

## Sixth SensoryPlus Awareness Day - Newcastle-upon-Tyne

### “An excellent course and excellent speakers”

In a bid to help new, and established, early years practitioners further understand the power and application of a multi-sensory approach, SensoryPlus hosted the sixth of its rolling programme of Sensory Awareness Days held in Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

The goal of these one day seminars is not only for the SensoryPlus team and their guest speakers to present the key elements of the sensory product range, examine multi-sensory approaches, promote an understanding of the different types of environments and how they are appropriate to different individuals but moreover to provide an opportunity attendees to network with likeminded individuals, share experiences, evolve ideas and discover alternative approaches to sensory environments. But most importantly, enjoy themselves.

Opened by David Payne, SensoryPlus Product Manager, the Awareness Days are deliberately designed to avoid overt product demonstrations and keep to the ethos of information and learning to the fore.

“Selling equipment isn’t the objective, creating a relaxed atmosphere in which delegates can be introduced to the Multi-Sensory approach and glean an array of practical product and activity tips is what makes these days fun, well attended and meaningful.”

Richard Hirstwood, an independent sensory trainer and a renowned authority around the world, provided a contagious level of energy and enthusiasm and more than two decades of experience in the Multi-Sensory field. His opening session, a maelstrom of sounds, lights, imagination and inspirational anecdotes, left the audience breathless. Beneath the humour and enjoyment, lurk serious messages and they ensure every delegate is both invigorated and leaves brimming with new ideas. Following Richard on the day is an onerous task, but his unique taster session entitled ‘An Introduction to Multi-Sensory’ provides the perfect starter for professionals new to Multi-Sensory approaches and a welcome recap for more experienced practitioners.

Judy Denziloe followed, a leading trainer on sensory work and learning through play, proved popular as she demonstrated real-life, simple to effect activities and advice on best practice. It is not all talking and listening on Judy’s training courses either! An important part of every training course is a practical session, looking at and handling a wide range of materials. Judy is a devotee of the cheap and cheerful

approach to Multi-Sensory equipment and as a result delegates left with an extensive wish list to be sourced at Ikea and the Pound Shop!

Lorraine MacAlister, a Family Support Programme Officer for the National Autistic Society started the afternoon sessions with an introduction to Autism Spectrum Disorders. Lorraine delivers *help!* Programmes across the central region for the NAS and has recently taken on a wider role in supporting the development of the programme.

With six of these days successfully complete, SensoryPlus have two more days planned for 2008, Dublin in September and Liverpool in October and plan to extend their programme in 2009 to reach more of the UK. For full details of the day's agenda, and the schedule for 2009 please contact Freephone 0800 212709 or email [lizgatt@sensoryplus.co.uk](mailto:lizgatt@sensoryplus.co.uk)

Here are some comments made by delegates attending the SensoryPlus Awareness Day in Newcastle-upon-Tyne:-

- “An excellent training day which has provided inspiration for practice ideas”
- “Interesting, funny and very informative. I will use a lot of the ideas”
- “Found the presentations very useful and can take away lots of cheap and great ideas”
- “Have quite a few new ideas for equipment that would improve our sensory area, bonus point - improvements can be made cheaply”
- “Excellent all round course”
- “I found the course was very useful and also a lot of fantastic ideas for our new school. The tutors were fabulous and very funny”
- “Very interesting and informative. Taking lots of inspirational ideas back to school to enable more effective use of our room”
- “Don't know where the time has gone. Not often on a course do I look at my watch or think 'Oh no' when told it has finished”
- “The delivery was fun packed and inspiring. Given some wonderful ideas to take back and develop”