

Autism, ADHD, and SPD Explained

What is it?

AUTISM

A developmental disability that affects communication, behavior, and social skills.

ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER (ADHD)

A difference in brain development and brain activity that affects attention, ability to sit still, self-control, and can affect a child's success in school and relationships. Average age of diagnosis is around 7 years old.

SENSORY PROCESSING DISORDER (SPD)

A condition in which the brain has difficulty processing sensory information and responding appropriately to that information. These children typically have one or more senses that either over or under-react to stimulation.

What to look for?

AUTISM

- Decreased eye contact
- Does not respond to their name
- Difficulty having a conversation
- Speaks with sing-song or monotone rhythm
- Difficulty recognizing facial expressions, tone, and body language
- Sensitivity to light, noise, and texture
- Intense focus on certain objects or activities

ADHD

- Inattentive easily distracted, lose track of their things, have trouble staving on task, unsafe driving
- Hyperactive fidgety, restless, easily bored, may rush through things
- Impulsive act quickly before thinking, may interrupt, push, or grab, impatient, risky behaviors, and emotional reactions inappropriate for the situation

SPD

- Over Responsive overly sensitive to sensory input, such as sounds or odors. May find clothing or physical contact unbearable
- Under Responsive little to no reaction to sensory input (e.g. pain or extreme temperatures) or have a slower response to sensation



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Similarities

AUTISM

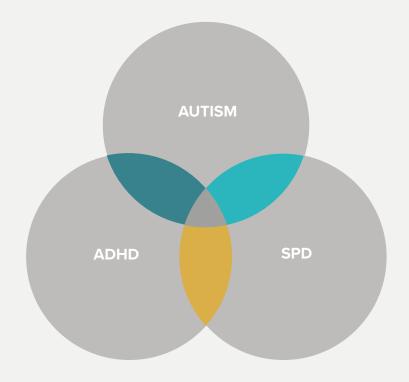
- · Restless, unable to concentrate
- Frequent meltdowns
- Anxious and may act out in social settings
- · Say they can't "shut off" their brain
- Impulsive, inappropriate touching of others, inappropriate and frequent movement, distractible, unaware when spoken to, difficulty following multi-step directions.

ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER (ADHD)

- Having one condition can increase chances of having symptoms of the other
 - Ex: kids with language difficulties are more likely to have reading disorders
- How symptoms can overlap:
 - Trouble paying attention (language difficulties can make it seem like kids aren't paying attention)
 - Trouble socially (eye contact and getting in people's space)

SENSORY PROCESSING DISORDER (SPD)

- SPD more frequently occurs in those with autism Both can result in sensitivity to stimulation
 - Ex: Touch, textures, lights, noises, smell
- Both can involve misinterpretation of sensory signals



RESOURCES

SPD: https://sensoryhealth.org/

ADHD: https://chadd.org/

Autism: https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/links.html

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