

The Sensory Projects Training Events

The Sensory Projects personally host two training events around the UK:

The **Develop Your Sensory Lexiconary** course, which educates delegates about the development of seven sensory systems and explores how this knowledge can be used to support communication, cognition, engagement, mental well being and more.

And the:

Sensory Engagement for Mental Well Being course, which teaches delegates simple sensory strategies they can use immediately to support the mental well being of individuals with complex disabilities.

See www.TheSensoryProjects.co.uk for details of where these courses will be running this year.

The Sensory Projects also provide a range of training days to settings these include off-the-shelf days and bespoke events tailored to the needs of that particular setting. Some of these events are open to people from outside of the settings to attend. For information about where these will be being held please visit www.TheSensoryProjects.co.uk and follow the links to the Upcoming Events page.

The Sensory Projects run on the principle that with the right knowledge and a little creativity inexpensive items can become effective tools for sensory inclusion.

Through the work of all the Projects founder **Joanna Grace** is seeking to contribute to a future where people are understood in spite of their differences.

To learn more about the projects, and to access free resources and information about bespoke sensory training visit

www.TheSensoryProjects.co.uk

Joanna's books: **Sensory Stories for Children and Teens** and **Sensory-being for Sensory Beings** are available on amazon, with more titles due for publication in 2018.



The Sensory Projects

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Sensory Engagement for Mental Well Being



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Sensory Engagement for Mental Well Being

Mental health

Mental health problems effect approximately 10% of the general population.

In the learning disabled population rates of mental illness are estimated to be running at around 40%.*

Research shows that the more disabled you are the more likely you to experience mental ill health. Research also finds that the more disabled you are the less likely you are to have your mental illness recognized and treated appropriately.

Mental health complaints in people with profound disabilities are often either unnoticed entirely or presumed to be a part of the pre-existing conditions.

Many people with profound disabilities fall out of the remit of mental health provision offered by local services. Often times mental health treatments rely on people being able to access language.

A lack of services, a lack of understanding, and very high risk rates all mean that people with profound disabilities are among the most vulnerable members of our population when it comes to mental health.

Warning signs

The following are warning signs of mental ill health in people with learning disabilities.** All of these signs and symptoms can also be indicative of other problems so it is important that people who know the individual well are discerning in the judgements they make about their well being.

- Loss of enjoyment in activities.
- Fear and agitation out in the community
- Loss of established skills.
- Increase or decrease in vocalisations.
- Appearing to watch or listen to something which is not obvious to others.
- Changes in eating patterns.
- Onset of self-injurious behaviour.
- Aggression.
- Changes in sleep pattern.

We need to also be aware that:

- Identifying mental ill health in terms of changes from the norm may not be appropriate to this population as often

mental health problems have been ongoing unrecognised for years.

- All behaviour is communication and that behaviour assumed to be “attention seeking” or “deliberate” could be communicating a mental health need. We need to listen to all behaviour and seek to understand what is being communicated.

Sensory strategies

On the Sensory Engagement for Mental Well Being day you will learn how to use the following strategies to support good mental health for people with complex disabilities.

I am	Like others
Explore	Greeting
More than meets the eye	Time
Less is more	Safe space
Change	Group wellness
In charge	And more.

You will also have the opportunity to develop mental health strategies appropriate to the needs of the people you support.

* NICE (2014) Mental health problems in people with learning disabilities: final scope <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng54/documents/mental-health-problems-in-people-with-learning-disabilities-final-scope>

** Perry D et al (2011). *Caring for the Physical and Mental Health Needs of People with Learning Disabilities*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers Ltd.