



Synced For Success: An Online Training Series to Address Trauma and Sensory-Related Behaviors

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BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

- Provident Charter School (PCS)
 - Grades: 2-8, Ages: 7-13 years
 - Specialized school for students with dyslexia with high prevalence of trauma and sensory-related behaviors
- 1 in 6 children has sensory-related dysfunction¹
- 1 in 4 children has been exposed to a traumatic event¹
- 51% of children exhibiting sensory-related challenges also present with full or partial post-traumatic stress symptoms²
- Sensory and/or trauma-related dysfunction can cause an extended state of fight or flight, making it difficult for children to follow directions, recall instructions, and attend to tasks, thereby disrupting the classroom dynamic³
- The staff at PCS expressed a need to increase confidence and satisfaction in addressing and responding to sensory and trauma-related behaviors in the classroom.
- Evidence supports teacher training on behavior management to foster successful academic instruction and a positive school environment⁴

OBJECTIVES

- Educate teachers, staff, and clinicians on trauma and sensory-related behaviors through the provision of educational modules and informational handouts
- Facilitate application of teacher, staff, and clinician's knowledge through an interactive, case-based module
- Infer feasibility of trauma and sensory-related materials, handouts, and interactive sessions on increasing confidence and satisfaction in identifying and responding to behaviors in the classroom

POPULATION

PCS Teachers & Staff

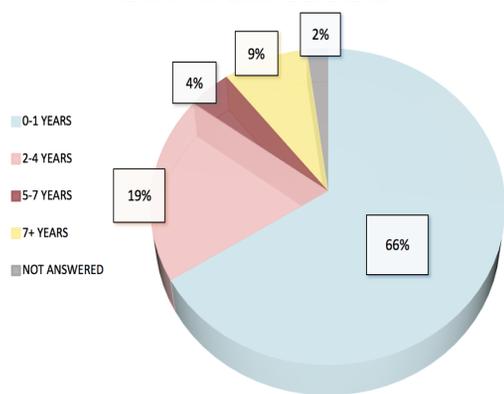
General education teachers, emotional support teachers, and enrichment staff

- Total number of staff: 103
- Total number of teachers: 58
- Student-teacher ratio: 5:1

Participants (see chart)

- PCS Teachers and staff: 15
- OT/OTAs: 5
- OT Students: 29
- Non-PCS Teachers: 1

PARTICIPANTS (N= 50)
YEARS OF PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE



OUTCOME MEASURES

Confidence & Satisfaction Among Teachers

- Trauma and sensory-related behaviors
- Likert scale

Knowledge Check Questions

- 10 multiple choice questions

Case-Based Module Feedback

- Live case-based module
- Interprofessional attendees
 - Clinicians
 - Teachers
 - OTD Students

How confident are you in identifying trauma-related behaviors in the classroom?

Confidence Level	Not At All Confident	Not Very Confident	Neutral	Somewhat Confident	Very Confident
Pre Confidence Trauma	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Post Confidence Trauma	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

How satisfied are you with current resources available to address sensory-related behaviors in the classroom?

Satisfaction Level	Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Satisfied	Very Satisfied
Pre Satisfaction Sensory	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Post Satisfaction Sensory	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

What did you find helpful about this module?

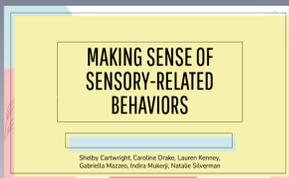
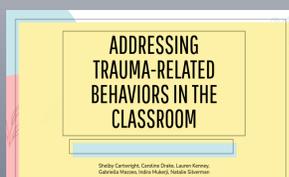
In what ways will tonight's module change the way you practice or teach?

METHODS & MATERIALS

PROCESSES



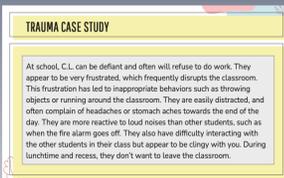
DIDACTIC MODULES



KNOWLEDGE CHECK

- Tactile defensiveness is most commonly associated with which of the following?
- Sensory Avoidant
 - Sensory Under-Responsive
 - Sensory Seeking
 - Sensory Over-Responsive

CASE-BASED MODULE



GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What are your initial thoughts on this case?
- What behaviors are you noticing?

HANDOUTS

TRAUMA-INFORMED CLASSROOM: Creating a Safe Environment

Clear Expectations & Structured Routine

- At the start of class, review behavioral expectations with specific examples of what those behaviors look like.
- Review the schedule for the day and have a visual copy of the schedule posted that students can easily see.
- Provide extra reminders about changes in routine for students who struggle with transitions.
- Ask for permission, i.e., "I'm going to help you put your coat on. Is that okay?"

Unconditional Positive Regard

Helps children develop positive attachment with teacher

- Begin the day by greeting each student individually.
- Recognize student strengths regardless of school performance.

Encourage Exploration & Expression

- Provide opportunities for children to explore, learn, and play without negative consequences, i.e., time and space each month for students to learn through science experiments without results affecting their grade.
- Provide open and supportive communication.
- Provide a "writing vocabulary" to improve students' ability to express their emotions.

