Home Assessment Modifications for Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder and Sensory Processing Disorder

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**Home Assessment Modifications for Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder and Sensory Processing Disorders**

By: Danielle Stelbasky, OTD/S

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**Mission and Vision**

**Mission:** To create safer, more accessible homes and environments for children and young adults with disabilities.

**Vision:** Inclusion for everyBODY.

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**Identified Needs of Tucker’s House**

**Why is there a need for specific home modifications for individuals with ASD and ASD-like behaviors?**

- **Growing population**
  - 1 in 54 children has been identified with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) according to CDC’s Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (ADDM) Network (Maenner et al., 2016).

- **Wandering and drowning**
  - Drowning remains the leading cause of death for children with ASD and accounts for ~90% of deaths associated with wandering or bolting, for those aged 14 and younger (Autism Speaks, 2017, p.28).

- **Caregiver burden**
  - 80% of caregivers of children with ASD report being “stretched beyond their limits” (Sharpley et al., 1997).
  - There is a clear relationship between elopement, aggression, self-injury, and temper tantrums on caregiver stress.

- **Environmental barriers due to sensory processing difficulties**
  - Typical homes are not suited for an individual w/ ASD or SPD, individuals may have difficulty regulating the following: visual, auditory, olfactory, tactile, vestibular, and proprioceptive systems.

- **Aggression, self-injury, and furniture damage**
  - 28% of 8-year-olds with ASD have self-injurious behavior (The Scott Center, 2019).

- **ASD is considered long-term and “nondegenerate”**
  - Because these individuals grow to be adults, adapting and alleviating barriers in their home environment is important to focus on because they are growing and changing individuals.

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**Goals of the Experiential Component**

- Identify needs for design specific to clients with ASD and/or sensory processing disorders
- Create a caregiver survey specific to ASD
- Observe and participate in home assessments and modifications
- Investigate sensory regulating products and systems
- Relate viable solutions for individuals with sensory impairments to live efficiently and safely at home
- Enhance communication skills with clients through self-reflections
- Determine how to integrate sensory enriching and calming experiences into home environment
- Conduct phenological research for individuals with ASD and ASD-like behaviors
- By incorporating the PEO model, identify barriers in clients’ homes and implement modifications to promote independence and occupational performance, to meet current AND future needs

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**Outcomes of the Project**

- **To reduce chance of wandering:**
  - Modifications for individuals w/ ASD and ASD-like behaviors

- **To reduce caregiver burden** (reduce environmental barriers in own home to feel safe, more independent, and happy in own homes):
  - Occupational Performance

- **To reduce environmental barriers due to sensory processing difficulties:**
  - Sensory regulating modifications for individuals w/ ASD and SPD

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**Acknowledgements**

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Teresa Plummer, PhD, OTR/L, CAPS, CEAS, ATP
Expert Mentor: Sandra Zaccari, PT
Belmont University, School of Occupational Therapy

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**References Available Upon Request**