

DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY of CALIFORNIA

Sensory Diets: Conception, Misconception and Real World Application

Julia Wilbarger, Ph.D., OTR/L
Allison Hunt, B.S., OTS
Morganne Peterson, B.S., OTS
Emily White, B.S., OTS

DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY of CALIFORNIA

Sensory Diets


All people need a certain amount of sensory and motor experiences to for optimal performance in daily life.

Wilbarger & Wilbarger, 2002

DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY of CALIFORNIA

Sensory Diets: Origins

Patricia Wilbarger, MEd, OT (1984) coined the term "sensory diet" to explain how certain sensory experiences can be used to enhance occupational performance in any individual as well as contribute to the remediation of developmental and sensory processing disruptions.



DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY of CALIFORNIA

Sensory Diets: Defined

- Sensory Diet are a carefully planned program of specific sensory-motor activities scheduled according to each individual’s needs (Wilbarger & Wilbarger, 2002).
- The type of sensation, intensity, quality of input, and time of implementation are key to the overall success of the plan.
- Takes into consideration each family’s schedule, preferences, and resources.

DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

4

Sensory Diets: Foundations

- Based on Ayres SI
 - Understanding the role of sensation in modulation, posture and praxis
 - Proactive (not reactive use of sensation)
- Task Analysis
- Development of Routines and Habits

DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

5

Sensory Diets: Origins

Patricia Wilbarger

- Originally used sensory diets as follow-up intervention for newborn & premature infants discharged from the NICU
- Applied in an Intensive Model: Avanti Camps
- Even before that...in large residential institutions & schools in Arizona, California and Pennsylvania

DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

6

Sensory Diets

- Based on work of
A. Jean Ayres, Ph.D., OTR
 - Theory of Brain-Behavior Relationships
 - “organization of sensation for use” related to adaptive response
 - Sensation is used to calibrate system for optimal responding
- Rooted in Tenets of OT

DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA 7

Sensory Diets: Do OT’s know what it is?

Google search (Updated Sept. , 2017)

- Sens Diet nearly 7,000,000 pages suggested
- Sens Diet and ASD 1,550,000 page suggestions
- Sens Diet and OT - 4,020,000 results
- Sens Diet and Wilbarger - 25,000 results

DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA 8

Sensory Diets: Purpose and Goals



- Must have a CLEAR goal!
- Promote optimum level of arousal, self-regulation & organization
 - Support any of the “A’s” regulated by the nervous system (CNS, ANS)
- Enhance sensory processing capacity to support postural development, motor planning & skill
- Decrease/Treat sensory defensiveness

DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA Sensory Diets 2017 Stackhouse & Wilbarger 9

Populations

- *Everyone* can benefit from a good sensory diet
- Children and adults who struggle with sensory defensiveness, sensory modulation, and basic arousal modulation are the key groups that will benefit from the Sensory Diet Approach
- Children and adults with a range of neurodevelopmental conditions or impacts will benefit from the Sensory Diet Approach

DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA 10

Capstone Project: Exploration of Sensory Diets

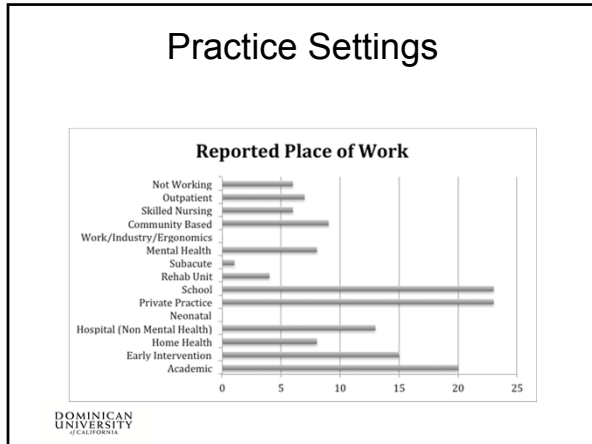
- Population: OTAC members
- 98 Respondents via SurveyMonkey
- Intended Findings:
 - Current use
 - Client and therapist characteristics
 - Education and training
 - Common modalities

DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Therapist Characteristics

- OT Experience
 - 1 - 50 years
- Average Length
 - 16 years
- Standard Deviation
 - 14 years
- Worked in all practice areas

DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA



Education and Training

Common responses (order of high to low):

- SIPT cert
- Continuing Ed Courses
- Wilbarger Protocol
- Therapeutic Listening
- Alert Program & Zones of Regulation
- Conferences
- M.O.R.E. Course
- Internet

DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Modalities

- Proprioception: Joint Compression
- Vestibular: Swinging
- Tactile: Textures
- Oral/Respiratory: Chewing
- Visual: Change Lighting
- Auditory: Music
- Physical Activity: Playground
- Self Regulation: ALERT Program

DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Clinical Reasoning of Sensory Diet Implementation

“Sensory Profile Assessment, clinical observations, parent report/interview, clinical 'trial/error' to see what works for the client.”

