

Self-Regulatory Accommodations:

A Positive Approach to Supporting People on the Autism Spectrum

TRAINING SUMMARY:

Self-Regulatory Accommodation are strategies, systems, or devices that help a person with sensorimotor differences respond effectively and comfortably to their internal and external environment. They are part of an interlocking spectrum of supports that include environmental and interactional accommodations. Accommodations are Positive Approaches because they ask us to work with, not on, the person who needs them, and to cultivate a respectful relationship. Rather than responding reactively and negatively to behavior that challenges us, designing successful accommodations requires us to be proactive and ask meaningful questions about a person's quality of life. Self-regulatory accommodations help the person with autism to take charge of their body and their experiences through a variety of means, including the use of "down time" to combat overstimulation; engaging in play and preferred interests to maximize alertness and focus; regulating the body through exercise, yoga, meditation, deep pressure, and deep breathing; advocating for personal choice, power, and control as an antidote to anxiety; and selecting and using the items and strategies in a "sensory diet." While there is no limit to the types of self-regulatory accommodations that can be created, most are very inexpensive, low-tech, and easy to implement.

TRAINING GOAL:

Support staff, parents, teachers, and community members will explore the impact of the physical and social environment on a range of social, emotional, communicative, physiological, and health-related issues that may challenge and disrupt the sensorimotor regulation of people with autism. The process of supporting the person to design and access appropriate self-regulatory accommodations will be investigated, and examples shared.

TRAINING OBJECTIVES:

Participants will:

1. Understand the types of sensorimotor challenges frequently experienced by people on the autism spectrum, and how to identify them
2. Become aware of the range of neurologically-based nonvolitional (involuntary) behaviors and the role of accommodations in alleviating them
3. Consider the wide range of self-regulatory accommodations, and the process of making collaborative, individualized choices
4. Take an in-depth look at how to create one useful form of self-regulatory accommodation, the "sensory diet"
5. Understand the importance of relationships, typical experiences, and typical environments in designing successful accommodations
6. Investigate ways to support and enhance self-determination through self-regulatory accommodations, and appreciate how they can be used to give individuals greater control and influence over their lives