

# Increasing Awareness and Knowledge of Sensory Modulation Disorder among Occupational Therapists in Mental Health Settings – A Project Development

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**Key words:** sensory modulation disorder, mental health, occupational therapy

**Background:** Sensory modulation disorder (SMD) is characterized by difficulties in modulating and organizing behavioral responses to sensory input to meet environmental demands. SMD is common among individuals with mental illness. Although effective interventions have been developed for SMD in the field of mental health, they have not been adequately implemented in these settings. This manuscript describes the needs assessment process that led to the development of a project aimed at enhancing the awareness and knowledge of SMD among Israeli mental health occupational therapists. **Methods:** The needs assessment process

included interviews conducted with occupational therapists in staff positions ,as well as a survey of those working with adults within the mental health system (N=65). The occupational therapists interviewed agreed that they lack sufficient awareness and information regarding SMD. Similarly, the survey indicated that 65% of responders have little knowledge in this area of practice and 78% reported that they did not use sensory-based interventions. However, 94% were interested in better understanding the subject. This needs assessment process highlighted the need to develop a project that will meet this need. **Project results:** A manual and an accompanying lecture have been developed for occupational therapists. The manual contains information regarding SMD in general ,and specifically with regards to SMD among clients with mental health difficulties. The lecture provides an overview of the manual and helps occupational therapists assimilate the information it provides so that they can better implement techniques for individuals with SMD in mental health settings. **Clinical implications:** This project will improve occupational therapy interventions targeting SMD in Israeli mental health settings.