



Meeting Neurodiverse Children Wherever They Are With Mobile Sensory Havens

Overview

Learning Objectives:

After reading this powerpoint you should be able to

- Describe why sensory havens are needed in the community
- Discuss what is considered when creating a sensory haven
- Describe the advantages of having a portable model instead of a fixed sensory haven

Community Events

- It's become more "*normal*" to see neurodiverse children and adults in community settings and participating in events
- However, there are still a lot of hurdles to overcome before full participation can be achieved for people with sensory sensitivities, communication difficulties, and social differences
- As OT practitioners and students, we can offer our support and knowledge of evidence-based mobile sensory havens to staff and volunteers of organizations to better include neurodiverse individuals during special events

Sensory Havens

- A place for children, **with or without disabilities**, to calm, refresh, and increase positive behavior and socialization
- Provide opportunities for neurodiverse children to continue enjoying what they are doing in the community by providing a small space for them to calm down
- 5-10 minutes in the sensory haven should be all they need

What Might a Sensory Space Look Like?

- Should be easily replicable and customizable
- Keep the amount of equipment inside to a minimum: chairs and lights
- Allow sensory haven visitors to make their own choices to customize the space
 - Allow ability to change the color of lights with a remote
 - Allow ability to play music through bluetooth speaker
- Consider the amount space in the event and how much space the sensory haven will take up
 - Options to use ice fishing houses, camping tents, or cardboard boxes as the main structure

Mobile Sensory Havens

Benefits:

- Portable route is much more economical than building up a large physical space
- Can vary in sizes to help community venues accommodate for users of different age groups and sensory needs
- A mobile sensory space allows venues to have them available for use without taking up large amounts of space or detracting from the main experience that individuals are at the venue for

Final Takeaways

- Choices related to creating mobile sensory havens depends a lot on the place they will be housed in
- The louder and more crowded a venue is, the greater the need is for calming and providing sensory regulation opportunities in the sensory space
- The more visitors the space has, the greater the number of supports there will need to be
- Don't forget to clean and sanitize the sensory haven



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