SENSORY TOOLS

Shopping List

- Earplugs, Noise-Cancelling Headphones
- Weighted Blanket
- Stress Balls
- Chewable Pencils
- Staples
- Stapler
- Staple Remover
- Staple Remover
- Staple Remover
- Staple Remover

Fun Game: Candy Struck!

- 100% Fun

Try and Apply: Sensory-Based Instruction Apps

- 100% Fun

DISCUSSION

- Through our needs assessment, the teachers and staff at PCS reported an increased prevalence of trauma and sensory-related needs amongst their student body and, consequently, a need for education on these behaviors.
- Due to the high prevalence of these behaviors in children in the community as a whole and the benefits of a collaborative approach, we expanded our target audience to include clinicians and occupational therapy students. This expansion allowed us to infer the feasibility of our education materials and their applicability beyond the classroom.
- We found that there was a positive trend regarding levels of confidence in responding to trauma and sensory-related behaviors and satisfaction with available materials. Pre-implementation, levels of confidence and satisfaction were widely dispersed across the Likert scale. Post-implementation, all respondents displayed a shift towards being "somewhat" or "very" confident and satisfied.
- Participants in our final case-based scenario module, *Turning Knowledge into Action*, reported that live instruction and collaborative group discussion enhanced their overall comprehension. Participants also indicated a high likelihood of using our education training series in the future. Teachers and staff especially benefited from having occupational therapists participate in and share their expertise during this session.

STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS

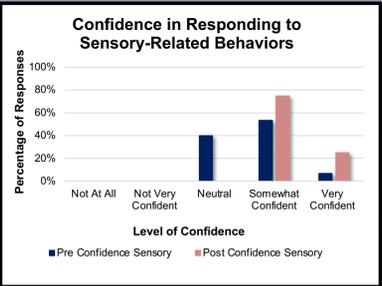
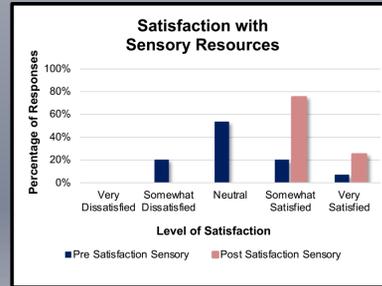
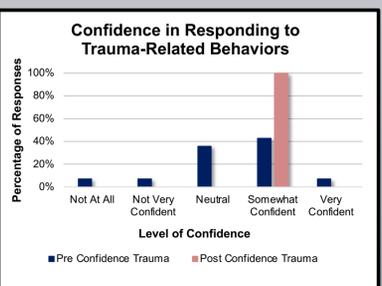
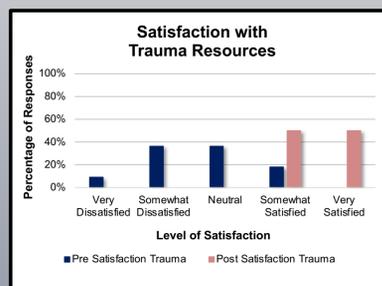
The ability to work virtually in collaboration with PCS allowed us to continue the development of our project despite the **COVID-19 pandemic** and related restrictions. A benefit of a virtual project was the opportunity to **increase access and sustainability** of our education and materials, thereby fostering expansion beyond our original target population. However, the need to adapt elements to meet COVID-19 guidelines did force us to **forego certain on-site activities**. Additionally, unforeseen COVID-19 related responsibilities placed on teachers **significantly limited participation**. Ultimately, these challenges created the opportunity to introduce **creative thinking** in our approach, strengthening our **problem-solving** and **clinical reasoning skills**.

RESULTS

CONFIDENCE & SATISFACTION AMONG TEACHERS

Pre-Survey Participants: n=15

Post-Survey Participants: n=4



"I will be more aware of signs of trauma or sensory issues in the clients I work with and will more carefully consider how my responses and interactions impact my clients from a trauma and sensory standpoint."

"It was helpful to apply the information from the presentations to the case studies. This facilitated learning and it was helpful to hear responses from the various attendees as well."

"I liked using a real case to work through and apply the knowledge I learned."

KNOWLEDGE CHECK QUESTIONS

Addressing Trauma-Related Behaviors in the Classroom
average respondent score: **93%**

Making Sense of Sensory-Related Behaviors average respondent score: **77%**

CONCLUSION

Occupational therapists are experts in utilizing a holistic and creative approach for sensory-based and trauma-informed care. We are uniquely positioned to create and provide training on identifying and addressing sensory and trauma-related behaviors. It is imperative to appropriately educate teachers, clinicians, and occupational therapy students on trauma and sensory-related behaviors to support elementary school student participation and ensure their success in the classroom. Evidence-based education and training generates foundational knowledge and skills. Participants can then disseminate these skills amongst their peers and help change the way our respective professions approach trauma and sensory-related behaviors in children.

Despite barriers, we determined that providing knowledge through a virtual platform can still produce effective results and have a positive impact on improving professional skills. The addition of a case-based module was an important part in facilitating learning and comprehension of educational material.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Understanding the principles of *Synced for Success* will allow teachers and clinicians to:
 - Effectively train others on the interplay of trauma and sensory-related dysfunction
 - Apply trauma-informed care to their respective professions
 - Act as advocates for individuals with related needs
- Decision tree
- In-person events

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