

Matt ([00:00](#)):

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Matt ([00:24](#)):

Hello, listeners, welcome back to the Sensory Friendly Solutions podcast. This is episode nine. We're one episode away from our season finale. Thank you so much for being with us. Whether it's your first episode, or whether it's your ninth episode, we feel very lucky to have you.

Matt ([00:45](#)):

Our guest for episode nine is Trish Hamilton. She's a friend of the podcast, a friend of Sensory Friendly Solutions, and we're very fortunate to dig into her sensory friendly journey. Trish is the marketing and communications manager for Uptown Saint John, a business improvement association, and is also no stranger to the microphone. She's the host of a podcast called the U Cast. She's also a radio host. She's been with the medium throughout its whole evolution, and it's great that she is also on the mics, being a voice for us all.

Matt ([01:27](#)):

We talked about her experience as a mother to a six year old boy that experiences autism. We talked about the power of naming it, and what can that do for families. We talk about the many manifestations of sensory overload, whether its routine disruption, a global pandemic like we're currently experiencing right now, media overload, whatever it is, Trish has experienced it. She gives us her advice on how to reduce the noise of the current era. And I really liked her answer. You'll have to wait until the end of the episode for that. It's a two part answer that I thought had a lot of impact.

Matt ([02:14](#)):

We're very lucky to have heard about her sensory friendly journey, we're lucky to have had her on the podcast. This is episode nine with Trish Hamilton.

Matt ([02:29](#)):

Hello, listeners, and welcome to episode nine of the Sensory Friendly Solutions podcast. We're almost done season one. It's a little hard to believe that we're already nearing the end of our first season. We've already had so many great guests on the podcast. And we're really excited to welcome our ninth guest, a friend of the company, a friend of the podcast, Trish Hamilton. Welcome to the show.

Trish Hamilton ([02:55](#)):

Thank you so much for having me on.

Matt ([02:58](#)):

You're very welcome. Before we go into what we're here to discuss, can you introduce yourself, Trish? I'm interested to know what it is you do. I know there's been some change for you this year. I'm interested to hear about that. And just describe in your own words what work you do right now. What do you do?

Trish Hamilton (03:17):

Sure. Right now ... Well, maybe I should start at the end of the beginning, if that makes any sense. In January of this year, 2020, I made some serious life decisions. And a lot of the decisions that I made were based around my son and his needs. And you know what, my needs as well.

Trish Hamilton (03:39):

So I left my job in February, and decided to go back to school. So I went back to school for ... Well, it started in May, and I just graduated on the eighth of November. So because of COVID-19, I was able to take an online course through York University, which I probably wouldn't have been able to take had it not been something that they had to offer online.

Trish Hamilton (04:08):

So digital marketing specialist is where I went with that. During the course, of course, I met Crystal. And we worked together on some different projects, and things like that. And I had known Crystal for a while, mostly because I had been thinking about making changes to my life, and my job for a number of years.

Trish Hamilton (04:31):

And Crystal and I met because of my son, and his autism spectrum disorder and sensory processing as well. And so ... Sorry, you can edit that out, right? Did you hear that noise?

Matt (04:48):

No worries, no worries, we can do some good stuff on the back end. Continue.

Trish Hamilton (04:53):

Okay, good. So Crystal and I had known each other for a while. And I had been working for her. And one thing led to another, and I ended up meeting Nancy [Tissington 00:05:04] at Uptown Saint John, who thought it might be good to have me on board.

Trish Hamilton (05:09):

So currently, I'm working at Uptown Saint John, which I absolutely love. It's a great mix of creativity, and digital marketing as well. So very happy to be on board there. In addition to that, I have picked up a podcast, as you mentioned. We do it for Uptown Saint John. And it's called the U Cast. And we talk to businesses in the Uptown core, whether they're new or well established, about what it's like doing business in Uptown Saint John.

