

The 8 Senses: Understanding Your Sensory Profile

Sensory Processing is how our brain takes in and makes sense of information from the world around us. It's a constant loop that happens very fast. Everyone takes in, processes, and reacts to sensations differently.

The brain receives signals from:

👁️ Eyes

👂 Ears

👄 Mouth

👃 Nose

👐 Skin & internal organs

💪 Muscles & joints

🧠 Inner ear (balance)

Your brain identifies and interprets the sensation:

Safe or unsafe? Like or dislike? Comfortable or uncomfortable?

Your brain decides what to do with the information:

Physical action? Emotional reaction? Often both!

Did you know we have a total of eight senses?

When we think about the senses, most of us picture the "big five": sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch. These are our **external** senses that help us interpret the world around us.

In addition to the traditional five senses, three more play a huge role in learning and daily life: proprioception, vestibular, and interoception. These are often called the "hidden" senses because they are **internal**.

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Imagine that for each of your eight senses, you have one cup.

The size of the cup is how much sensation or sensory input your brain can process comfortably, also known as our **neurological threshold**. Cup sizes may vary across the senses:



Small Cup:

overflows more quickly, may be **sensitive or avoidant of certain sensations**, needs less input or stimulation, may try to **control or remove input**



Medium Cup:

holds a moderate amount of input, **usually comfortable** in environments without needing adjustments, may notice input but is **not strongly affected**



Big Cup:

Holds a lot of input before feeling full, **may seek out or create sensations** to feel satisfied, **often need more input** to maintain regulation

A person is regulated, calm, and focused when their cups are filled with the right amount of sensory input:

Too Much Input



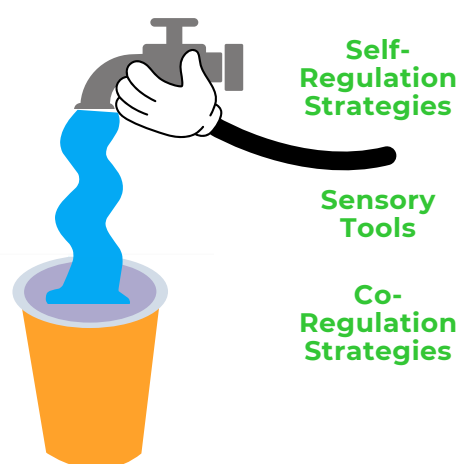
Dysregulated

Not Enough Input




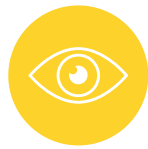


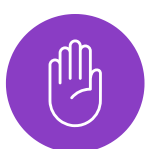



Dysregulated

"Just Right" Input



Regulated

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 <p>Taste</p> <p>Function: Detects flavour and textures</p> <p>More sensitive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Picky” eater • Gags on strong flavours <p>Less sensitive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Craves intense flavours • Fidgets with lips or non-food items 	 <p>Sight</p> <p>Function: Detects light, colour, shape, movement</p> <p>More sensitive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoids bright lights • Overwhelmed by clutter <p>Less sensitive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Misses visual cues • Drawn to fast/ flashing visuals 	 <p>Sound</p> <p>Function: Detects speech, music, and environmental sound</p> <p>More sensitive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covers ears • Distressed by loud or unexpected <p>Less sensitive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Misses audio cues, like name called • Seeks loud noises or music 	 <p>Smell</p> <p>Function: Detects and identifies odours</p> <p>More sensitive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reacts strongly to perfumes or food smells • Headaches <p>Less sensitive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doesn't notice strong odors • Seeks out smells
 <p>Touch</p> <p>Function: Detects textures, pressures, temperatures, pain</p> <p>More sensitive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dislikes certain fabrics or textures • Avoids messy play <p>Less sensitive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeks strong touch/ pressure • May not notice injury 	 <p>Proprioception</p> <p>Function: Detects body position and movement</p> <p>More sensitive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoids movement • stiffer posture <p>Less sensitive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bumps or crashes into things • Seeks pressure or “heavy work” 	 <p>Interoception</p> <p>Function: Detects hunger, thirst, pain, emotions</p> <p>More sensitive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reactive to minor discomfort or emotional shifts <p>Less sensitive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doesn't notice / can ignore hunger, thirst, or internal cues 	 <p>Vestibular</p> <p>Function: Detects balance and head movements</p> <p>More sensitive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoids swings, spinning, heights <p>Less sensitive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constantly moving • Craves spinning or jumping

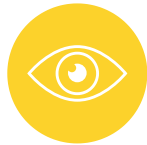
My Sensory Profile



Draw a small, medium
or large cup to show
how sensitive you are
in each area



Taste



Sight



Sound



Smell



Touch



Proprioception



Interoception



Vestibular