

Working with sensational children: a difficult child or a child in difficulty ?

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Understanding Behaviour



“The purpose of behaviour is to get our needs met, it is a form of communication”

Definitions

‘Challenging behaviour is largely learnt through a history of interaction between the individual and their environment’

‘Behaviour serves a function, our role is to establish what it is’

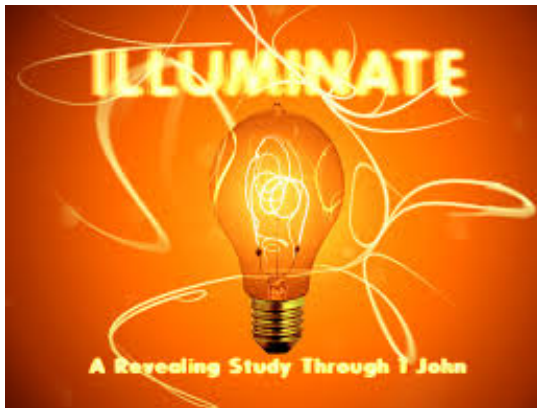
OMRDD Strategies for Crisis Intervention and Prevention - 1988

The sensory cause needs....

Illumination

NOT

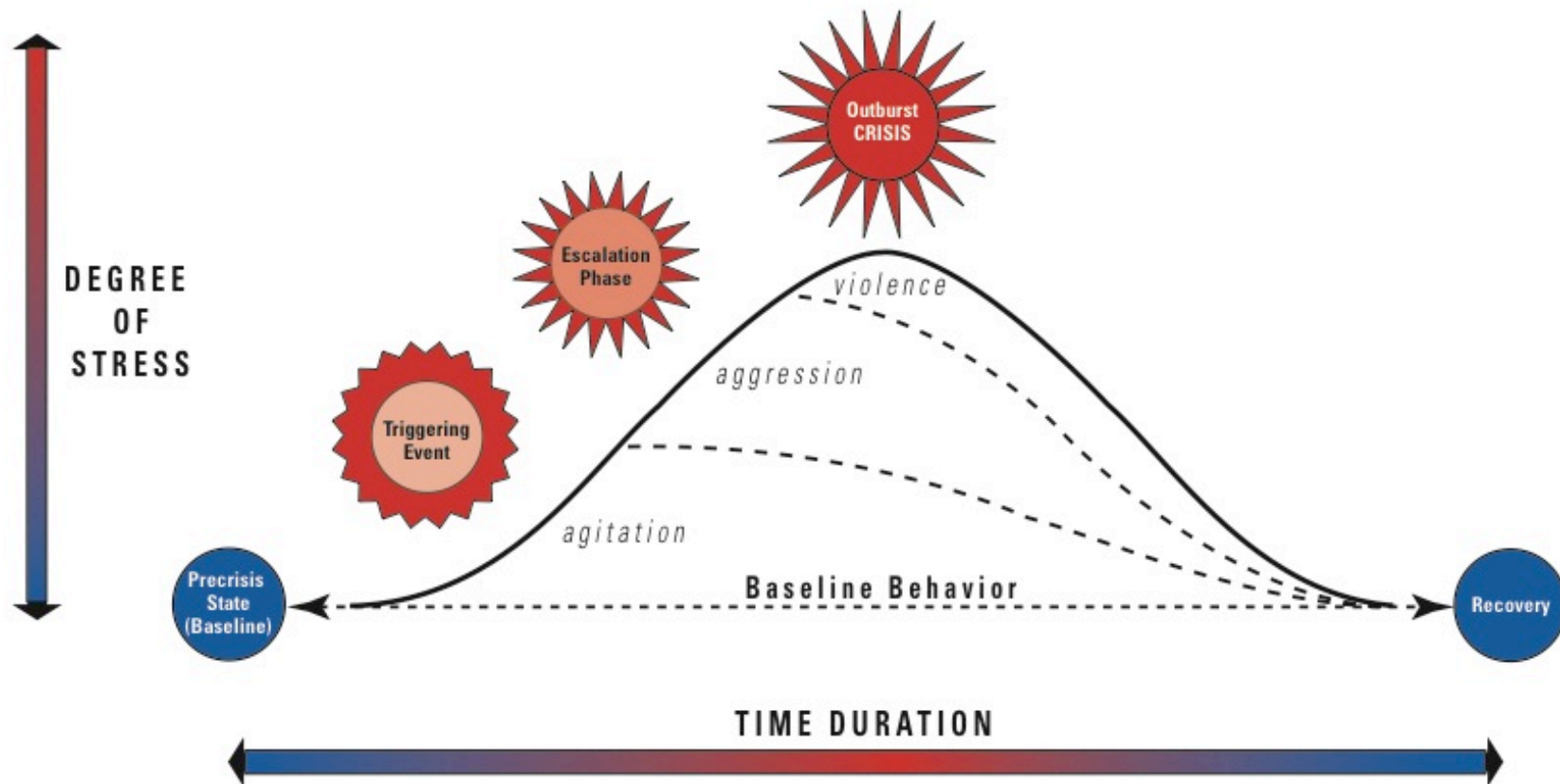
Elimination



Sensory or behaviour?