Trish Hamilton (05:41):

Further to that, I just ended up starting my own company. It's called E2M Marketing and Media. Of course, very new. So just swung the doors open on that as soon as I closed the doors to the course. And it's been something I've wanted to do for a while, have my own company, because I wanted the freedom to be able to be with my son.

Trish Hamilton (06:04):

And then finally, a friend of mine started a radio station. And I swore I'd never get back into radio. I had done radio for 28 years. And yeah, that's the job that I actually left at the start of the year. It's just not what it used to be. And if you're not doing something, and you're not enjoying it, whether it's the only thing you know or not, sometimes you need to make that change.

Trish Hamilton ([06:28](#)):

So made that change. But I ended up back in radio just a couple weeks ago. A friend of mine started his own community based radio station in Quispamsis called Oldies 96. And I do my days on that station. So I'm a busy girl.

Matt ([06:44](#)):

You are. And we're going to dig into a lot of that. But it's interesting to see how you started in radio, you had a long career, 28 years. But then in some ways, I mean, I know you have the bug and the expertise, but podcasting is just an evolution of the medium. So you're still using your voice.

Trish Hamilton ([07:03](#)):

Right. Right. And it really is. And when you're in broadcasting, you learn certain disciplines, and you learn what you can and can't say. And I think one of the main things about being in broadcasting, or even doing a podcast, anytime you put yourself out there as a spokesperson for a brand, you need to behave that way.

Trish Hamilton ([07:28](#)):

I've always believed that if I'm wearing somebodies logo, that's who I represent, whether it's after hours or not. So yeah, there's a lot of discipline that carries over from radio into the podcasting. And when you can talk as much as I can, podcasting seems to be a natural transition.

Matt ([07:46](#)):

I'm curious on how your experience has been. We've had a lot of feedback throughout the course of this podcast that the medium is so effective because instead of just a quick soundbite, we're hearing stories, and lived experience from people all over the world on the topic of sensory friendly solutions. So I'm curious, for the U Cast, what has been your experience in doing the podcast? Do you feel the same where you get to expand at length, you get to really dig in. How have you found the medium?

Trish Hamilton ([08:14](#)):

I find it a lot more thorough. When you're in radio, you're ... I was a midday announcer on a country station, and music director. And your days are so busy that when you do get an interview, and I've had many of them which have been all exciting, but when you do get an interview, it's one at a time, and you ask the key questions, and you're in and you're out.

Trish Hamilton ([08:39](#)):

With the podcasting, just like you said, you can really dig in, and really talk to people, and find their why, what makes them tick, what are they looking to do, or how are they succeeding in what they're doing? It's an evolution really from broadcasting, into podcasting. And I'm really enjoying it.

Matt ([09:04](#)):

Yeah. No, that's excellent. We are too. We're having a lot of fun on this side as well. Let's do, Trish, let's do a quick COVID check in. It's been a heck of a year. Like I said, we've spoken to people all over the world, from profs at the University of Missouri, who went through the American election, to folks in the UK, who are about to go on lockdown again until December. It's been a wile ride. I know. It's been a wild ride, and we feel for everybody.

Matt ([09:32](#)):

But every family is in a unique situation. You just graduated a course, you just started a business, and a new job, and that's all exciting. But you also mentioned your son's needs. What has the COVID experience been like for you? Let's do a quick little check in, just debrief on some of the things you've been through this year.

Trish Hamilton ([09:49](#)):

In the beginning, honestly, Matt, I don't like to say that I was enjoying it, because I don't think that a global pandemic is enjoyable.

Matt ([10:00](#)):

Right.

Trish Hamilton ([10:00](#)):

But the part that I did enjoy was being able to have my family close, because we are always ... As you can tell, I'm busy. And to be able to get up every day and spend that time with all of my ... I have three children, a 24 year old daughter, and a 17 year old daughter, and then my son.

