  A majority of people with developmental disabilities **startle much more readily** due in part to hyperactive hearing (the inner ear does not form properly). They also startle for up to 1 hour versus 5-10 seconds for neurotypical individuals.

- **Senses must all be working together** i.e. be integrated. If they are not, several of the person's senses can react to over stimulation e.g. a startle often makes light seem 5 times brighter and noises 5 times louder.

Prevalence of Sensory Problems (cont'd)

- A high percentage of challenging behaviours such as aggression or self harm are caused by sensory problems (reference Aggression to Calming).

  A high percentage of these challenging behaviours can be prevented and deescalated with sensory interventions to improve sensory processing (in the moment) and sensory integration.

Prevalence of Sensory Problems (cont'd)

- A person's preferred stimulating activities are often clues leading to what need they are trying to meet and how best to meet that need. Encourage safe self stimulation and add a well balanced, prescribed (by Occupational Therapist if possible) daily sensory diet (reference below).

- Occupational Therapists who are trained and certified in Sensory Integration methods are the best qualified to assess and plan interventions and daily sensory diets.

- The following are examples of typical sensory processes that are more often problematic for people with developmental disabilities.

Balanced Gastrointestinal (GI) **is required for….**

Balanced Neurotransmitters **which are required for….**

Balanced Sensory Integration & Processing

Audio Sensory Processing Problems

Inner Ear Problems

Often, those with developmental disabilities or autism cannot tune into human speech because they cannot use their middle ear muscles to dampen the lower sound frequencies as those without developmental disabilities or autism can do.

- Because lower frequencies are at full volume, they mask higher frequencies
- Lower frequencies trigger Fight/Flight brain responses
- Autopsies often find cerebellum inflammation which has close links to the vestibular inner ear system (ref. John Hopkins 2005)
- Sound Therapy is often an effective treatment

Sensory Screening Tool

Session 8 – Resource 2

What to do?

- Occupational Therapists who are trained and certified in Sensory Integration methods are the best qualified to assess and plan interventions and daily sensory diets.

- The following are examples of typical sensory processes that are more often problematic for people with developmental disabilities.