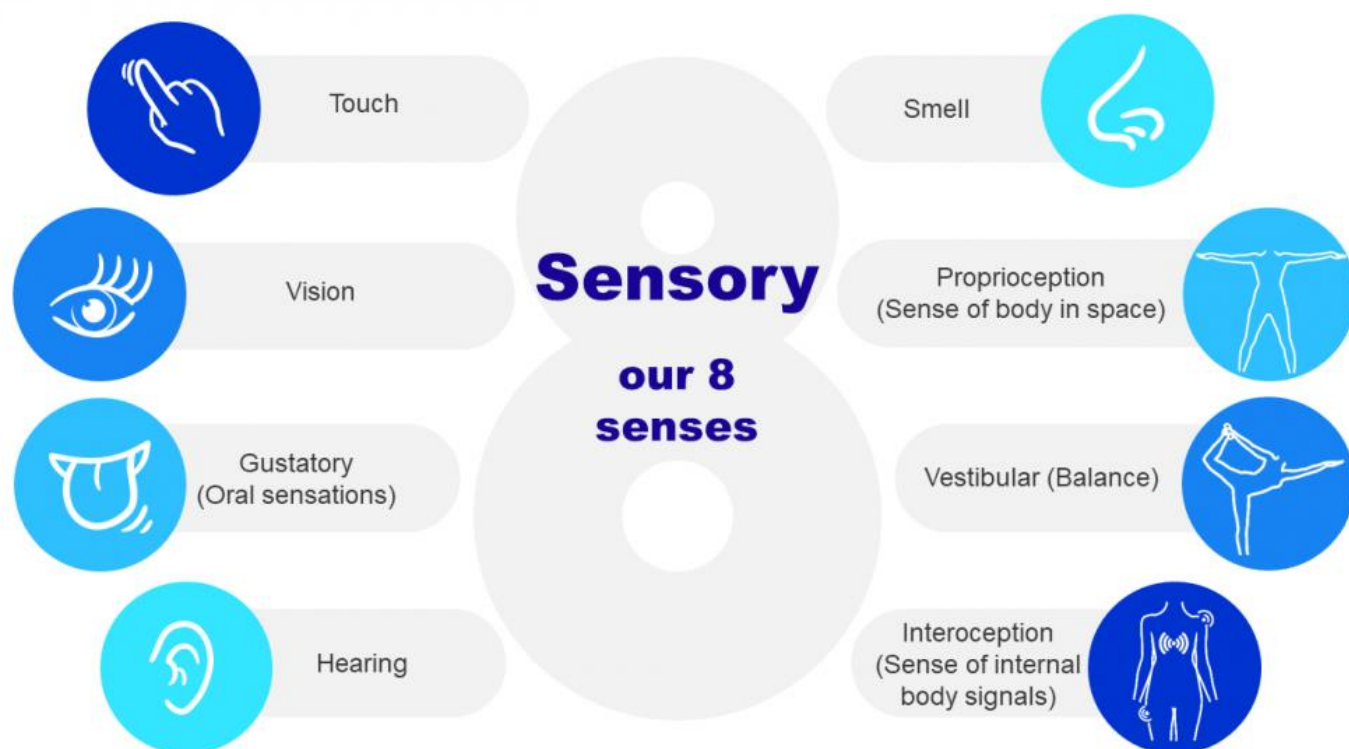


Sensory Information

The information contained within this newsletter can be adapted for use at any time regardless of any diagnosis.

The 8 Sensory Systems



Sight

If you're hypersensitive / over sensitive to visual input, you may find yourself overwhelmed by bright or coloured lights, too much detail to look at, busy wall displays, posters etc. On the other hand, if you're hyposensitive or under sensitive to visual input, you may struggle focusing on detail.



Tips that may work

Dim the lighting – try using bulbs with lower wattage

Wear sunglasses to reduce glare when you're out and about outside. Or wear a baseball cap.

Reduce the brightness on any screens.

Blackout blinds can really help with getting to sleep and staying asleep

Sound

They may be hyposensitive or hypersensitive to sound. They may not respond to certain sounds, they might enjoy loud environments, or they might have trouble with hearing. This could lead to constantly seeking this sensory input, whether this is in the form of loud music, making noises, or another way you've found to meet this need.



