

Sensory-Inclusion Guide

Neurodivergent Expertise



Understanding Sensory Sensitivities

Sensory sensitivity refers to how individuals perceive, process, and organise sensory information from their surroundings and their own bodies. This processing can vary, with some individuals being hypersensitive, leading to strong reactions to stimuli, while others may be hyposensitive, resulting in muted responses to sensory inputs.

Link Between Sensory Sensitivity and Neurodivergence

Many neurodivergent individuals experience sensory sensitivity. Neurodivergence includes conditions such as autism, ADHD, dyslexia, and dyspraxia, among others. Studies indicate that up to 95% of autistic individuals experience sensory sensitivities. This heightened sensitivity can impact daily life, making public environments like workplaces and public transport challenging. Recognising and accommodating these diverse sensory needs is crucial for fostering an inclusive environment where individuals can productively contribute and thrive.



Impacts

01

Individuals with heightened sensory sensitivity may find everyday environments overwhelming due to hypersensitive processing of sensory inputs like light, noise, movement, and smells, leading to sensory overload.

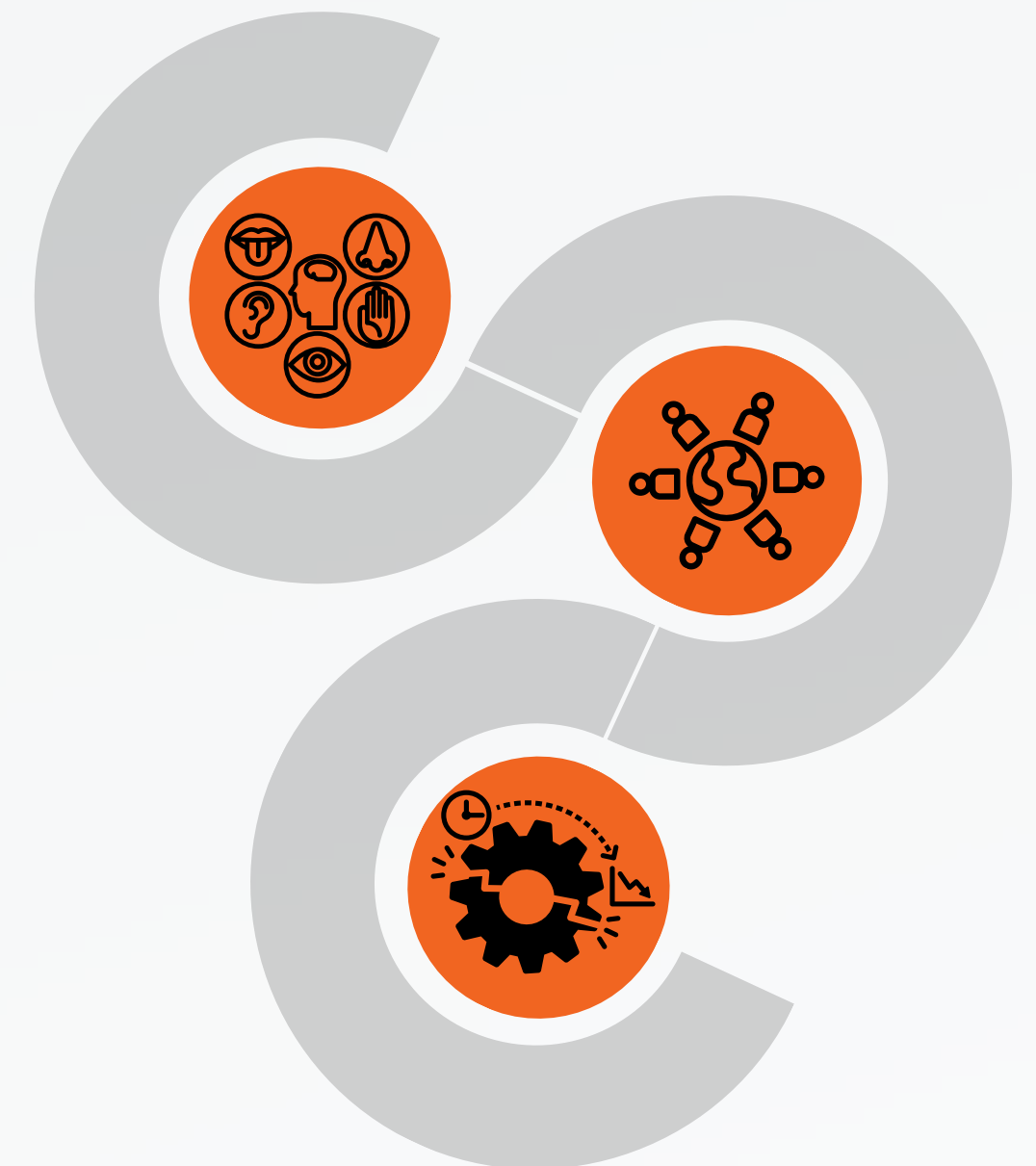
02

Crowded public transport, supermarkets, and busy offices can be particularly challenging, causing distraction, exhaustion, and stress for those with heightened sensory sensitivity.

03

These environments can negatively impact an individual's productivity, stress levels, morale, and overall well-being.

If a person struggles to regulate their sensory environment, they might encounter **sensory overload**. This happens when the brain finds it challenging to handle an overwhelming amount of sensory information simultaneously. Consequently, individuals may feel overwhelmed, causing them to retreat from their surroundings, refrain from speaking, or seek a calm environment to recover.



Managing Overload

Self-Regulation

How do Individuals Self-Regulate?

Neurodivergent individuals employ various strategies to control their environments and manage sensory input, including:

- Hybrid and Remote Working: Opting for sensory-controlled work environments to reduce impact.
- Physical Movement: Engaging in short walks or physical activities.
- Mindfulness and Breathing Techniques: Using mindfulness practices to maintain focus.
- Noise-Canceling Headphones: Blocking out distractions in business settings.
- Quiet Spaces: Seeking peaceful work areas free from interruptions.

When self-regulation falters, it is crucial to:

