Interoception

Sensory Spectacle training

Interoception
Emotions
Self-regulation
SPD

“Interoception allows us to ‘feel’ our internal organs and skin and gives information regarding the internal state or condition of our body” (Craig 2002)
Why Interoception is important

Heart rate increased
Tense muscles
Stomach fluttering
Slightly shaky
Nervous

Body States
Hunger
Thirst
Need to go to the toilet
Pain
Sexual Arousal
Itch
Tickle
Temperature
Nausea
Headache

Emotion States
Anger
Embarrassment
Happiness
Anxiety
Excitement
Sadness
Fear
Happiness
Sadness
Worried

The Insular Cortex

Nervous

“I feel trapped with these internal sensations that are constantly there. I can’t tell hunger from anxiety, from bowel movements - it’s very confusing.”

Chiara

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Cover Story Images
Homeostasis

• Homeostasis is my body’s natural drive in order to be at its optimal level of functioning. I want to do this with using the least amount of energy possible.

• Our body’s are designed to reach homeostasis automatically so at an unconscious level.

Self-regulation

• My ability to self regulate is tied very closely with my interoceptive system and how I recognise and understand those messages I am receiving from inside my body.

• Interoceptive signals alert us that our internal balance is off and motivate us to take action - to do something to restore that balance.

Co-regulating to begin with

when a baby is hungry = cries  when a baby is cold = cries

caregiver feeds  caregiver swaddles or cuddles

Interoceptive Awareness & Emotions

• Having a good interoceptive awareness allows us to understand our emotions and know how to support / regulate myself.

hANGRY
Research shows a definite link between interoceptive awareness and emotions as they relate to overall regulation, complex thinking and a sense of self.

Difficulties regulating our bodies can impact our quality of life, health & independent living.

SPD
Difficulty self-regulating as these internal messages may be mis-interpreted.

Interoceptive awareness

Body states or emotions

Self-regulation skills

Difficulties regulating our bodies can impact our quality of life, health & independent living.

“...In restaurants I find it noisy that I can’t tell if I’m full or not when I’m eating.”

Emily

Sensation
The physical act of the sensory organs being stimulated by the environment.

Perception
The mental process of interpreting and processing the information received by the sense organ.
Interoceptive awareness

**Over-responsivity**

- feel internal states more readily, over feel, highly anxious, a lot of sensations at once which can be overwhelming
- “It just feels noisy inside my body. I’m not sure what it all means.”

**Body state example** - e.g frequent requests to go to the toilet
**Emotions example** - Minor ailment can be amplified - shown as extreme pain

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Interoceptive awareness

**Under-responsivity**

- may not notice internal body signals unless extremely intense

**Body state example** - difficult to toilet train, frequent accidents - doesn’t sense feeling to go to the toilet
**Emotions example** - when asked how their body feels - finds it difficult to answer with clarity

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Interoceptive awareness

**Discrimination Difficulty**

- Cannot always pinpoint the exact feeling they sense internally.
- May have a vague or general feeling but difficulty identifying accurately what the sensation means.

**Body state example** - complains of hunger - when has food only eats a bite - they may have mistaken the hunger feeling for something else like needing the toilet
**Emotions example** - insistant they are ok when it is clear they are angry - not be able to distinguish subtle differences e.g heart beats fast when happy and angry and confused the 2 emotions.

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How to support

- Mindfulness is proven to benefit emotional regulation, sleep quality and self-esteem; reduce anxiety and depression; increase attention; and decrease anger management issues (Burke 2009)
- Kelly Mahler resources - adapts mindfulness practices, creating strategies that work well for many different learning styles.
- Talking and referring to emotions
- Breathing exercises & proprioceptive input
- Doing mirror work – psychologists say this is one of the key ways for us to learn about our sense of self

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Research papers

Will be included in with the PDF of this presentation

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*A conference helping us to understand how we feel*

**Thursday 5th March**

The Bridge School, London

Bookings open Dec 2019

**Confirmed speakers**

Prof Manos Tsakiris
Dr Jamie Galpin
Dr Liz Shea

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