

Sebastian's Story

Fourteen year old Sebastian had always been driven, even as early as the age of three. However, "I felt like he was never at peace" his mother recalled. "Even when he was asleep, he never seemed to be at rest." She also explained that Sebastian had difficulty focusing and had problems with communication and reading.

His parents tried various therapies over the years attempting to help Sebastian overcome these issues but nothing helped. They sought the help of medical specialists and had neurologic evaluation. Medication was prescribed to help him while in school. "I felt like the medication made him dull and not himself," his mother recalled, "when the medication wore off later in the day his hyperactive behavior resumed." When the doctor recommended another dose in the evening to control the behavior and a different medication before bed so he could sleep, his parents decided to stop all the medications and look for a better solution for Sebastian. While they continued to search, his grandfather found out about a new program to Southwest Florida, available through his doctor, Michael C. Shaffer, D.C., of the Naples Chiropractic Group, which changed Sebastian's life.

"Sebastian had all the signs of a sensory processing problem." Dr. Shaffer stated, "This is an inability to integrate the senses such as sight, sound and touch. It is through our senses that we take in, interpret and understand information. If any of our senses do not function well or they do not work well together, it can cause a variety of problems similar to what Sebastian was experiencing."

Dr. Shaffer was interested in providing an effective sensory integration program in his clinic. "Most of these programs take months to complete and require the person to follow direction and do specific activities to develop the sensory skills. Some people, like Sebastian, are unable to perform these routines; even though they are good candidates for sensory integration training." Dr. Shaffer explained. That is why he decided to add The SAVE Program to the practice. SAVE stands for Sensory-motor, Auditory, Visual Education. The SAVE Program is an accelerated sensory integration program that takes only five days, two hours a day, to complete. It stimulates five senses simultaneously, which creates and reinforces neural pathways. This five pronged approach helps develop, retrain and expand the ability to take in, understand and use information more effectively. According to Dr. Shaffer, most importantly, for people like Sebastian, it is passive, requiring no effort on the part of the participant.

The SAVE Program works by having the individual recline in a specially designed chair which goes through a series of gentle motions that stimulate the vestibular, kinesthetic and proprioceptive systems. Simultaneously, the participant listens to modified music that stimulates the auditory system and watches special colored lights for visual stimulation. Individually each of these sensory programs have been shown to be successful. Integrating all five types of training in a systematic and synchronized manner yields the rapid results.

The day Sebastian began the program he started showing improvement. "The change in Sebastian, from the first day was noticeable." recalled his grandfather. "Almost instantly his agitation level began to wane and his communication improved. Truly a blessing."

Dr. Shaffer explained that although improvements are often seen during the week of training, the benefits of the program continue well after the five days. This was the case for Sebastian. His mother reports his vocabulary has increased and his reading skills have improved. "The atmosphere in the whole house changed with Sebastian. It became calm and peaceful. Sebastian is more communicative and he no longer stutters." She says she recommends The SAVE Program, I would swear on it one hundred percent. I really think it changed his life. I feel like he is at peace now and can learn more. Before his mind would race so much he couldn't learn. It is almost like a balance for him. He continues to improve each day."