

SEPTEMBER, 2013

“Weakness of attitude becomes weakness of character.” - Albert Einstein

Therakids

ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF EDUCATORS AND PLANTING THE SEEDS OF CLASSROOM WELLNESS.

WILBARGER DEEP PRESSURE PROTOCOL

People with sensory integration issues have difficulty processing sensory stimuli. This can involve over-stimulation or under-stimulation of the different senses. The result is varying levels of sensory defensiveness or hyposensitivity, as seen in conditions such as Autism. The Wilbarger Deep Pressure Protocol is a very specific protocol, which entails more than simple brushing of the skin. Additionally, it is never practiced in isolation of other occupational therapies for sensory integration. Occupational therapists devise an individualized treatment plan to meet the "sensory diet" needs of each client. Therefore, therapeutic brushing should always be done under the direction of a trained Occupational Therapist.

When the Wilbarger Deep Pressure Protocol is prescribed and recommended to address sensory and tactile defensiveness, it is very important to follow the guidelines....

The Deep Pressure Protocol needs to be performed every 2 hours, faithfully. If not, it can create further sensory dysregulation and sensory processing difficulties. If you cannot commit to the every 2 hours, than don't do it.

- The technique **must** be taught by a trained professional in order to establish competence in the amount of pressure and pattern for brushing.
- Do not let your child brush him/herself...unless they are old enough and competent to be trained to do it with the specific technique and protocol.
- Never brush the stomach; it can cause a severe systemic reaction.
- If a child is not tolerating the brushing, do **not** force it, not even in the beginning.
- You can always provide joint compressions independent of the brushing, and this can be achieved through a variety of activities.



The Deep Pressure Protocol

Therapeutic brushing requires the use of a special, soft, plastic surgical brush and no other kind. This brush is believed to be the most effective for the delivery of the specific type of stimulation to the nerve endings of the skin that is required by this protocol. The brushing applies very firm pressure, which begins at the arms and works down toward the feet. **The neck, stomach and chest areas are avoided.** Brushing should never scratch, tickle, or itch. Generally, within a few sessions, if performed correctly, you will see a change in the child's sensory thresholds. Brushing is always followed by joint compressions. Once you start brushing and joint compressions, you should never leave contact with the child.

Some of the benefits of brushing include:

- *An improved ability to transition between various daily activities
- *An improvement in the ability to pay attention
- *A decreased fear and discomfort of being touched (tactile defensiveness)
- *An increase in the ability of the central nervous system to use information from the peripheral nervous system more effectively, resulting in enhanced movement, coordination, functional communication, sensory modulation, and hence, self-regulation.

- 1) <http://www.ot-innovations.com/content/view/55/102/>
- 2) <http://asensorylife.com/to-brush-or-not-to-brush.html>
- 3) http://www.ehow.com/info_8358677_brushing-techniques-sensory-integration.html

For past newsletters, go to www.therakids.org. On the left side of the page click on Newsletters.

Therakids P.C. provides specialized occupational, physical and speech therapy services to help children overcome developmental concerns. Services are provided in the school setting throughout southwestern Illinois by licensed occupational therapists, occupational therapy assistants, physical therapists, physical therapist assistants and speech-language pathologists. **Email: www.therakids.org**

