**Sensory Symptoms Checklist: Adolescent Version**

This checklist is not a diagnostic tool; rather, it is an indicator of sensory over- or under-responsiveness. The purpose of this tool is to assist in developing an appropriate treatment plan and/or sensory diet for an individual with sensory modulation difficulties.

Remember: It is normal for all people to be sensitive to certain sensations. Sensory modulation becomes a disorder only when it negatively impacts a person’s life (e.g., ability to pay attention, learn, socialize, relax).

The asterisk (\*) indicates sensory-seeking behavior. Sensory Seeking is a form of under-responsiveness, but these individuals seek intense sensation to compensate for the under-responsiveness of their nervous systems. In general, under-responders tend to be more passive and sedentary than the sensory cravers, but they still share many symptoms.

**TACTILE (TOUCH)**

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| **Symptoms of Over-Responsiveness**[ ]  avoids affectionate touch[ ]  startles with unexpected touch [ ]  becomes distressed when others invade personal space[ ]  requires the use of soft pencil grips [ ]  dislikes putting on deodorant[ ]  dislikes wearing makeup [ ]  dislikes the feeling of sweat [ ]  is bothered by tags and seams in clothes[ ]  clothing does not match the weather (e.g., won’t wear pants in winter)[ ]  overly ticklish[ ]  is uncomfortable being dirty[ ]  becomes distressed by air blowing on skin (e.g., wind, fan)[ ]  becomes distressed by needles and shots[ ]  cannot tolerate lotion/sunscreen[ ]  dislikes self-care tasks (brushing teeth, cutting nails, combing hair)[ ]  difficulty with fine motor tasks | **Symptoms of Under-Responsiveness**[ ]  applies layers of makeup\*[ ]  enjoys being dirty\*[ ]  is unaware of dirt/food on skin[ ]  doesn’t mind needles/shots[ ]  difficulty playing instruments[ ]  difficulty with fine motor tasks[ ]  does not notice light touch or scratches[ ]  craves intense food textures\*[ ]  needs to touch something that is textured to focus on a task\*[ ]  prefers contact sports\*[ ]  wears clothes of intense textures (e.g., velvet, sequins, tights, lace)\*[ ]  enjoys messy crafting (pottery, painting)[ ]  unaware of runny nose, watery eyes[ ]  is always touching other people/invading personal space\* |

**PROPRIOCEPTIVE (PRESSURE ON MUSCLES AND JOINTS; BODY AWARENESS)**

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| **Symptoms of Over-Responsiveness**Since proprioceptive input is always helpful to the nervous system, we do not see ***over-responsivity*** in this category.\*Indicates sensory-seeking behavior. | **Symptoms of Under-Responsiveness**[ ]  self-injurious behaviors\*[ ]  heavy walking or toe-walking\*[ ]  grinds teeth and/or cracks knuckles\*[ ]  participates in rough play or sports (football, hockey, wrestling, etc.)\*[ ]  participates in sports requiring high flexibility (gymnastics, skating, etc.)[ ]  demonstrates poor hand-eye coordination[ ]  falls out of chairs or walks into walls/people[ ]  writes hard or types forcefully\*[ ]  writing is too faint to read [ ]  poor fine motor coordination[ ]  clicks pen to focus\*[ ]  is seen as “aggressive”[ ]  pets animals too hard\*[ ]  enjoys hugs and physical contact\*[ ]  wraps up in blankets\* [ ]  cannot sleep without a weighted blanket\*[ ]  prefers when clothes fit tightly\*[ ]  stuffs food into mouth/eats quickly\*[ ]  breaks items unintentionally [ ]  cannot identify objects by touch alone[ ]  difficulty typing or writing without looking[ ]  cannot identify location without using clues from surroundings [ ]  gets lost easily when driving [ ]  has difficulty giving directions [ ]  needs to chew gum or eat crunchy snacks to focus\*[ ]  has poor balance and/or posture |

**VESTIBULAR (MOVEMENT)**

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| **Symptoms of Over-Responsiveness**[ ]  gets dizzy easily[ ]  experiences motion sickness[ ]  does not enjoy driving [ ]  is afraid of heights[ ]  doesn’t like feet to leave the ground[ ]  avoids going to amusement parks/riding rollercoasters[ ]  dislikes high energy sports involving a lot of movement (roller blading, ice skating, skateboarding, dance, gymnastics, cheerleading, etc.)[ ]  becomes distressed when head is tilted out of the upright, vertical position[ ]  is unmotivated to change positions/can be described as lazy[ ]  difficulty with tipping head back in the shower to wash hair | **Symptoms of Under-Responsiveness**[ ]  loves rollercoasters and swinging\*[ ]  is constantly in motion\*[ ]  can jump on a trampoline for hours\*[ ]  loves high energy sports with a lot of movement [ ]  loves to spin\*[ ]  does not get dizzy when spinning [ ]  has abnormal tone (low/high)[ ]  cannot fall asleep without moving enough throughout the day[ ]  needs alternative seating within the classroom[ ]  requires a fidget to focus\*[ ]  fidgets a lot\*[ ]  is described to be in constant motion or on-the-go\*Indicates sensory-seeking behavior. |

