

Self-Care, Sensory Processing and Regulating Yourself and Others



Sensory Processing is the method our nervous system uses to receive, organise and understand sensory input and respond to it. It includes all our senses – how we see, hear, smell, taste and touch the world – as well as how we know where our bodies are and what they are feeling.

Those of us who have difficulties with our sensory processing find that our sense receptors are working perfectly fine, but our brains struggle to process the information. There is often too little (hyposensitive) or too much (hypersensitive) information to process.

To function at our best, we need to be in the “just right” regulated state. This means that we must calm (down-regulate) ourselves if we are over-stimulated or do things to awaken (up-regulate) ourselves if we are under-responsive.



At the moment, many of us don't feel like we have a minute to ourselves. The demands of managing our families, work - or the lack of it, the change in our routines, plus all the emotions that are affecting us individually, as families and as communities.

How do we find the time for self-care and to keep ourselves regulated?

- Check in on yourself and your family regularly. Notice whether you need to up-regulate or calm yourselves. If you can, set aside an hour for a bath, a walk or some other activity that you can do on your own. Maybe this isn't possible, so aim for a few minutes at regular intervals throughout the day, where you can focus on your own needs and practice self-care and self-regulation.
- Use everyday tasks to help yourself and your family get in the “just right state”. Incorporate sensory activities into your day. Climb, jump, swing and carry a heavy bag on your walks; smell favourite smells; listen to your favourite music or sing together; play with water or sand or do some washing up; make a cake without using a spoon or mixer – just your hands (go on try it!); have a hug; give each other space when you need it.
- Remember that our sensory processing involves what goes on inside our bodies as well as outside. We need to be aware of our emotions and physical health and look out for each other.
- Self-regulate and co-regulate before tackling day to day challenges.