Is Your 'Difficult' Child Actually Highly Sensitive? The Hidden Truth Behind Their Intense Emotions Transcript

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Understanding Highly Sensitive Kids

Does your child melt down over things that seem small to everyone else? The wrong socks, a tone shift, change in your schedule, allowed classroom. What if those are overreactions, but a nervous system that feels everything more intensely, more strongly, and it's just hard to navigate that?

Macy had always been called sensitive. For people that are called, sensitive doesn't always feel good because we're using it in the wrong context. I deal with a lot of those kids and I'm like, sensitivity isn't bad when you harness it.

So as a toddler, tags in her shirts made her cry. In kindergarten, she covered her ears during music time. By second grade, She fell apart. If her teachers corrected her in front of the class, you know, when you call a kid over to look at your work, she would fall apart.

And, at home, small stressors really stacked quickly. Noise, rushed morning, annoying sibling, just even walking past her, hunger. She didn't notice until it was too late and then she'd be more than hankery.

and by afternoon she would explode and her parents wondered why does everything hit her so hard especially because other kids in the family and mom and dad weren't quote-unquote so sensitive and here's what was actually happening.

Macy's nervous system was registering the world at a higher volume and she just felt things.

How Sensitivity Shows Up in Daily Life

And what is this? Because this is common. Dr. Becky, who's amazing, talks about deeply feeling kids and sensitivity can mean a lot of things, could mean that you experience things I think there's people that experience at a higher frequency.

I certainly did. I feel things very strongly, but I'm able to let go of those feelings. They don't dysregulate me. i'm also somebody who regulates myself all the time and always did as a kid.

I'm an Aquarian, if you haven't figured that out. That's what we do. We know when to pull back. It's just part of our nature, it's part who I am, and it is part what Phil and Mina taught me to do, so I a very aware, alert person, but I also somebody who constantly is resetting myself, re-grounding myself.

Not letting those stressors build up and some of our sensitives just don't have that ability. They just do not know how to do it, but they can. Some children have lower sensory threshold, stronger limbic or emotional activations, faster stress responses, slower recovery.

After stimulation, they just need some more time to process. And their nervous systems, the detect subtle shifts in tone. They notice noises that maybe other people tune out.

The notice behaviors. I am constantly scanning my environment. all the time and picking up everything all time. And actually, it's funny, I just met somebody who was doing the same thing.

I said, oh, you pay attention to everything. He was like, yes. How do you know? I was, like I literally can see you. paying attention to people, what happens to your body language.

He had a really hard time growing up and he was labeled the sensitive. he labeled a different person in his family and really he is a creative and turned it into some really cool things.

It was pretty amazing what he turned out.

Nervous System Overload and Big Reactions

A loving family. They just didn't know what to make of him. He moved in in a direction that was pretty amazing and added in our different things. People can feel things, they can absorb emotional tension in the room.

even. They can experience embarrassment as a threat. It's not always drama, it's amplification. And their brain isn't weak or something's wrong with it, they're just reactive to input and they need time to help regulate.

So for them, how does it feel? So imagine living with a nervous system that goes from neutral to too much quickly. This is a stress cup that fills up a lot faster than other kids.

Their body can flood with cortisol sooner and it flips into protection mode, easier their brain. Sensitive people can use this to their advantage, like me, but you have to be regulated.

All those systems are starting to activate in their brain. They become less flexible. Their frustration tolerance can be small, can feel enormous, and they could do a lot of avoiding of stress.

because of their sensitivity, especially if people say, well, you're just sensitive and you are not able to channel it. Things can feel very enormous for them.

So because they feel things more deeply at home, You may see more intensive reactions. Big fears over small disappointments, you know, irritability after a lot of socialization or busy days, things that seem a.

Even vacations, anticipating vacatio can set them off and shutting down in loud environments or even explosions after holding it together. and transitions can be potentially hard for them depending on the kid and their sensitivities.

So they can't be labeled as dramatic or over emotional and that's what happens. And really this is a nervous system in overload and there is often a sensory emotional loop That goes on for these kids because the sensory system starts to overload, you know, whether it's a noise or a touch creates a stress response.

They can be easily agitated by these things, being in a crowd or birthday party could create hyper vigilance that patterns with rigidity. And they can get really stuck on things or show behaviors where like, where did that come from?

They could be shut down and they're talking or talking too much in environments.

Helping Kids Regulate and Recover

And once that nervous system is crossing over into that sympathetic dominant state, that threshold, That's when you start to see the big behaviors, emotions, logic disappears, all those things that you're seeing in other situations.

This is really happening because of the sensitivity of their nervous system. When Macy's parents, you know, shifted from, why are you overreacting to what is your why is your body overloaded, they started to see things differently.

So, for her, it was sensory, and they start to reduce that. They built decompression time after school. She needed that, otherwise, I always like to say they slowed down transitions, then they always really focused on building in moments of regulation before they started a task, before the transitioned.

And we're talking even to transitions that she really enjoyed. She needed time to move from one thing to the other. In fact, even though they added more time, to transition, regulating first, She started to shorten her time and

everything else because she was just really struggling and tasks and task were taking a very, very long time.

Things didn't change overnight, as I always like to say. She softened, she recovered a little faster, and she stopped feeling bad about herself and started think sensitivity isn't a bad thing.

And highly sensitive kids, you know, they don't need thicker skin to toughen up. What they need is a nervous system that feels regulated and more rhythm and predictability and parents who regulate first.

Because when their nervous is regulating, they can be supportive and sensitivity becomes empathy, insight, creativity, like my friend, deep connection.

An unregulated sensitivity feels very chaotic, regulated sensitivity becomes powerful. For me, my sensitivity and awareness is really a superpower. It's like an extra level of sensory perception.

that other people don't have. But again, I'm constantly regulating myself in so many ways throughout the day that it's just part of my routine and things don' t get stuck to me.

I don t feel that sensitivity. for people. I put boundaries up like boom right away. Loving boundaries, but also sometimes I just set boundaries because people need it and they try to take advantage.

And that's a great skill. Philomena taught me that you should all be teaching your kids about boundaries.

Sensitivity as a Strength and Summit Promo

People feel really terrible setting boundaries it is one of the most incredible things you can ever teach your child. Most people again don't know boundaries so they're they welcome you setting I set boundaries all the time for people and they appreciate it.

Some people push back and get a little angry at me, but those aren't my people. And as Philomena would say, we only have an obligation to our immediate family.

We don't have them obligation. To other people doesn't mean you're not kind, But you know what I'm talking about. You got a sensitive kid. Your kid isn't too much.

Don't let anybody tell you that their nervous system just feels more. And when you calm that system first, their intensity becomes their strength, not their struggle.

And I hope this hit home with you and don't miss the regulated child summit. If you haven't signed up for it, it's free and you can learn how to calm intense nervous system.

spot hidden sensory triggers and support your kid without shame or power struggles. And when you regulate first, everything falls into place and the regulated child summit is incredible.

It's a free opportunity to get short, promise you short tips delivered in your inbox twice a week for 30 days plus some bonus mom parent content about supporting your health and they're literally just quick written tips.

This is not a whole bunch of videos, this is truly a summit that really becomes your nervous system action plan. That's what the VIP upgrade if you choose to, but it's free.

You can just sign up and check the show notes and be a part of that every little bit. puts money back in your bank, in you nervous system bank and every single person can bring regulation into their lives and we can help sensitive kids really just shine.