

Sensory Needs

The sensory needs of autistic people may be different from non-autistic people. This can have a big effect on a person's day to day life. Learning more about the sensory system and how your senses affect you is important. This can empower you to put strategies in place to help you on a day to day basis.

What is sensory processing?

Sensory processing is the ability of our brains to interpret, organise and respond appropriately to information received from our sensory system.

All of the information received from the world around us comes from our eight senses. Information is picked up by sensory receptors and is sent to our brain to interpret. This is an automatic response and helps us to interpret the environment around us.



Auditory
(Hearing)



Gustatory
(Taste)



Tactile
(Touch)



Visual
(Sight)



Olfactory
(Smell)



Proprioception
(Body Position)



Vestibular
(Balance)



Interoception
(Internal Senses)



Meeting your sensory needs

It is useful to get to know your own sensory needs and how they are affected by the environment around you. Meeting your sensory needs can prevent sensory overload and support self-regulation. It can also help you to recover from sensory overload if you reach that point.

There are 3 steps to identifying your sensory needs:

- Analysing and identifying
- Applying strategies
- Monitoring their effectiveness

Analysing and identifying

Keeping a sensory diary can help you to analyse and identify your own sensory needs. This can help you to identify your personal needs and triggers. In time this can help you to prepare for activities proactively. This could be through planning some sensory strategies through the day in order to avoid sensory overload. Here is a link to information on some [sensory strategies](#) and [sensory diary](#) for you to try.

Applying Strategies

Filling in the sensory diary for a few weeks should help you in identifying your sensory needs. You can then start to create a sensory diet for yourself and also think about strategies you might want to use around certain events and activities. Here is a link to a [sensory diet](#) sheet that you can use.

Monitoring their effectiveness

It is important to monitor and modify your sensory diet to make sure that it works for you. Your sensory profile might change over time and be affected by illness or any additional stresses you might be under.



Stim toys are great for anxiety situations as well, like fidget spinners, cubes and beads and a chewable necklace is quite cool as well. Plus stimming is really great for sensory regulation as well, for me allowing myself to stim and tic freely, when I'm not feeling like I need to mask, can be really helpful.