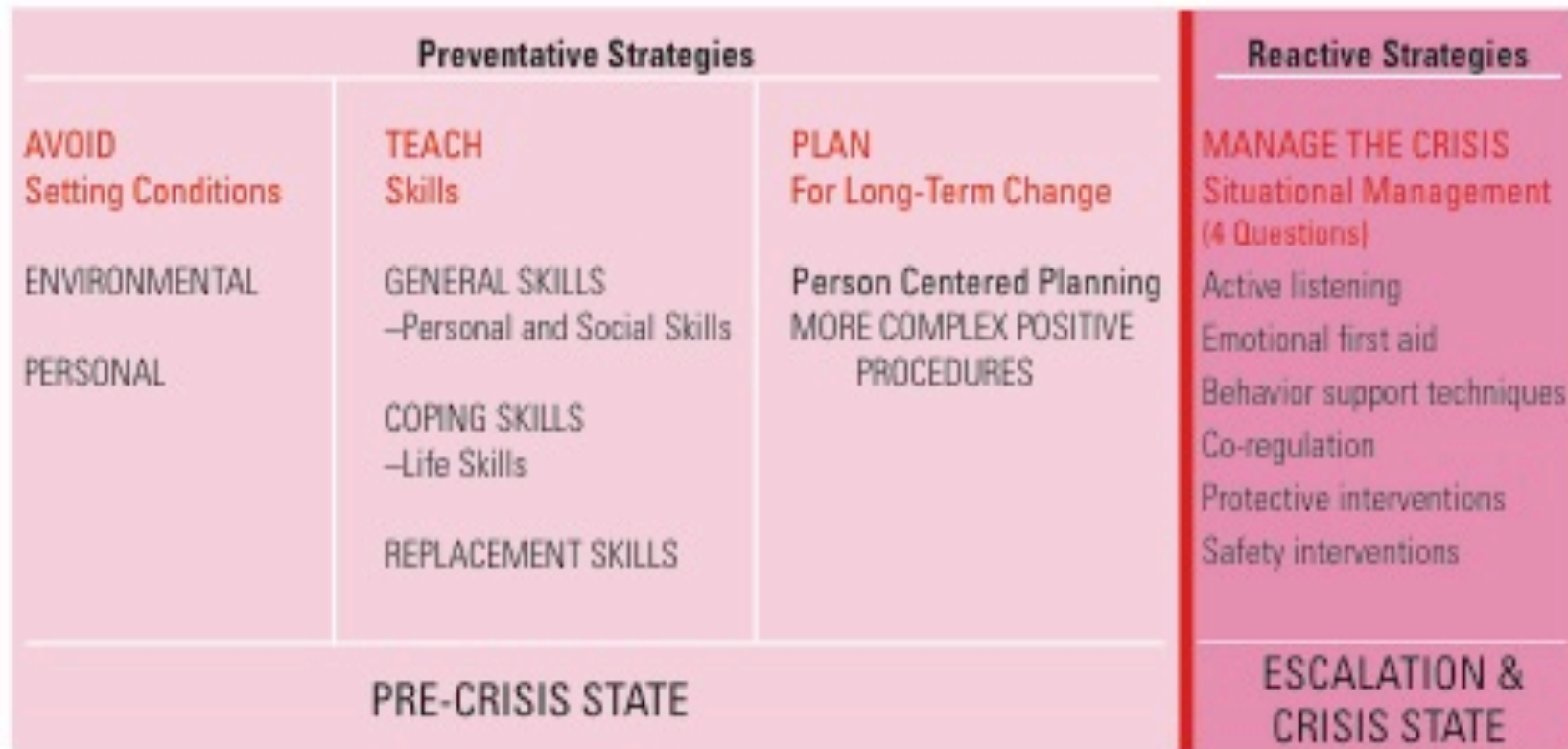


Stress Model of Crisis



Non-Aversive Multi Element Model (NAME)

