

# **Accommodating the Sensorimotor Differences of People on the Autism Spectrum: A relationship-based approach**

## **TRAINING SUMMARY:**

This autism field is becoming increasingly aware of the importance of sensorimotor differences in the lives of people on the spectrum. These differences can have a profound impact on how individuals with autism experience the world, how they act, and how they learn. They also affect how others perceive -- or misperceive -- them and their intentions. Sensorimotor differences can be accommodated through three main approaches: adapting the environment, helping people adapt or "self-regulate" their bodies, and adapting the ways we interact with people who experience these challenges. The ability to create successful and flexible accommodations is based on the development of respectful, trusting relationships.

## **TRAINING GOAL:**

The goal of this training is for parents, professionals, and community members to become aware of the nature and universality of sensorimotor differences, to become familiar with different types of accommodations, and to consider how accommodations can be developed and personalized within a respectful relationship.

## **TRAINING OBJECTIVES:**

The objectives of the training are for the participants to:

1. Understand the nature of sensorimotor differences and their impact on activity, communication, development, and the way people are judged and perceived
2. Gain insights into the personal experience of sensorimotor differences
3. Understand what accommodations are and what they accomplish
4. Explore how respectful environmental, self-regulatory, and interactional accommodations can be designed and implemented
5. Appreciate why relationships are powerful and fundamental elements of support
6. Become aware of resources that can help develop their knowledge base on this topic

## **METHODS TO ACHIEVE OBJECTIVES:**

Training content can be delivered via webinar incorporating lecture and discussion (app. 1½ hours). This training also can be delivered in person in a traditional training or classroom setting incorporating lecture, videos, discussion, and interactive group exercises (2-3 hours).

## **PREPARATION AND MATERIALS NEEDED FOR WEBINAR:**

PowerPoint

Copies of the non-annotated PowerPoint are participant handouts.

Annotated PowerPoint is Trainer's Guide.

## **IN THIS WEBINAR PLAN:**

The script guideline for the Trainer is indicated in the PowerPoint Notes.

Activities or Discussion points are indicated by ACTIVITY or DISCUSSION.

Timeframes have been suggested in the Trainer's Notes. However, these should be considered highly flexible. If participants ask productive questions or contribute to a rich discussion, the

Trainer should remember that there is 15 minutes of time built in to accommodate interaction. The session may end at 1 hr. 15 minutes if trainee interaction is low.

**POST-TRAINING NEXT STEPS:**

Participants are required to complete the Post-Test and Trainer Evaluation.

**POST-TEST:**

Answer TRUE or FALSE:

1. Only people with autism have sensorimotor differences.
2. The presence of sensorimotor differences indicates that a person is lacking in intelligence.
3. Accommodations help people work with or work around their differences.
4. The results of a person's actions always accurately reflect their intention.
5. Many environmental accommodations involve making lights, noise, and smells less overwhelming.
6. Accommodations cannot be provided until a person's behavior is under control and they are "ready."
7. A "sensory diet" refers to soft foods such as jello.
8. A person with autism may function as both overreactive and underreactive to sensory experiences.
9. Accommodations work best when they are prescribed by objective professionals who are not part of a client's daily life.
10. Once an accommodation is designed, it must be used in the same way for the rest of the person's life.
11. The best way to respond to motor and vocal tics is to draw the person's attention to them.
12. The three types of accommodations are environmental, self-regulatory, and interactional.

Answer Key:

1-F; 2-F; 3-T; 4-F; 5-T; 6-F; 7-F; 8-T; 9-F; 10-F; 11-F; 12-T

If credit is being offered and a more extensive response is required, an in-depth test involving short essay questions is available.