Trish Hamilton ([10:19](#)):

And so to be able to wake up every day and have them near, and have them close, and being forced to slow down, I appreciated that, and I didn't take that for granted. It was difficult for my son, because when you're six, at the time he was six years old, explaining to him that, "Yeah, we've been in the house for two, three weeks." Or whatever it was, "And you can't go see your friends. So let's talk to them on FaceTime, or let's drive by their house and wave." And not being able to fully explain to him why we had to stay in was tough.

Trish Hamilton ([11:02](#)):

And one thing about SPD kids that I've learned, and one thing about my son that I've learned is, if you throw a wrench into his routine in any way, there's a huge adjustment period.

Matt ([11:15](#)):

Right.

Trish Hamilton ([11:15](#)):

Now, it wasn't so much of an adjustment to keep him home as I knew it was going to be sending him back out into the world when the time came. And it was ... At the beginning of COVID, it was enjoyable. And then it just got to the point where I just started to feel bad for him, because socially, none of our kids were interacting the way that you would want them to.

Trish Hamilton ([11:41](#)):

And with him being on the spectrum, he was making friends, and he likes children, which sometimes kids on the spectrum don't, they prefer adults. And he was just starting to make friends, and get into a little peer group. So as much as it was nice to have him home, and have him close, and have that extra mommy time, it was hard knowing that at some point, I'm going to have to turn him loose again. And I don't know how this has affected him.

Matt ([12:12](#)):

Yeah. In episode two of the podcast, we interviewed Maurine Benny from the Autism Awareness Center. And it's fascinating you mention routine disruption, because the first thing she mentioned, and the first request from parents in her producing webinars, producing podcasts, producing information was how to deal with the routine disruption. So it's really fascinating that you and your family went through that.

Trish Hamilton ([12:37](#)):

Yeah. I'm not sure how to really put it into words, except to say, it started off to be fun, but ... And we've heard all the stories about parents having to work from home, and you're trying to entertain your kids, and in some cases, you're trying to do school work with them while you're doing your own job.

Matt ([12:56](#)):

Right.

Trish Hamilton ([12:57](#)):

In my case, it was doing a little bit of work on the side with Crystal, on different projects. And taking a course, and dealing with him and his school work. But for me, my course was flexible enough that I could do it when he went to bed at night. But for the parents who had to work their regular jobs from the comfort of their own home, that would have been extremely difficult.

Matt ([13:23](#)):

Yeah, no doubt. And we've heard from those folks. And we're going to ask you to give some parental advice, if you would, on the back end of the show. So we'll wait for that. But it strikes me that you have two other children. And we were reminded by Dr. Bill Wong, who we had on the podcast, that sensory overload can be experienced by anybody, and in fact is experienced by all of us at some point or another.

Matt ([13:51](#)):

And one of the things we talked about during COVID, which I know you have some input on because of your line of work, we highlight this trend. Crystal sent us a note when we were designing the podcast, and said, "We think this is a key priority in the discussions." And the stat is this. As of June 2020, the word sensory overload was being searched over 40,000 times a month on Google. And that increased by 50% from the past year.

Matt ([14:21](#)):

So clearly something has happened, regardless of COVID. I know you have, I think you said 24 and 17. And I know they're in the thick of it as well, social media and news coming at us 24/7. When you think

about that statistic, do you see that as a parent and in your daily life? This uptick, and this sensory overload?

Trish Hamilton ([14:41](#)):

Absolutely. And not just from my son, but yeah, my 17 year old for sure had a very rough time, because she was being told, "You can't be at school. You can't see your friends." Of course, people are bubbling with their close family, and things like that. And we weren't really bubbling with anyone.

Trish Hamilton ([15:04](#)):

And I did notice with her, because she had a part time job, so she was working a little bit in the service industry. And she was nervous, and she was scared, and she wasn't sleeping well. And I definitely noticed, through her, a sensory overload. It seemed like she was just overwhelmed a little bit at times. And the same for my other daughter who's 24. I think, in a lot of cases, we all were overloaded in our own ways.

