



Nau mai haere mai to Trish Barnett who has joined our team.

“ Prior to my new role at Spotswood College, I worked at BLENNZ (Blind Low Vision Education Network NZ) for 5 years as a Resource Teacher of Vision in the Taranaki Office. Prior to this I was at Inglewood High School in the Special Needs Department. The rest of my teaching career has been in various teaching and management positions in primary schools in Taranaki. I am really looking forward to my new role as a classroom teacher in Te Waka Manaaki and working alongside the students, teachers and teacher aides. “



Professional Development - Becoming Sensory Detectives

During our weekly meetings and recent teacher only day staff in Te Waka Manaaki partook in an online course on Sensory Processing Disorder. Staff developed a good understanding of our 8 senses, learnt about the importance of sensory integration in development, what a sensory processing disorder is, it's subtypes and how to identify the sensory needs of our students and support them moving forward.

Sensory Processing Disorder / Difficulty (SPD) - is when the brain finds it difficult to organise and respond to the messages it is receiving.

A persons with SPD finds it hard to process and act upon information received through the senses, which can create challenges performing everyday tasks.

The characteristics of SPD are often misunderstood to be negative behaviours.

These might include breaking things, biting, pushing people, figeting with objets, humming and rocking.



SENSES

Our External Senses:

We are all aware of the original **5 senses** - **touch, hearing, sight, smell and taste.**

These are our **external senses**, as all of the information comes from outside of our body and travels into it.

However, there are **3 more senses**, which is hugely important in development, paticularly when beginning to identify characterisitcs of SPD.

Our Internal Senses:

Proprioception – this sense tells our body where we are in space using feedback from our joints and muscles. It tells us if something is light or heavy.

Vestibular - this gives us a sense of movement and is modulated internally by fluid in the inner ear. It helps us to determine how fast or slow we are moving and relies on gravity, as well as information from our eyes.

Interoception – this internal sensation tells us how our body is feeling inside. It includes messages like how fast our heart is beating, if we need the toilet, if we are thirsty or tired.

Messages from our external senses can override recognising these internal feelings

SPD can mean that someone may be processing too many sensations through one or more of their senses (Hyper / over responsive) or not enough (hypo / under responsive).

Key Facts:

- **1 in 20 people have SPD**
- **SPD can affect anyone**
- **75% of those with autism are also diagnosed with SPD**
- **SPD is familiar with ADHD, Fragile X, Epilepsy, Dyspraxia, learning difficulties and many other diagnoses**