

Living sensorially with dementia – understanding how we use our senses.

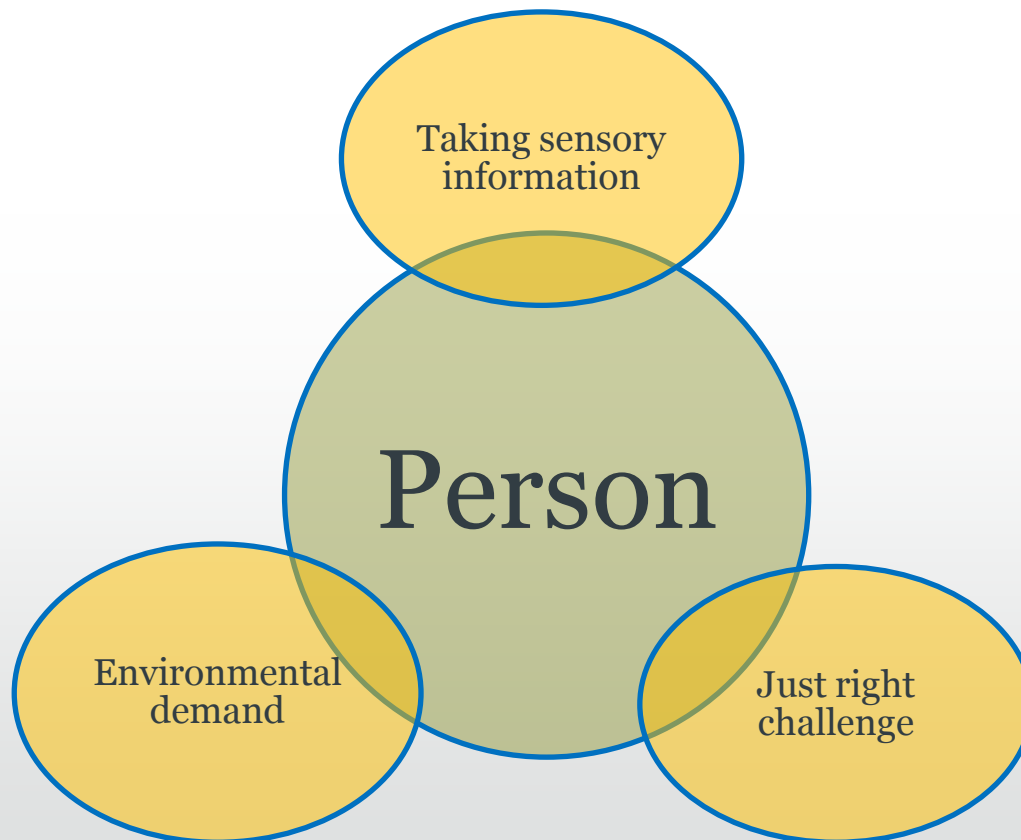
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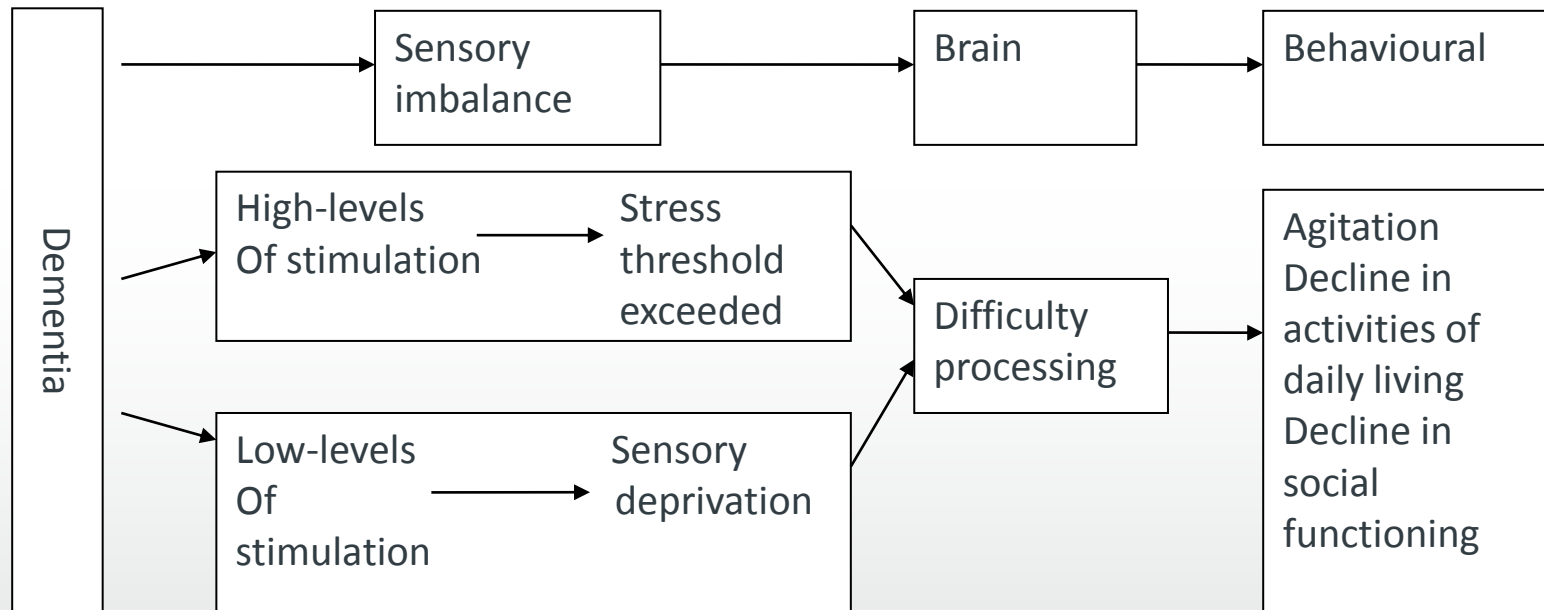
Problems experienced by people with dementia