Trish Hamilton ([15:36](#)):

And my husband as well. I think that he experienced some of it. But with his job, he also works in the media, so he was still out everyday, because he was one of the people who had to cover COVID. So he was getting out of the house on a regular basis, and things like that. But I think that in different ways, every single one of us experienced a little bit of sensory overload from time to time.

Matt ([16:01](#)):

I think you're absolutely right. And it's just a sign of the times in many ways as well. Trish, if we could, to whatever extent you feel comfortable doing so, can we talk a little bit about your sensory friendly journey? Specifically with your son and your relationship to him. We've had some fascinating discussions on lived experience, and how people have navigated down the road of sensory friendly, and sensory processing issues. And it's really been rewarding for our listeners, and we've had a lot of feedback that the lived experience, and the journey is one of those things that a podcast can really do well. And we've been digging into it throughout the whole first season. So let's just talk a little bit about what that sensory friendly journey was like for you and your family.

Trish Hamilton ([16:45](#)):

Absolutely. When it comes to that, I'm, honestly, Matt, I'm an open book. If anybody else can listen and get anything from what I say, or with your podcast, and what you're doing here, then it's all worth it. I think the very first thing that I want to say is, if you think there's something off, or not right, get it checked.

Matt ([17:12](#)):

Right.

Trish Hamilton ([17:13](#)):

That was one of the things that we came to terms with. And I think he was around three years old really when we really said, "We need to look into this." One thing that people need to know is, daycares, teachers, things like that, they're not qualified to tell you that they think your child may be sensory or be on the autism spectrum.

Matt ([17:38](#)):

Right.

Trish Hamilton ([17:39](#)):

And as far as I know, they're not allowed to tell you that. It has to be something that you come to yourself. So if you think there's something going on, don't wait for somebody else to suggest it to you, because that's what we did, we waited. And finally, one day, I looked at a daycare worker, and I said, "What is it with him? Is he autistic or something?" And she said, "Okay, I'm so glad you finally asked."

Matt ([18:02](#)):

And what were those ... You're highlighting on it a huge theme of this podcast, and I'm so happy you started there, because time and time again, whether it's someone who experiences autism themselves, like Dr. Bill Wong, or whether it's a writer on the subject, like Carol Kranowitz, who wrote *The Out Of Sync Child*, this idea of naming it, and then once you name it, being able to come to terms with it and address it has been a theme through literally every single episode. So it's fascinating you start there.

Trish Hamilton ([18:32](#)):

Yeah. And that was when the light bulb went off, and I thought, "Well, we've got some work to do, because when he ..." My first hint that something was ... And I hate saying off, or not right, because it is right, it's him, and that's the way that he is. So there's nothing wrong about it.

Trish Hamilton ([18:51](#)):

But the first time that I noticed that there might be more to him than I expected, or that I knew of, he was about five or six months old. And he's a happy little baby, and he would laugh, and giggle, and do all the five and six month old things. But then he would clench his fists, and he would scream so loud. And I couldn't figure out why.

Trish Hamilton ([19:16](#)):

And that theme, that would happen from time to time. And I remember, he was about a year, my husband traveling, and I cried on the phone, and I said, "He's autistic or something. He's just ..." And part of me asked the question, "Well, maybe it's the difference between having a boy and my two girls. Maybe I'm just used to girls." But as a mother, you just know, as a parent, you just know.

Matt ([19:41](#)):

Right. Your intuition.

Trish Hamilton ([19:43](#)):

You know what I mean? That there's just something there. And people need to not be afraid to explore that. One of the things that my husband and I talked about in the beginning was, do we want to label him? But it's not a label. It's help. There is more to it by "labeling" him as autism spectrum disorder, and sensory processing disorder.

