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[Home](#) > Sensory Processing Disorder

## Sensory Processing Disorder

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A neurological medical condition, sensory processing disorder or SPD is a term used by health care professionals to describe patients who experience difficulties regarding sensory information. These problems may start from difficulty in recognizing the stimulus, to processing the information, and eventually, to reacting to the stimulus in the environment.

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### Description

SPD should not be mistaken for deafness or blindness. This is because unlike blind or deaf patients, people with SPD can still receive sensory information. However, the problem arises when the brain registers, interprets and processes the sensory information differently as compared to normal people. The difficulties in the brain processing of sensory information manifest through unusual behavior in response to the physical stimulus. Symptoms of SPD include problems with usual activities of daily living including personal hygiene, inability to concentrate, plan and organize, hypersensitivity, withdrawal confusion, fear, distress or agitation.

SPD has not been categorized in the official categorization of neurological disorders, such as the ICD-10 and the DSM-IV-TR. The American Academy of Pediatrics is one of the health organizations that do not view SPD as a distinct diagnosis. Rather, they believe that SPD is simply a feature of other disorders. For Instance, AAP recommends that a diagnosis of SPD must only be made if it is a symptom of childhood anxiety disorder, attention-

deficit/hyperactivity disorder, autism spectrum disorder, or developmental coordination disorder. Although it is still under further research, the term has been utilized by many practitioners.

## Types

Many health professionals use the term SPD to broadly refer to three types or primary diagnostic groups. This categorization was the result of the research by Lucy, J. Miller, Ph.D., et.al.

- **Type I SPD** is called Sensory Modulation Disorder (SMD). SMD involves over/ under response to sensory stimuli, or over/under seeking of sensory stimulation. In this condition, the attributes of the stimulus, such as its frequency, intensity, duration, novelty, and complexity are differently processed. The symptoms of SMD include fear-anxiety patterns, stubborn, negative or self-absorbed behaviors.
- **Type II SPD** is referred to as Sensory Based Motor Disorder (SBMD). As the term implies, SBMD includes symptoms that show disorganization in motor response such as dyspraxia and postural control difficulties.
- **Type III SPD** is named Sensory Discrimination Disorder (SDD). SDD refers to the condition in which there is an abnormal processing of auditory or visual sensory information. This may manifest as lack of attention, difficulty concentrating, and disorganized or negative behaviors.

## Treatment

There are several therapies used to manage SPD [1]. One of these is sensory integration therapy, a type of occupational therapy in which the patient enters a room where all his senses would be stimulated and challenged. Other therapies include Active Engagement (fun activities), Child Directed (child initiates therapeutic activities), Just Right Challenge (challenging playful activities), and Music Therapy (peaceful activities while listening to calming music).

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**Source URL:** <https://explorable.com/sensory-processing-disorder?gid=23090>

### Links

[1] <http://www.spdfoundation.net/about-sensory-processing-disorder.html>