- Poor concentration
- Restlessness / wandering
- Shouting out
- Aggressive behaviour
- Lost and disorientated
- Unable to do everyday activities or hobbies they used to enjoy
- Unhappy / depressed
- Anxious
- Difficulty following simple instructions
- Memory loss
- Loss of ability to interact socially
- Physically frail

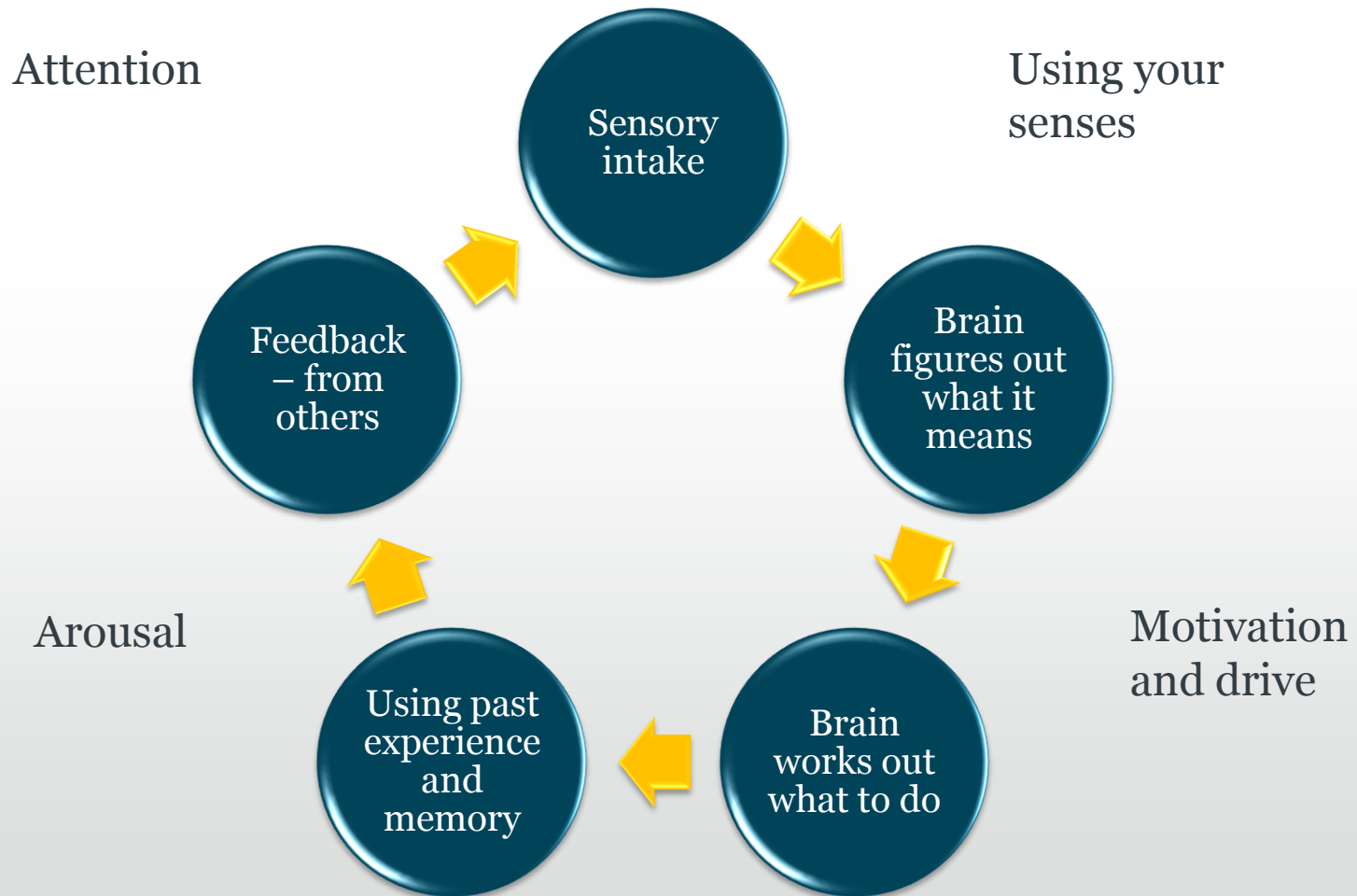
Sensory challenges



Environmental demand



Interpreting sensory information



How we respond to sensory information

Dunn, 2002

Sensory processing patterns are based on how our brains react to sensory stimulation and how we responds to that input.

Nervous system thresholds – thresholds for responding to stimulation based on sensory preference

Self regulation strategies - what we do to actively management that sensory input

Patterns of sensory processing assessed by the Sensory Profile

	Responding strategies	
Threshold / reactivity	Passive	Active
High threshold with low reactivity	Low registration (Bystander) Does not notice sensory events or is slow to respond	Sensory seeking (Seeker) Looks for sensory experiences
Low threshold with high reactivity	Sensory sensitivity (Sensor) Readily notices sensory stimuli, may be distracted by them	Sensory avoider (Avoider) Deliberately acts to reduce or prevent exposure to sensory stimuli

Strategies - Sensory seeker

- Sight – Bright lights, coloured objects to draw attention
- Sound – Have the radio / TV, faster tempo music
- Touch – Rummage boxes, things to interact with
- Taste – Spicy foods, hot and cold, sweet/ sour / bitter/ salt
- Smell – Citrus / peppermint
- Movement – walks, active activities

Think about how we respond to each of our senses

- Sight - visual
- Sound - Auditory
- Touch - Somatosensory / vibration
- Taste - Gustatory and texture
- Smell - Olfactory
- Movement - Vestibular / proprioception

Strategies - Low registration

- Sight – Bright lights, coloured objects to draw attention BUT use judiciously to draw attention
- Sound – Alarms, beepers to alert
- Touch – Rummage boxes, things to interact with
- Taste – Spicy foods, hot and cold, sweet/ sour / bitter/ salt
- Smell – Citrus / peppermint
- Movement – walks, active activities

Strategies - Sensory avoider / sensitivity

- Sight – Low level lighting
- Sound – Quiet or self selecting especially when doing something
- Touch – Avoid random stimulation (labels / tags)
- Taste – Familiar, be aware of textures
- Smell – Floral, sandalwood, familiar, orientating
- Movement – gentle, linear activities

Thank you for listening