“I have patients complete the **interest inventory on Sensory Diet** and also the AASP with the accompanying treatment/sensory motor recommendations, so they choose the sensory motor activities which they are drawn to. I also observe their behavior and take in their self-report of what helps them to self regulate well.”

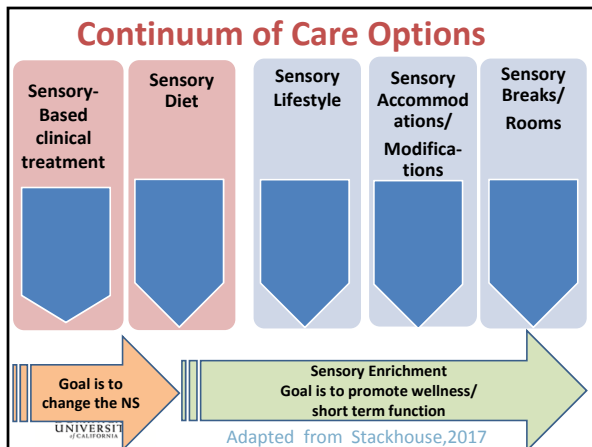
DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY
of CALIFORNIA

Clinical Reasoning of Sensory Diet Implementation

“By evaluating the **needs of the client**, the **environment** that is requesting OT help, and the **abilities of the caregiver** to manage a sensory plan.”

“Use it with the child in session with the parent observing and identify the change in behavior afterwards to determine if it is calming, alerting, or otherwise. Have parents practice it at home and chart which result they are experiencing. Have parent **identify patterns of behavior/arousal** throughout the day and what change they are looking for. Show them where they can place the tools to make that change and how to switch it around if it isn't working.”

DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY
of CALIFORNIA



ASSESSMENT & COLLABORATIVE PLANNING

A sensory diet is best designed by the family and therapist together.

DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA Sensory Diets 2017 Stackhouse & Wilbarger

Sensory Diet Planning

- Careful planning is critical.
- Activities and suggestions are incorporated into daily life.
- Collaboration with the client, family and caretakers is essential.
- Activities are based on the client and families preferences and capacities.

DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Planning the Sensory Diet

Requires set up, implementation and monitoring

- Where to start?
 - Your Assessment will guide you
- The structure should be set up specifically with monitoring included so it can be modified and managed

DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Planning the Sensory Diet

Requires set up, implementation and monitoring

- Where to start?
 - Your Assessment will guide you
- The structure should be set up specifically with monitoring included so it can be modified and managed

DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Gathering Information

- Sensory History Interview
- Routines Based Interview/Questionnaires
- Direct Observation & Treatment
- Video and Records Review

- Then, make a hypothesis of your theory for that child – what is your goal?

DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA Sensory Diets: 2017 Stackhouse & Wilbarger 23

Goal Oriented

- What are you trying to achieve with this treatment approach?
- Given the goal:
 - What do you know about the child’s resources?
 - What is their profile of strengths and weaknesses?
 - How does the sensory basis of their challenges relate to life challenges?
 - Following cues as a beginning – **then the real work starts!**

DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA Sensory Diets: 2017 Stackhouse & Wilbarger 24

Sensory Diet Elements

- Specific Sensory-Based Activities on a Time Schedule
- Modifications to:
 - Routines
 - Interactions
 - Tasks
 - Environments
- Development of lifestyle habits and patterns

DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

25

Build a Daily Schedule

	Sensory-based Activities	Routines & Transitions	Environment & Task Adaptations	Interaction Adaptions
Wake -Up				
AM				
Lunch				
Early PM				
Dinner				
Bed-time				

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Sensory Diet Example

DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Take home...

- Sensory Diet is not just incorporating Sensory-rich activities into the day
- Carefully planned treatment program
- **Goal is to shift functioning and adaptation.**

DOMINICAN
UNIVERSITY
CALIFORNIA
