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Parent Perceived Facilitators and Barriers to Implementation of Ayres Sensory Integration® (ASI) Parent Education Modules for Autistic Children

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Title of the Doctoral Presentation: Parent Perceived Facilitators and Barriers Regarding Implementation of Ayres Sensory Integration® (ASI) Parent Education Modules for Autistic Children

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Abstract

Introduction: Ayres Sensory Integration® (ASI) is an evidence-based intervention for children with challenges in sensory integration. Parent education is an integral part of ASI (Parham et al., 2011). To address parent education, researchers developed the ASI Parent Education Modules, developed by a team of researchers (Schaaf et al., 2015) and embellished by others (Roan et al., 2022) designed to educate parents about their child’s sensory integrative challenges, ideas for addressing these at home, and to promote collaboration between therapists and parents.

Objective: To examine parental perceptions of the facilitators and barriers impacting the implementation of ASI Parent Education Modules for autistic children experiencing sensory integration challenges.

Methods: A qualitative, phenomenological approach using a reflexive thematic analysis approach (Braun and Clarke 2006, 2022) was used to better understand parents' experiences with the modules and their perceived facilitators and barriers when using the ASI parent education modules.

Results: Three themes resulted from use of the analytic approach related to parents’ experiences learning about ASI, their child’s underlying sensory integration challenges, and activities they could do at home with their child: Challenges of Raising an Autistic Child as a Neurotypical Parent, Making the Connection, and Testing Limits and Pushing Boundaries.

Conclusion: Themes highlight the importance of ASI parent education and collaboration between occupational therapists and parents to promote client participation. Parents may have a limited understanding of ASI concepts and the rationale of sensory-rich activities in the clinic and at home. The results of the study indicate parents desire to understand their child's sensory integrative challenges, the rationale behind the intervention, and how to implement sensorimotor activities at home. The results further support parent education to improve therapeutic outcomes and promote children with sensory integrative challenges' participation in daily routines.

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Synopsis: This study utilized one-to-one virtual interviews to examine parents' perceptions of the facilitators and barriers to implementation of the ASI Parent Education Modules. Findings indicate that parents have limited knowledge of how help their children with sensory integrative challenges participate in their daily routines prior to using the ASI Parent Education Modules. After using the ASI Parent Education Modules, parents developed an understanding

of their child's sensory integrative differences and felt more comfortable implementing sensory-rich activities. Parents discussed the benefits of using sensory-rich activities at home to promote their child's participation in valued occupations.

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Keywords: Autism, Ayres Sensory Integration®, parent-education, occupational therapy

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