Trish Hamilton ([20:10](#)):

We got resources, we got help, we got understanding. His school works with us. And you know what, all those things have helped so much along the way. Being able to tell people, whether they're parents of friends of his, and things like that, to be able to say, "He's on the spectrum, so he may need his headphones for sensory." Because he does wear noise cancellation headphones from time to time.

Trish Hamilton ([20:42](#)):

But because of all the help, and all the resources that we've had, and all the things that we have learned, whether it's on our own, or through some of the resources, he's using his headphones less. He knows now he's able to cope with certain things. He knows that things are going to change. And I really strongly advising any parents that if they think that their child may be autism spectrum disorder, ASD, or SPD, don't hesitate to check it out. There is absolutely nothing wrong with finding out about your child.

Matt ([21:18](#)):

This has been another great revelation of the podcast, is bringing this into the light, not being hesitant to move forward, and finding these resources, and getting help. What do you think it is in the early days, like you mentioned with you and your husband, what do you think that hesitancy is? Is it maybe a little bit of fear? Is it maybe a little bit of not wanting him to feel segregated from other kids? What do you think parents feel when they're a little bit hesitant to go forward and pursue a diagnosis of some kind?

Trish Hamilton ([21:47](#)):

I think it is based in fear. A lot of it, I think, is not knowing what's going to happen. And for us, we didn't want people to look at him differently. But the option is, don't diagnose him, or don't look into it, and people are just going to think differently of him anyway, because he is different, and he does things differently, and he needs his own time, and he has his own way.

Trish Hamilton ([22:14](#)):

So by diagnosing it, we can say, "This is him. This is what he's dealing with." And you know what, nobody judges him. I mean, to our knowledge. Nobody, of course, is going to say it to our face. But everybody that we have dealt with has been understanding, and they appreciate the heads up instead of hiding it. Hiding it is just making it harder for our son. You know what I mean? Because of course, you could look at an undiagnosed ASD, or SPD child, and think that they just have behavior issues.

Matt ([22:50](#)):

Right.

Trish Hamilton ([22:50](#)):

And that's not the case. He's dealing with something internally. And people knowing that gives him a fair shot.

Matt ([22:57](#)):

No, that's a great way to put it. When you think about those resources, and that help that you received in the early days, and continue, I imagine, to receive today, are there some resources, or specific forms of help that have really improved the quality of life of not only your son, but of the family as well? Because we know there are a lot of parents listening here.



Trish Hamilton (23:21):

Dr. M. Marie Savoy ... Sorry. Dr. M Murphy Savoy is one. A pediatrician out of, I believe Chalmers and Fredericton. And she has been so valuable to us. And we were fortunate enough to meet her, and have the pleasure of talking to her a few times, because we were looking for a diagnosis. And she's been very valuable to us.

Trish Hamilton (23:57):

Even more so than that, our pediatrician, her name is Dr. Wendy Alexander. And she's no BS at all. And we love her. Everything that she has suggested has worked for us. And she understands him, and she understands us, and she's watching him grow, and all along the lines, giving us great advice.

Trish Hamilton (24:24):

Honestly, it just takes one or two really good, really strong people in your corner, and you feel like you can tackle all of it. And they've really given us the courage, and the go ahead to push him sometimes, or not let him get away with stuff. Because of course, there's a line between a five, six, seven year old boy, and an ASD SPD kid, right. You have to teach him right from wrong, and you have to make him accountable for his actions. But at the same time, you know why he lashed out. So having them on our side has been amazing. They've made all the difference.

Matt (25:06):

I love the way that you put that. They've given you the courage to, as he grows up, as he matures, as he develops within himself, to give him a little push. I think that's really fascinating that you've built that relationship with the people in his life.

Trish Hamilton (25:21):

Yeah, they've been great. And I think the most valuable piece of information that we heard ... And I'm not even sure which doctor it was. But one of them had said to us, "You have to make sure that you're not walking on eggshells with him, because the world is not going to be walking on eggshells with him."

