

# Marc Landry -Occupational Therapist

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## Format for 1.5 hr Keynote and 3 hour Breakout Session

### Keynote

#### "Hey-My Brain Doesn't Work That Way"

#### The New Frontier - Reaching the Brain (where it is now) to Grow It!

Never before have we been confronted with so many factors that affect brain function in children, and as this happens our resources are shrinking and being taken away. Science is often manipulated and twisted to promote government policies and special interests. I believe that we need to use science to unite us and to educate society and policy makers so that we can raise healthier children and promote optimal brain function as part of our educational mandate.

Let's look at a few factors that affect brain development and brain growth so that we can better understand the invisible diversity that is our greatest challenge, the diversity in brain function. Let's work to understand what happens in different parts of the brain and use this knowledge to support improved and integrated brain function. Let's move to implement strategies that help to grow brains that light up and experience the joy of learning and the pride of success.

I believe that the greatest challenges children face in education are the internal and environmental factors that cause them to be either disconnecting from their potential or to be victimized by their stress response systems. With greater fragility in the nervous systems of the children we support, setting limits and behaviour modification techniques are no longer enough. We need to reach their brains where they are at and help them feel grounded and connected. Then we can lovingly walk them forward to be young people who enjoy learning and find fulfillment in growing their own brains and learning with passion.

- Accepting forms of diversity that challenge us
- Factors that lead to neurological diversity
- Basic brain differences and differences between and among sexes
- Areas of the brain, what they do, and how this affects behaviour and learning
- How motor and visual differences have changed over the years
- The Stress Response System and it's impact on behaviour and learning
- Ideas and Strategies to support learning in fragile and different learners

## Breakout Session

### "Hey-My Brain Doesn't Work That Way" Understanding Sensory Processing, Teaching Self Regulation, Supporting Stress Management

We teach children that we have 5 senses, but I want to be sure you understand 9 of the senses and the complex process of sensory processing, particularly sensory modulation. Let's understand the huge differences in neurological thresholds and sensory sensitivities and how these impact the whole system, including the stress response system.

Once we take all of this into account, we can easily see how to support different sensory processing styles and how this can have a dramatic effect on arousal, attention, and wider brain activation.

Emotional regulation is the highest form of self regulation, and is beyond the grasp of many people when under stress or compartmentalized brain function. Understand what second order self regulation is and how you use your own sensory preferences to manage your level of arousal and attention. Learn to implement, teach, and monitor self regulation awareness and strategies that support wider brain activation, learning and classroom behaviour.

People with different sensory processing styles face different environmental stressors and need support and guidance in learning self regulation and stress management. Once we teach and allow sensory strategies to manage arousal, we can teach biological and cognitive strategies that will help with stress management in children (and adults).

- Understand more of our senses
- How sensory processing works
- The Neurological Threshold Continuum
- Self Regulation and the arousal system
- Teaching self regulation and using Sensory Diet
- The value of proprioception/heavy work and sensory breaks
- Environmental factors affecting arousal and stress in children
- Buffers to stress
- Cognitive and sensory approaches to stress management