**INTEROCEPTION (INTERNAL SENSATIONS)**

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| **Symptoms of Over-Responsiveness**[ ]  has a low pain tolerance[ ]  describes sensations that should not be painful as painful[ ]  is distressed by temperature changes [ ]  frequent complaints of “growing pains” or general aches/pains[ ]  suffers from headaches [ ]  frequently complains of nausea[ ]  experiences menstrual symptoms disruptive to everyday life[ ]  has poor tolerance of hunger/gets ‘hangry’[ ]  constantly feels the need to urinate[ ]  is resistant to medical procedures [ ]  shows disordered eating behaviors  | **Symptoms of Under-Responsiveness**[ ]  has a high pain tolerance [ ]  burns mouth easily[ ]  has difficulty distinguishing between temperatures[ ]  has difficulty recognizing hunger cues[ ]  over-eats and/or has difficulty recognizing fullness/satiety\* [ ]  requires food to include a lot of spices\*[ ]  does not recognize the need to go to the bathroom until it is urgent [ ]  experiences sleep difficulties [ ]  dresses inappropriately for the weather/temperature[ ]  has difficulty recognizing signs of sickness \*Indicates sensory-seeking behavior. |

**AUDITORY (SOUND)**

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| **Symptoms of Over-Responsiveness**[ ]  plays music at a very low volume[ ]  cannot listen to more than one sound at once/gets distracted by competing noises[ ]  cannot filter out sounds from different environments [ ]  cannot focus with the A/C, radio or other quiet background noises[ ]  startles easily with unexpected sounds [ ]  dislikes noisy environments [ ]  frequently asks others to be quiet/lower their voices[ ]  becomes distressed by the sound of someone chewing or making excessive noise[ ]  does not like common household sounds[ ]  prefers quiet environments and spending time with smaller groups of people [ ]  watches television on mute[ ]  prefers watching and playing quieter sports and activities [ ]  focuses best when seated at the front of the classroom [ ]  has difficulty refocusing when loud noises occur when driving (horns, sirens, etc.)[ ]  benefits from using noise-canceling headphones | **Symptoms of Under-Responsiveness**[ ]  blasts music\*[ ]  focuses best when listening to music or other noises\* [ ]  has difficulty hearing others who speak quietly [ ]  watches television with the volume turned up\* [ ]  does not consistently respond when spoken to[ ]  requires others to repeat themselves when speaking[ ]  has difficulty locating sounds [ ]  may appear oblivious to some sounds [ ]  talks out loud to complete a task\*[ ]  doesn’t notice background noises[ ]  frequently makes noises within their environment [ ]  enjoys loud environments\* [ ]  likes to make sounds echo\* [ ]  prefers watching and playing louder sports\*[ ]  spending time with larger groups of people\*[ ]  requires preferential seating in the classroom to pay attention [ ]  benefits from a microphone to enhance the teacher’s voice[ ]  makes loud noises happen repeatedly\*\*Indicates sensory-seeking behavior. |

**VISUAL**

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| **Symptoms of Over-Responsiveness**[ ]  bothered by bright lights[ ]  always needs to wear sunglasses[ ]  is affected by blue light from electronic devices/needs to wear blue light blocking glasses[ ]  dislikes video games [ ]  dislikes visually busy places (e.g., grocery store, sporting events)[ ]  becomes distressed by disorganized spaces[ ]  avoids making eye contact[ ]  prefers working in dim light[ ]  cannot fall asleep unless bedroom is in total darkness (e.g., blackout curtains)[ ]  rubs eyes a lot[ ]  gets headaches from visual tasks[ ]  has difficulty sorting through all the written information on walls in public places[ ]  tilts head or rests head on arm during writing tasks | **Symptoms of Under-Responsiveness**[ ]  loves looking at bright/shiny objects\*[ ]  prefers colorful items\*[ ]  demonstrates poor hand-eye coordination and visual perception[ ]  has difficulty visually tracking items moving throughout the environment [ ]  has difficult keeping place when reading[ ]  has difficulty sorting through competing visual input[ ]  enjoys fast paced video games\*[ ]  loves spending time in visually busy environments\*[ ]  difficulty locating an item in a busy visual environment [ ]  does not need to wear sunglasses[ ]  is not affected by stimulating blue light[ ]  has difficulty playing EyeSpy games[ ]  has difficulty recognizing road signs when driving\*Indicates sensory-seeking behavior. |

**GUSTATORY AND OLFACTORY (TASTE AND SMELL)**

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| **Symptoms of Over-Responsiveness**[ ]  talks about smells often[ ]  notices odors that others don’t [ ]  is sensitive to perfume/cologne [ ]  cannot tolerate conventional cleaning products[ ]  doesn’t like candles or air fresheners[ ]  avoids places with strong smells cannot tolerate playing ‘smelly’ sports (e.g., hockey)[ ]  has a limited food repertoire and does not like the taste/smell of certain foods[ ]  becomes distressed by being around others who might smell [ ]  is considered a picky eater[ ]  sensitive to new food textures | **Symptoms of Under-Responsiveness**[ ]  is unaware of some smells[ ]  prefers strong flavors of foods\*[ ]  does not recognize body odor[ ]  wears a lot of perfume/cologne\*[ ]  prefers when others wear perfume/cologne[ ]  likes the smell of strong smells (e.g., soaps, gasoline, cleaning products)\*[ ]  loves candles and air fresheners\* [ ]  enjoys places with strong smells[ ]  needs to smell things before tasting them\*[ ]  prefers chewy, crunchy, and/or hard to chew foods\*Indicates sensory-seeking behavior. |