Trish Hamilton (25:42):

And it was an eye opener, because we got so used to, "Okay, don't offer him food, or don't let him see this, or we can't make this noise, and this light has to be off, and this needs to be in a certain place." We got so used to that, because we were living it, and we knew, "Okay, he's not going to like that, so we won't do it."

Trish Hamilton (26:07):

But I think the whole point of it was, they are going to be tested, and they are going to be tried out in the real world. And you have to just be careful that you're not walking on eggshells when you're with him at home.

Matt (26:23):

I think that's going to be a really powerful take away from this episode for me is that it actually honors him to push him a little bit in his life, and to expect things of him. And I think that's really, really fascinating, and will certainly help in his development. If you could give advice to a parent listening, maybe just one piece of advice. It can fit the time, but it can be evergreen as well. What's one thing ...

And maybe it is that not walking on eggshells, maybe that is the take away for parents here. But if you could give parents one piece of parting advice that could help them on their journey, what comes to mind?

Trish Hamilton ([27:01](#)):

Listen to your gut.

Matt ([27:02](#)):

Oh.

Trish Hamilton ([27:05](#)):

He was five or six months old when I was looking at him, I'll never forget it, in his little bouncy seat thinking, "Why are you screaming? You've eaten, we're playing, we're having fun." Just listen to your gut. You might be wrong. There might not be any spectrum involved at all. But it's way more valuable to know than to not know. It has been for us.

Trish Hamilton ([27:31](#)):

And I think the second thing too, it's hard when you see parents and their kids in a store, and a kid is acting out, or whatever. There have been times, absolutely, where I've thought, "Oh, wow, that kids a handful." I don't do that anymore. I don't judge other moms and other dads. I don't know their story, and what they go through when they're home. And maybe this was the only time they could get out, and they brought their child along with them.

Trish Hamilton ([28:03](#)):

And kids go through a lot of emotions whether they're on the spectrum or not. And I think it's really important that we support each other, and keep an eye out. Like I said, if your guts telling you somethings a little different here, get it checked. And that could be the start of really a fascinating and heartwarming journey.

Matt ([28:30](#)):

Yeah. I think that's beautiful. Giving parents permission. I think that's great. Trish, our final question. You've been very generous with your time. This is the final question we ask every single one of our guests. We're coming back to you specifically. You're a busy person, you're clearly an achiever. It's a noisy time, it's a loud time, there's a lot coming at us. What are your strategies to reduce the noise of the current era? Are you a yogi? Do you do mindfulness? How do you give back to Trish? How do you reduce the noise? Help us all out here.

Trish Hamilton ([29:08](#)):

Honestly, Matt, I don't know that I do. I think that I'm almost used to the noise. I had several jobs when I was a teenager. It's just always been, and it always will be a hectic life. I take a lot of solace in being with my family. I love coming home every night. And maybe there is an answer to that. Having a job that you love, when I come home at night, it's amazing, because I'm not worried about going to sleep and having to wake up in the morning and go into my job anymore.

Matt ([29:51](#)):

Yeah, you're present.

Trish Hamilton (29:53):

Yeah. Yeah. And you have to do something that you love. I 100% believe that now. Even though, you know what, for 28 years, I loved radio. And I still love radio. But you just know when you need a change. And you have to allow yourself the freedom to make those changes. And as far as Emerson, and stuff like that, we don't really reduce his noise or the input. We know when he's had enough, and we will remove him from situations.

Trish Hamilton (30:26):

But it goes back to the whole pushing him a little bit further thing. We try not to walk on eggshells anymore, we try to push his limits, we try to take him on a city bus, or different places. And if it's too much for him, he'll let us know. But yeah, we try to not reduce the noise too much, and just keep plugging along.

Matt (30:50):

I actually really love that advice. Even the first part. So the second part could be summed up as maybe presence, doing something you're passionate about. But the first part as well, your mind defaulted to, "You know what, sometimes you got to put on your boots and get through it."

