

A reflection on integrating sensory modulation and emotional regulation in occupational therapy practice

DATE

9 June 2026

PROVIDER

OT Online Courses Ltd

STUDY TIME

1.5h

REFLECTIVE STRUCTURE

Rolfe

LEARNING ACTIVITY TYPE

Formal / Educational

WHAT?

I recently completed an online training session focused on sensory modulation and emotional regulation within mental health practice. This comprehensive programme provided valuable insights into the intricate relationship between sensory processing and an individual's capacity for emotional regulation. The training explored key concepts such as identifying sensory preferences, understanding the utility of grounding techniques, and familiarising myself with various sensory assessment tools.

Furthermore, the session emphasised a trauma-informed approach to care, highlighting its importance when working with individuals experiencing emotional dysregulation. A significant takeaway was the practical application of these principles, with a dedicated focus on strategies for integrating sensory regulation into daily routines, personal roles, and overall participation in meaningful occupations. This training has equipped me with a more nuanced understanding of how sensory experiences impact mental wellbeing.

SO WHAT?

This training has profoundly deepened my understanding of the intrinsic link between sensory modulation and emotional regulation. I now recognise that sensory processing is not merely about comfort but is a fundamental determinant of emotional stability, impacting an individual's ability to engage with their environment and manage distress. My previous perspective on daily routines and roles, often viewed through a purely functional lens, has been broadened to acknowledge the critical role sensory regulation plays in enabling meaningful participation.

I have gained a more integrated view, understanding that sensory modulation is a vital pathway to achieving effective emotional regulation. The practical application of sensory strategies within the context of daily life is now much clearer. I can see how to translate theoretical concepts into tangible interventions that support clients in their everyday routines, roles, and engagement in occupations, thereby enhancing their overall occupational performance and wellbeing.

NOW WHAT?

Moving forward, I am committed to integrating the principles learned into my practice. I will proactively incorporate questions about sensory preferences and sensitivities into my initial client assessments to develop a more holistic understanding of their unique needs and potential triggers. To provide immediate support during moments of distress or dysregulation, I will curate and practice a range of grounding techniques, adapting them for diverse client presentations and environments.

I also plan to research and pilot specific sensory assessment tools discussed during the training with a small cohort of clients, aiming to enhance the accuracy and depth of my sensory profiling. Crucially, I will collaborate closely with clients to co-create personalised sensory regulation plans. These plans will be designed to align with their daily routines, roles, and participation goals, thereby empowering them in their journey towards self-management and improved occupational wellbeing.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS MAPPING

Understand and analyse activity and occupation and their relation to and effect on health, wellbeing and function, as part of occupational formulation, diagnosis, and therapeutic use of occupation

This reflection demonstrates an enhanced understanding of how activity and occupation relate to health, wellbeing, and function, specifically through the lens of sensory modulation and its impact on emotional regulation and participation.

Select and use relevant standardised and non-standardised assessment techniques, and observation, to gather information about the service user's functional and occupational abilities, performance and participation, taking account of the cultural and environmental context

The intention to explore and trial specific sensory assessment tools directly reflects the standard of selecting and using relevant assessment techniques to gather information about a service user's functional and occupational abilities, performance, and participation.

Understand the need to meet the emotional, social, psychological, cognitive and physical health-based occupational needs of service users, across a range of practice areas and how this can vary across a range of practice areas

The reflection highlights an increased awareness of the need to meet the emotional, social, and psychological occupational needs of service users, particularly through the application of sensory regulation strategies within daily life.