Tips that may work:

Noise-cancelling headphones are great for reducing background noise or focusing more on the noise that works for you. You can also get in ear noise cancelling pods, that are discreet and vary in size and how much noise they reduce. These should be used with caution particularly if in public near roads in case they do not hear cars or emergency vehicles which could be dangerous. Over use of noise cancelling headphones could increase difficulties as the wearer does not become used to the environment and becomes dependent on listening to favourite music or quieter environment.

Reduce the sound within your environment as much as possible – this could even be something like remembering to turn the extractor fan off after cooking. Turn the TV off if the young person appears overwhelmed.

Smell

Hypersensitivity to smell can be difficult when trying to navigate day-to-day life. Even something as simple as sitting on the bus can become a nightmare when someone sits next to you with strong perfume on! Suddenly our brains might be unable to process any other information besides the strong smell next to us.



Then again, you may be hyposensitive to smells and may have a very limited sense of smell. This could lead to being unaware of foul smells, or even smells which signify danger such as burning.

Tips that may work:

Use unscented body care items, such as shower gel and moisturiser or use smelly shower gels to alert the system ie, zesty lemon

Remove scented air fresheners from your environment if possible.

Ensure safety measures such as smoke alarms are in place, and check them regularly.

Touch

If you're hypersensitive to touch, many daily tasks can be trickier. These can include choosing clothes to wear which don't irritate your skin, brushing or washing your hair without it being painful, eating or not eating certain foods due to their textures, and maintaining relationships due to difficulties with physical affection.



If you're hyposensitive to touch, you may have a very high pain threshold, which could put you in danger if you don't realise that you're hurt. You may eat inedible objects, or you might enjoy the feeling of pressure being applied.

Tips that may work:

We are

**We are
LSCft**

kind ● a team ● respectful ● always learning

Try to buy seam-free clothing like socks, and removing labels can really help.

Carry fidget toys such as tangles.

Taste

If you're hyposensitive to taste, you may enjoy very strong flavours, or eat objects which you shouldn't! If you're hypersensitive this can affect what foods you can eat for example you might not like spicy foods. This can change with time though as we get older our food choices can vary.



Tips that may work:

Try to remember your child may have Sensory differences in relation to food which includes taste, texture and smell. It can be difficult to ensure your child is getting all the right vitamins and minerals in their diet. With this in mind, try not to add pressure. Seek advice from your GP if necessary.

Vestibular

Our sense of movement and balance is known as our Vestibular sense. It is responsible for controlling our muscles, and most of our reflexes. The vestibular system is stimulated by movement up or down, backward or forwards, and around or over. The vestibular system tells us where our body is in relation to gravity, where it is moving to and how fast. The nerves that control our vestibular system are located in the inner ear and tell our brain what direction we are moving in.



Tips that may work:

Walking on a curb or line (or a balance beam!). Walk on the couch cushions or across a bed. Balance across an obstacle course, or try some stretches or yoga poses please keep yourself safe.

Proprioception

The proprioceptive system is one of the lesser known senses. This sensory system has huge influence on our body awareness, identifying and grading both force and pressure. The proprioceptive system receptors are located in our muscles, joints, ligaments and even within our skin and bones. Movement triggers feedback from the receptors to our brain and provide information about where our arms, legs, hands and feet are in relation to our body. This sense helps us to coordinate our movements so we can walk, run, hop, skip, negotiate obstacles or kick an object with precision.



Tips that may work:

Weight bearing activities e.g. crawling, push-ups. Resistance activities e.g. pushing/pulling. Heavy lifting e.g. carrying books. Cardiovascular activities e.g. Running, jumping on a trampoline. Oral activities e.g. chewing, blowing bubbles. Deep pressure e.g. tight hugs.



Interoception

Interoception is our sensory system that provides information about the internal condition of our body—how our body is feeling on the inside. Interoception gives us the body sensations such as a growling stomach, dry mouth, tense muscles and racing heart. Awareness of these body sensations helps us to experience much needed emotions such as hunger, fullness, thirst, pain, body temperature, need for the bathroom, relaxation, anxiety, sadness, frustration and safety.

Tips that may work:

Yoga – focuses on listening to your body and providing good proprioceptive and vestibular input.

Mindfulness – gives the person time to focus on their body and emotional state.

Breathing exercises. Heavy work activities – involve large muscles of the body

