



Activities for Self-Awareness

INTEROCEPTION

What is it?

The interoceptive sense provides information about sensations from our internal organs. It regulates functions such as hunger, thirst, digestion, body temperature, sleep, mood, heart rate, state of arousal. It runs on autopilot and makes us conscious of when we need to act (eat, drink, urinate, put a jumper on etc). If a child lacks efficient interoception they may not sense when they are hot, hungry or in pain.

What to look for?

- Difficulty recognising when they feel: hot, cold, hungry, thirsty, if their bladder is full so they may eat/drink more or less than others, may use the bathroom more frequently than they need to or have accidents
- Finding self-regulation challenging
- Struggling with focus and attention
- Frequently feeling nauseous
- Intense reaction to pain or extremely high pain tolerance
- Having trouble “feeling” their emotions – for example they might not feel fear because they don’t notice that their muscles are tense, and their heart is racing.
- Feeling emotions more intensely/ are overwhelmed by their emotions

What to try – little and very often:

- Mindfulness activities
- Body mapping activities/ activities where they have time to notice how their body is feeling
- Heavy work activities that will help the child feel grounded
- Verbally label what your child is experiencing for them ‘I have noticed... I’m wondering if...’
- Model how you are feeling “I am really tired, my head feels heavy”
- Emotion matching activities
- Social stories to explain hot and cold, when to go to the bathroom, how much to drink/eat and when etc.

*For more information about how we could work with you please contact:
IF@suffolk.gov.uk*