- Remove Themselves: Exiting the environment to regain composure.
- Shut Down: Pausing verbal communication and requiring space for recovery without interrogation.



Importance of Sensory-Inclusive Workplaces for Businesses

Recognising and addressing sensory diversity in the workplace is not only a moral obligation but also a strategic business choice. Firstly, it can lead to increased productivity, innovation, and overall well-being among employees. By reducing sensory overload and minimising stress triggers, employees can concentrate on tasks and excel in their performance.

Catering to sensory needs can result in reduced absenteeism, higher morale, and increased loyalty and retention rates among staff members.

Prioritising sensory inclusivity can also boost an organisation's reputation as an employer of choice. Demonstrating a commitment to diversity and inclusivity can attract exceptional talent from diverse backgrounds, enriching the workforce and fostering a culture of acceptance and respect for individual differences.

Supporting Neurodivergent Colleagues

As colleagues or managers, recognising signs of sensory overload and offering support can make a significant difference. Here are some supportive strategies:

- **Post-it Note Strategy:** Allow individuals to signal when they need a break without needing to explain.
- **Flexibility:** Recognise sensory stimuli has an accumulative impact. So weeks individuals may require more flexibility to manage.
- **Follow-Up Conversations:** Discuss ways to support them in stressful situations at a separate time. Avoid talking to someone in sensory overload, as it exacerbates the situation.



About Us



Xceptional Academy are **neurodiversity experts** who work with leaders in the private, public, and community sectors to create genuinely safe workplaces for neurodivergent people. Our team combines lived experience, academic research, and industry knowledge in co-designing a suite of solutions for employers.



- Search and Placement
- Workforce Planning
- Neuro-Inclusion Training
- Post Placement Coaching
- Neuro-inclusion procedures and policies
- Advisory Services



Contact Us

Take the next step in your neuro-inclusion journey with Xceptional Academy. Contact us today to learn more about our training solutions and how we can support your organisation's commitment to neurodiversity and inclusion.



Nicole Done

Principal, Neurodiversity Enablement

 +61 405129483

 nicole@xceptionalacdemy.org.au

 Sydney, Australia



Aron Mercer

Chief Growth Officer

 +61 414489207

 aron@xceptionalacademy.org.au

 Brisbane, Australia