Trish Hamilton (31:04):

That's right. Yeah, we wear many pairs of boots in this family. And we all get through it. And we get through it together. Having a support from my daughters with my son is one of the most valuable things. I'd never be able to thank them enough. And they of course, have watched my husband and I through our journey with our little guy, and have been there every step of the way. And having people support you through it is very valuable too.

Matt (31:35):

Trish Hamilton, thank you so much for being episode nine of the Sensory Friendly Solutions podcast.

Trish Hamilton (31:41):

Thank you so much, Matt. Anytime, I will be back.

Matt (31:44):

Take care.

Trish Hamilton (31:45):

Thank you.

Matt (31:45):

Bye-bye. (music).

Crystal (31:57):

It's Crystal [Seaberger 00:31:59], occupational therapist, and founder of Sensory Friendly Solutions. My reflections today are going to be recorded solo. I truly welcomed hearing from Trish. As she shared, we met because as I was launching Sensory Friendly Solutions, and telling the story of what I wanted to accomplish, Trish had an interest in digital media, and storytelling as a way of reaching an audience, an audience of people who shared her experiences as a parent due to a personal interest in Sensory Friendly Solutions because of her son, Emerson.

Crystal ([32:45](#)):

Trish made some significant changes in her professional life. Changing jobs and going back to school all during a COVID-19 lockdown. She undertook just significant life changes when there are significant world changes happening. And she did this to find joy in her daily life and an ability to better support her son, who she shared has autism spectrum disorder, and sensory processing disorder.

Crystal ([33:21](#)):

I appreciated Trish's perspective on some of the positive opportunities that she sought, and really made happen at an incredibly challenging time. That complete change in daily routine to most of her family being home most of the time, for Trish, was something she embraced, and adored, because she truly relishes time with her family.

Crystal ([33:54](#)):

She also reflected on some of the shared concerns of parents. I'll say parents of children in general, and parents of autistic children, or a child with sensory processing disorder, or SPD. As Trish revealed, being at home was, in some ways, a lot easier for her son. But the transition back to school, and back to daycare, those were ones that would really need a lot of work, on her part, on her son's part, on the school's part, on the daycare's part.

Crystal ([34:38](#)):

In fact, Trish has written several blog posts for us about managing some of those changes as a parent. Things like returning to school with some practical tips, and what she's tried and tested. And also, adapting to wearing a mask for young children. It takes extra work for families like Trish's.

Crystal ([35:07](#)):

Like many healthcare professionals, and I imagine parents too, Trish's advice, heartfelt, and from real life experience, was appreciated. So moms and dads, listen to Trish. As she says, listen to your gut. Explore your concerns about sensory challenges. Find answers to your questions. A diagnosis for Trish's son was like a key unlocking the wonder of Emerson. And I'm tearing up as I say this, in Trish's words, "A diagnosis gave Emerson a fair shot."

Crystal ([36:02](#)):

Before listening to Trish on today's podcast, I hadn't really understood or realized the power for parents, and families, and children, of having one or two people in your corner. Trish has had access to wonderful pediatricians. And she relies on them for solid advice, and information. And having another person in your corner has empowered their family, as Trish put it, "Not to walk on eggshells."

Crystal ([36:39](#)):

Sensory overload is part of their daily family life with Emerson. But they don't sanitize their life of sensory experiences. They learn how to manage. And Emerson is learning how to manage his sensory experiences too. Living a sensory friendly life isn't about removing all sensory experiences, it is about designing a life that fits, and living a life that allows for exploration, trial and error, and finding joy. (music).

Matt ([37:24](#)):

Welcome back, listeners, to the innovation segment of episode nine of the Sensory Friendly Solutions podcast with Trish Hamilton. We had a really great episode, and we have an equally great innovation segment planned for you today. A really special foundation called The Braedon Foundation. We've communicated back and forth with Tiffany Agnew, the founder, board president, and as you'll find out, Braedon's mom.

