

# Sensory Differences in ASD

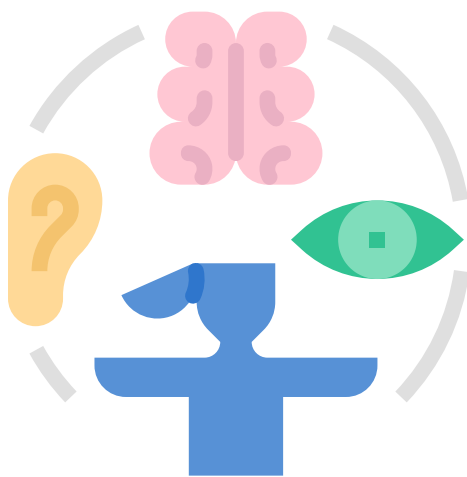
Many individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) have challenges in sensory areas that affect their daily lives. They can be hyper and/or hyposensitive to any of the senses.

## Hyposensitive Examples (Under-Sensitive)

- Person may seek sensory input by:
  - Banging objects loudly.
  - Spinning.
  - Rocking.
  - Showing a preference for spicy food or other strong flavors.
  - Smelling or sniffing objects.

## Signs of Sensory Overload

- Covering of ears/eyes.
- Putting head down.
- Wearing a hood, sunglasses, headphones, or hat indoors.
- Appears stressed or anxious.
- Appears to be in pain.
- Marked change from usual behavior.



## Hypersensitive Examples (Over-Sensitive)

- Bothered by loud places, particular noises (e.g. squeaky door), fluorescent lights, scented products, and certain fabrics or textures.
- Food sensitivities (strong flavors or certain textures) may lead to limited diets.
- Interference with hygiene (hair brushing and/or teeth brushing may be painful).
- Sensitivity to touch.
- Fine motor difficulties (handwriting, buttons, shoelaces, etc.)

## How to Help

- Ask about sensory concerns.
- When meeting individually and in groups, consider the space.
- Try to use windows, lamps, or indirect lighting instead of fluorescent lights.
- Consider a private room instead of a common area with background noise.
- Provide "fidgets" for people to use during downtime (stress balls, fidget spinners, Koosh balls, etc.)