The NAME Model*



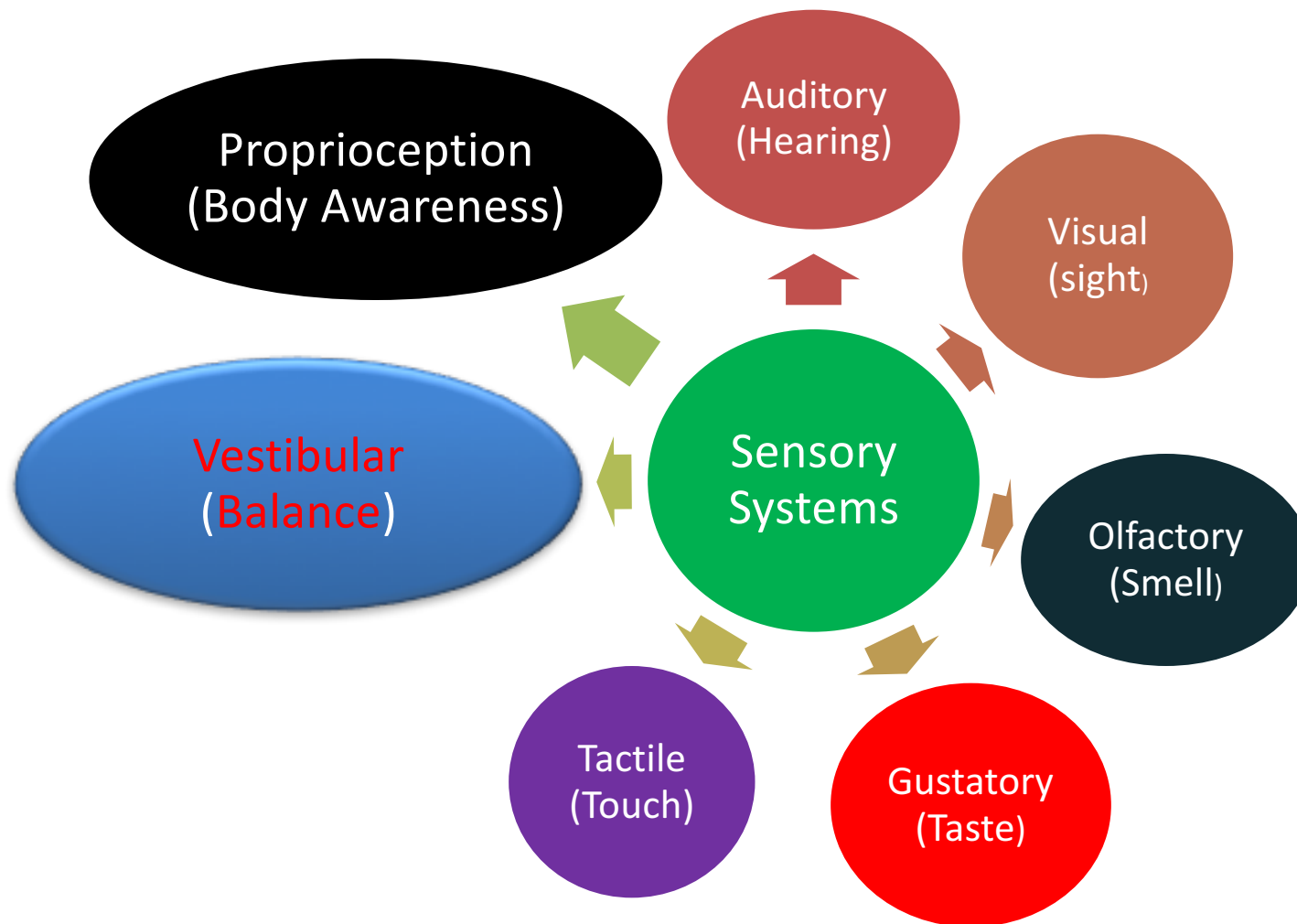
*Adapted from Wright & Sumner, 2001


TRIGGER

Functional Assessment Categories of Behaviour (Motivation)

- **I**llness
- **H**abit
- **S**ensory
- **E**scape
- **A**ttention
- **T**angible

The 7 senses (Sensory Systems)



What is sensory processing?

- Once the body takes in the information from our senses the brain then works to decide what that information means. Memory and response time to information play an important part in interpretation.
- Throughout the day there is a continuous flow of sensory information coming. The brain therefore has to prioritise and emphasise what responses are needed most.

Example



Many different sensations are present when completing activities;

“A child colouring in a colouring book”

- **Tactile stimulation** – the child feels with his hands and forearms whilst using the crayons, the colouring book or the table he is working at.
- **Visual input** – from the colours, the objects he is working on and other objects/people that around him in the environment.
- **Auditory input** - noises around him in the environment such as people talking, noise crayons make against the colouring book.
- **Smell** - from the crayons, colouring book, odours in the environment.
- **Proprioceptive input** – his position in relation to table and crayon to colouring book.

Sensitisation and habituation

Two abilities are used by our sensory system in order to decide what information is important.

- **Sensitisation** – the process of directing attention to stimuli that is most important in a specific situation. This process is used by the central nervous system as a defensive or alerting mechanism. This process is triggered if a situation is novel, there is particular obstruction or a potential threat.
- **Habituation** – the process of recognising that something familiar has occurred. This allows the body to overlook sensations that are recognisable, so that the person can attend to things that are less well known.

Main concerns of sensory processing difficulties

- Change blindness
- Risk of self harming behaviour
- Lack of pain awareness
- Difficulties learning from the environment and understanding safety
- Undesirable behaviour
- Frequent stress and anxiety

Types of Sensory Processing Difficulties – examples?