Matt ([37:58](#)):

We wanted to read what this foundation is doing, the impact that they're making, and a very specific element of the business that we think makes for a really impactful innovation segment for this episode.

Matt ([38:13](#)):

If you haven't heard of The Braedon Foundation, you're going to want to check them out and follow their awe inspiring journey on Facebook. Tiffany Agnew created The Braedon Foundation in 2018, in memory of her teenage son, Braedon, who passed in May of 2018. The foundation strives to bring happiness to the hearts of children in New Brunswick who are facing severe life threatening, or high risk illnesses through their Happy Heart room makeover and Happy Heart shopping sprees.

Matt ([38:46](#)):

They also provide a free support group that's available for parents of children with critical illness. Recently, they've caught our attention with their Happy Heart sensory room. It's a makeover for a young girl in Grand Bay, Westfield, Riley. She was born with Fraser Syndrome, a genetic mutation to the FRAS-1 gene, which has had a significant impact on her development. She also has [inaudible 00:39:13]. She also has Cryptophthalmos, which means the skin over her eyes is continuous without formation of eyelids. She's blind, but demonstrates light perception, so she really enjoyed her new disco light dancing across the room creating flashes of light that she could see.

Matt ([39:42](#)):

In addition to being blind, she also has bilateral hearing lost, fused vocal cords, and only one kidney. In her short seven years here, she's already had over 30 surgeries, and still wakes up smiling most days. It's amazing.

Matt ([39:59](#)):

While Riley faces many challenges in her life, she is an inquisitive and physically active child who, according to her teacher, Beth Button, is full of spunk. And we were honored to see that spunk come alive as she clapped for joy, and danced about. Beth, who submitted the application on Riley's behalf, was able to join us for the makeover reveal, and was overwhelmed by the insane amount of joy this Happy Heart room makeover brought Riley and her whole family.

This transcript was exported on Nov 18, 2020 - view latest version [here](#).

Matt ([40:29](#)):

This was different from the rooms they normally create, but Tiffany was excited to take on the challenge, and create something really special for Riley. After hours of research, and many conversations with Riley's mom, Melissa, Tiffany was able to create a sensory room that literally had Riley clapping and dancing for joy.

Matt ([40:50](#)):

The room features a hanging pod swing, a disco light, multiple custom made busy boards, a comfy corner, a custom made Lego and magnet board, and a Lego table. You can find out more, and see the transformation by going to [thebraedonfoundation.com](http://thebraedonfoundation.com). That's the B-R-A-E-D-O-N foundation dot com. And there, you'll see an article titled, An Insane Amount of Joy For Riley. A Happy Heart sensory room makeover.

Matt ([41:29](#)):

To Tiffany and the rest of the team at The Braedon Foundation, we're so lucky to be featuring you on our innovation segment of episode nine of the Sensory Friendly Solutions podcast. (music).

Matt ([41:45](#)):

Thank you to our sponsor, Taking it Global. Ensuring that youth around the world are actively engaged and connected, and shaping a more inclusive, peaceful, and sustainable world. As part of their Rising Youth Initiative, they're looking for young people who are inspired with ideas, and ready to take action through youth led community service grants. Head to [risingyouth.ca](http://risingyouth.ca) to learn more, and to become the next Rising Youth grand recipient.

Matt ([42:13](#)):

The podcast is also supported by New Brunswick Community College as part of the community resource awareness during and after COVID-19 applied research project, funded by the New Brunswick Innovation Foundation. Learn more about NBCC's efforts to transform lives and communities at [NBCC.ca](http://NBCC.ca).

Matt ([42:32](#)):

The Sensory Friendly Solutions podcast is produced by me, Matt George. Is engineered by the great Zachary [Pelche 00:42:39]. It is part of the Unsettled Media Podcast Network.