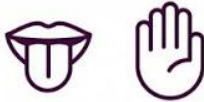




Sensory Wellbeing Booklet



PEACE 

Pathway for Eating disorders and Autism
developed from Clinical Experience

Our senses

Our senses refer to how we perceive and process around us. There are five basic senses: vision, hearing, taste, smell and touch. We also have bodily senses. We can detect internal bodily sensations such as our breathing or heart rate (interoception), we have a sense of our own body (proprioception), and we can sense our own movement (vestibular).

Our senses are an important part of how we self-regulate our body and our emotions. We can use sensations to help us feel calmer, or to feel more alert. Our ability to do this effectively is closely related to how you perceive and react to sensations. You may find that you are hyper (over) sensitive to certain sensations, or hypo (under sensitive). If you are hypersensitive, you may find certain sensations unpleasant and avoid them. If you are hyposensitive, you might enjoy stronger sensations.

	Signs of hypersensitivity	Signs of hyposensitivity
Vision	Dislikes bright lights/ prefers lights to be dimmed or turned off.	Enjoys bright lights, might find everyday lighting too dim.
Hearing	Easily startled, dislikes loud noises.	Likes listening to loud music, might not always respond to auditory cues.
Taste	Finds food that other people enjoy too strong. Prefers bland foods.	Enjoys strong tasting foods, like curries that other people find too hot.
Smell	Picks up on smells that other people can't identify. Dislikes new smells.	Doesn't notice smells that other people identify. Enjoys strong smells (e.g. essential oils).
Touch	Avoids touching people. Dislikes certain fabric textures.	Does not notice pain/ temperature changes.

Do you experience under or over-sensitivity to any sensations?

Do you find any sensations particularly pleasant or aversive?

Does this vary at all across different times or situations?

What sensations make you feel...

Calm?	Alert?
Grounded?	Happy?

We can use sensory strategies to help us self-regulate. For example, if we're in an aversive sensory situation, we can help ground ourselves using pleasant sensory sensations. Or if we're feeling stressed, we can use sensory tools to help us relax. What sensory strategies could help you cope or adjust in difficult situations?



Situation	Sensory strategy	Barriers
<i>I feel overwhelmed by the noises and sounds when I go to the train station at rush hour.</i>	<i>Rubbing a bit of my essential oil cream on my hands to smell and make me feel grounded/ focused.</i>	<i>I would need to remember to carry the cream with me.</i>




As well as using sensory strategies to respond to specific situations, it is also important for your sensory wellbeing to be aware of the different sensory experiences in your everyday routines. Are there any negative sensory experiences in your everyday environment? What would reduce these negative sensations and enhance your positive experiences?

Environment	Sensory strategy	Barriers
<i>I don't like the feel of labels or seams in my clothes.</i>	<i>Cutting out the labels and wearing seamless underclothing.</i>	<i>Wearing underclothing could get too hot.</i>

Your Sensory Box

These are boxes you can develop yourself to help you manage your wellbeing. It may be that you are over-stimulated by certain senses or under-stimulate by certain senses. This can change from situation to situation and it might be a useful idea to include items which will increase and decrease your arousal levels. DIY ideas are highlighted in bold.

<p>Vision</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sunglasses, tinted glasses - Sensory lights - Photos - Taking yourself somewhere visually appropriate for you (dark room/ garden) - DIY: Sensory jars filled with glitter (Jar, glitter glue, glitter and water)
<p>Touch</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Weighted lap pads/ shoulder pads (DIY using dried rice/ dried beans) - Fiddle toys: fidget spinner, fidget cubes - Textured items: scraps of fabric, - Spray bottle with water - Soft pillow or toy - Brush - Stress balls (DIY: balloons filled with flour) - BlueTak/ play doh
<p>Smell</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scented oils (DIY: You can get a plain body lotion and add essential oils) - Flowers - Potpourri (Dried plants e.g. lavender) - Perfume/ room spray

	
<p>Hearing</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ear defenders, ear plugs. <i>With items such as the ear defenders, it is important to moderate use and to use appropriately. It is possible if you over used ear defenders that when you don't use them, the more overly stimulating noise and noise sensitivity will be.</i> - Another option is audio isolating ear protectors. These essential 'focus' hearing for you to the conversation around you. (Flare: £24.99) - Headphones to play music that suits you and your level of arousal. It may be calming, soothing music or it may be heavy metal! You can also consider apps such as 'Headspace' and 'Calm' which have some free content. You can also listen to some white noise or other 'waves'. - DIY: Voice recordings of family members/ friends/ yourself saying things you know you like to hear when you are feeling this way. Filling a jar with dried rice/ beans and creating a 'maraca'.
<p>Taste</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A mint spray