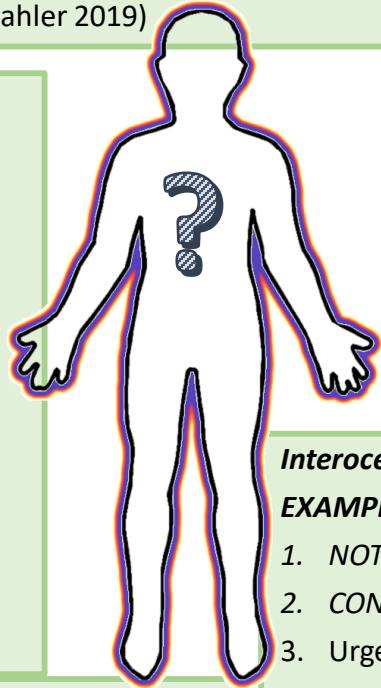




Interoception is a sense that provides information about the internal condition of our body—how our body is feeling on the inside. Interoception allows us to experience many body sensations such as a growling stomach, dry mouth, tense muscles or racing heart. Awareness of these body sensations enables us to experience essential emotions such as hunger, fullness, thirst, pain, body temperature, need for the bathroom, relaxation, anxiety, sadness, frustration and safety. At the most basic level, Interoception allows us to answer the question, “how do I feel?” in any given moment. Interoception also helps us manage the way we feel, by prompting us to take action based on the body signals we notice. This system is very important for self-regulation. (Kelly Mahler 2019)

Possible presenting difficulties:

- Not recognising own emotions in self
- Not recognising the need to use the toilet until urgent
- Not recognising change in body temperature, pain or illness
- Over stimulating through physical exertion
- Often complains of aches and pains
- Always feels hungry or thirsty
- Frequently uses the toilet
- Overly dramatic when poorly
- Can not locate area of pain
- Reports feeling sick, but unable to give any detail of symptoms or location



Interoception

Interoceptive Awareness:

EXAMPLE:

1. *NOTICE* body signal
2. *CONNECT* body signal to emotion
3. Urge to act
4. *REGULATE* with an action/ behaviour
5. *OUTCOME* discomfort fades

THIRST:

1. Dry Throat/ dry mouth
2. Thirsty
3. Urge
4. Get a drink
5. No dry mouth or throat

Compensatory strategy examples:

- Blink the bee app
- Water bottle with marking
- Watch alarm
- Set toileting into routine

Helpful strategies:

- Mindfulness –not suitable for all, may need guidance and visuals for individual body parts
- Yoga and meditation
- Don't tell the child how they feel, help them learn to experience for themselves
- Label the way your various body parts feel during daily activities (e.g. “My hand feels warm when you hold it; My cheek feels wet when you kiss it; My breathing feels fast when I run with you.”).
- Encourage your child's ‘Interoception Attention’: Encourage your child to notice how various body parts feel during daily activities (e.g. “How do your hands feel when you are holding a glass of ice water?; How do your eyes feel at bedtime?; Look at the goose bumps on your skin; Put your hand on your chest and feel your heart beating fast.”).