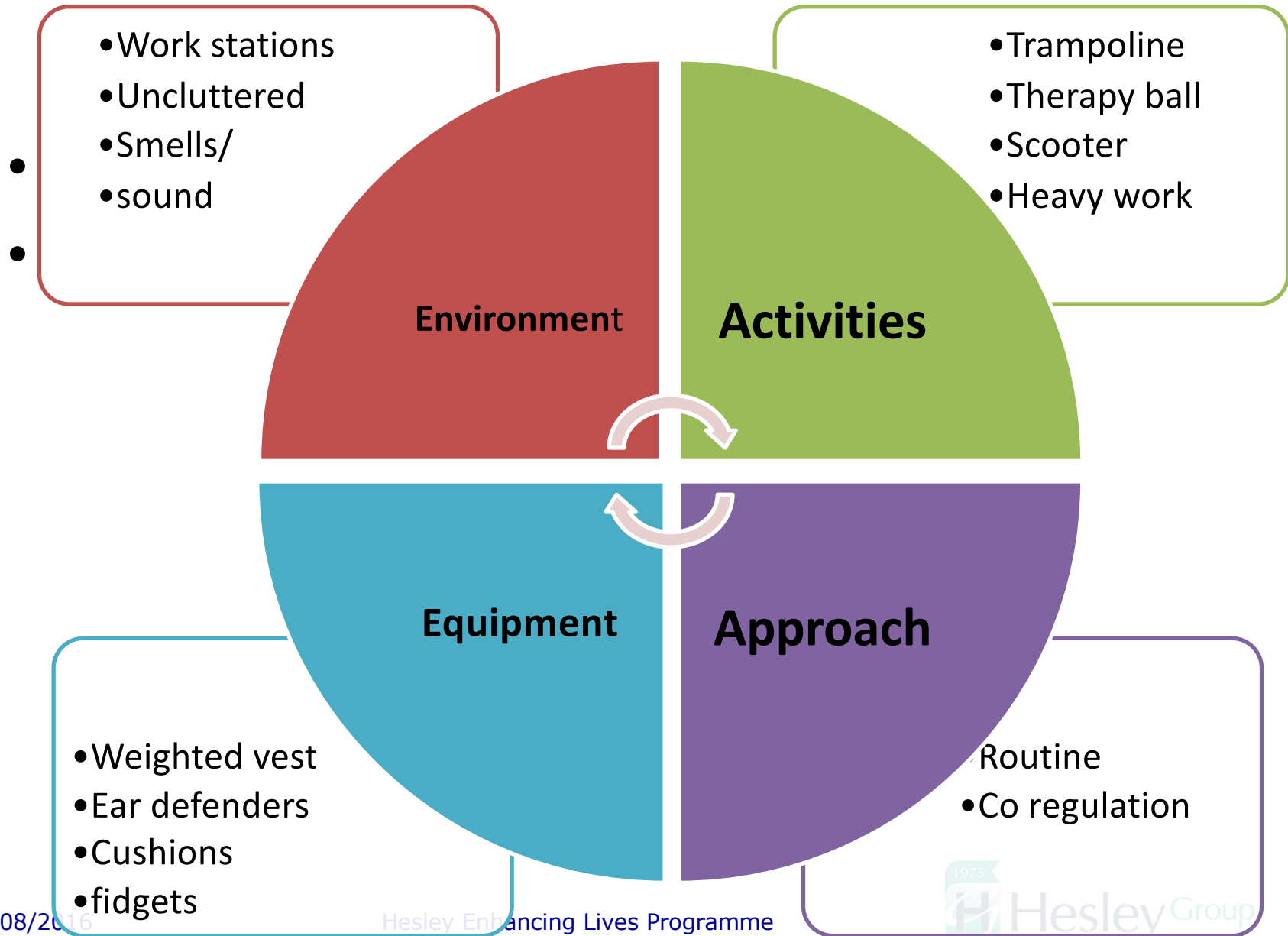
- **Sensation Seeking** – this type of individual tries to add extra sensory input to every experience. They may do this by making noises while completing tasks, putting inappropriate things into their mouths, move their body excessively.
- **Poor registration** – this type of individual requires an extreme amount of input to even notice what is going on around them. This person may present with flat affect and disinterested in all and anything.
- **Sensation Avoiding** – this type of individual attempts to limit the amount of input by actively avoiding. They dislike change, may create specific routines and rituals and become highly upset if they change.
- **Sensory Sensitivity** - This type of individual has heightened sensitivity to sensory input, they have difficulty focusing on tasks for any length of time and are constantly alerting to something new.

Unacceptable behaviours ?

Sensory cause

Behaviours	Sensory cause
Hitting self or others /pinching	Deep touch and deep proprioception
Biting self or others	As above
Chewing on clothes or items	As above
Rocking /spinning	Linear or Rotary vestibular –visual if eyes open
Throwing self to floor-crashing	Vestibular-deep touch-prop
Teeth grinding	Deep prop, vestibular form vibration and auditory
Screaming non-stop	Auditory and vestibular

Sensory diet:



So what do we know?

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Finally

Understanding sensory causes to behaviour will

- provide us with more tools to help children with behaviours of concern
- improve their happiness and well being
- and thereby enable us to support children to improve their quality of life



Questions of

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