



Children and Young People's Guide: You, Me and Sensory Processing Difficulties

Relationships

Friendships are very important to our sense of worth, and having good relationships can help us through the more difficult times in our lives. Having good relationships with our parents, teachers, and others who care for us will also mean a happier life.

Here are some tips to help maintain good relationships:

- It may be helpful to **let your friends know** about your sensory difficulties as it will help them to understand if you behave in an unexpected way. Most people will respond to your telling them in a positive and supportive way.
- **Use any help and strategies available** to lessen the effects of your over- and under-sensitivities. This will enable you to focus more on your friends and friendships and less on the things that upset you.
- Don't be afraid to **ask your friends to alter their plans** to make it easier for you to join in – for example, if you're meeting up in town, ask if you can meet in a quieter place if loud noises cause you distress. You are worth the effort!
- You may feel very self-conscious about your sensitivity but try to remember that your friends are probably more focused on their own thoughts and feelings. If you think about what's important to them it may help lessen your own anxiety.
- Your experience of dealing with sensory difficulties makes you a great friend for others that have similar difficulties – it's more common than you think! Be aware of others around you and be ready to help if needed.
- In general, **good listening** is important to maintain any friendships; people need to feel they are important to you, and paying attention to what they say is a key way to show this.
- Try to **remember the important things** about your friends; for example make a note of their birthday somewhere that you will see it - nowadays there are all kinds of apps on your phone or social media that can help with this.
- Try as far as you can to **keep to arrangements**, or if you need to cancel, make sure your friends understand your reasons - maybe your hearing is particularly sensitive, or you are suffering another consequence of the SPD. Let them know and they can be more understanding and won't feel that their friendship is not important to you.

INFORMATION AND RESOURCES



ADDvanced Solutions
Supporting you to find the answers

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Tips for my teachers in school - How you can help me:

- **Be aware of my sensory difficulties** and any strategies that are in place to help me with them.
- **Believe me** if I tell you I'm struggling. Things can change from day to day and throughout the day - this is more difficult for me than it is for you!
- **Find ways to include me** that take account of the sensory difficulties I'm experiencing.
- I may have a strong need to make my work 'perfect' and this can make me very anxious and afraid to begin. It may help if we find a way to raise awareness of SPD among the class, and how it can affect different people in different ways.
- Every child or young person with SPD is affected in a unique way - ask me what it is that I need support with.
- Please make any other teachers who are working with the class aware of my sensory difficulties, especially supply teachers or new staff.
- Help me to find ways to overcome the sensitivities if I feel you are on my side I will feel more confident to try and overcome the challenges.
- If I struggle with strong smells it may be helpful if I could have my lunch in an alternative place to the lunch room with one or two friends.

Transition

Any change has its challenges; with sensory difficulties these can be more daunting!

When changing class from one year to the next, it will be important for you to visit the new setting a few times to familiarise yourself with the lighting, sound levels, new smells etc. of the classroom.

Your teacher should put together a sheet for your new teacher and other staff, that explains any over - or under - sensitivities that you experience, and how to lessen their impact on you. Most staff would be very thankful for your input on this sheet - you could put one together yourself using the sheet on the next page.

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My SPD, by:

I have over-sensitivity to:	✓	How it impacts me:
Sound		
Sight		
Touch		
Smell		
Taste		
Balance (Vestibular)		
Position (Proprioception)		
I have under-sensitivity to:	✓	How it impacts me:
Sound		
Sight		
Touch		
Smell		
Taste		
Balance (Vestibular)		
Position (Proprioception)		

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