

# Peer Support Handout: Sensory Needs & Mental Health

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## The Core Senses

The five core senses are Touch, Sound, Taste, Smell and Visual. However, there are many more, such as proprioception (sense of body in space) along with internal needs, such as sensing thirst, pain or hunger.



Produced by:



**Mental Health  
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## Sensory Needs

Autistic people have a variety of sensory needs and when these needs are unmet they can have a significant impact on our mental wellbeing, service access and day to day experiences.



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## Sensory Overload

When sensory needs are unmet, or sensory inputs are intense, overlapping, or continuous, then this can cause sensory overload. Sensory overload can lead to meltdowns or shutdowns.



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## Sensory Tools

Sensory adjustments and sensory tools can help to improve your mental health and sensory regulation. As well as other areas of wellbeing, such as sleeping patterns and social battery.



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## Unmasking

This can be taking time to unmask and engage in special interests, explaining your needs and stimming. These activities can help to meet sensory needs and give you space to explore them.



## Signposting and Support Resources

**Sensory Adaptations** - Here are some suggestions for tools to meet sensory needs:



Taste



Internal



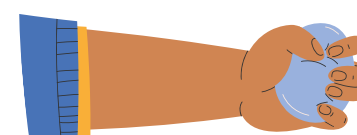
Vestibular



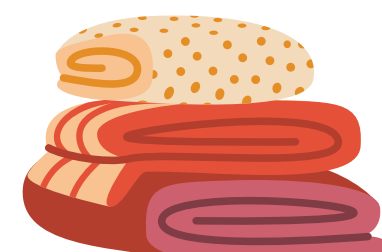
Sound



Olfactory



Touch



Proprioception



Visual

**Brain in Hand** - This app is tailored to support autistic users with functions, such as a pre-recorded responses that may be helpful in experiencing sensory overwhelm, or a traffic light system that can support autistic people to explain their sensory, pain or emotional scales of wellbeing.