

New Perspectives in Autism & BEST Strategies for School

For: TDSB OT/PT Professional Support Services

May 6th, 2022 (Online Delivery)

9:00 a.m. to 4:30p.m. (Eastern)

This one-day interactive workshop will provide an overview of DSM-5 diagnostic criteria for autism spectrum disorder (ASD), prevalence, sex differences, common co-occurring developmental disabilities, medical and mental health conditions, sensory processing differences, recommended sensory processing assessments, new perspectives in interpreting autism and the need for OTs and PTs to adopt strengths-based and neurodiversity affirming practices.

The afternoon will focus on BEST (Body, Emotional, Sensory and Thinking) evidence-based interventions to improve function and participation for autistic children and youth at school (with a focus on self-regulation).

Small group activities, case studies, practice opportunities, ongoing reflection and discussion will be utilized.

**Please note that the presenter's clinical experience is primarily with autism spectrum disorder and that the case studies/videos used will focus on autism spectrum disorder. The sensory systems & BEST strategies can be applied to all children and youth who present with sensory processing challenges.*

Workshop Agenda

9:00-9:30	Best Hopes & Introductions
9:30-10:30	The 8 Sensory Systems
10:30-10:45	Morning Break
10:45-12:00	New Perspectives in our Understanding of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
12:00 -1:00 p.m.	Lunch
1:00-2:00	Recommended Sensory Processing Assessments & Key Solution Focused Questions to Include
2:00-2:45	BEST* (Body, Emotional, Sensory, Thinking) Strategies for School
2:45-3:00	Afternoon break
3:00-4:30	BEST Strategies for School Continued & Case Studies

Learning Objectives

By the end of this workshop, you will be able to:

1. Explain sensory processing, the eight sensory systems & their relationship to behaviours
2. Describe new ways of interpreting autism as well as latest relevant research findings
3. Answer the Question: Is it Sensory or is it Behaviour?
4. Gain and awareness of recommended sensory processing assessments for school
5. Implement key solution-focused questions to help you in gathering helpful assessment information
6. Select and implement BEST* (Body, Emotional, Sensory and Thinking) evidence-based interventions to improve function and participation for autistic children and youth at school (with a focus on self-regulation).

About the Presenter

Maira Peña, BScOT, MOT, OT Reg. (Ont.) is an occupational therapist working at Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital in Toronto who has dedicated her career to supporting children and youth on the autism spectrum and others who experience sensory processing differences. She is an Expert Hub Team member of the ECHO Ontario Autism Program which aims to further develop pediatricians, school psychologists' and teachers' skills to screen, diagnose and best support children and youth on the autism spectrum in Ontario. She has presented nationally and internationally to parents, teachers, pediatricians, occupational therapists and other allied health care professionals. She is a published researcher and the creator and host of Holland Bloorview's Autism Summit.