

EATING DISORDERS



NEURODIVERSITY
AUSTRALIA

SENSORY ACCESSIBILITY GUIDE FOR CLIENTS

Advocating for your Sensory
Needs in Healthcare





Why It Matters

Healthcare spaces can be busy, noisy, bright, or unpredictable – which can be overwhelming or even distressing for people with sensory processing differences.

When sensory needs aren't understood or supported, it can make it harder to communicate, focus, or even access care.

Advocating for your needs can also be difficult, especially if you've been dismissed or misunderstood in the past. Many clinicians genuinely want to help but may not realise what small, no-cost adjustments can make a big difference for you.

This guide lists practical adjustments that are usually easy to do in most healthcare settings and don't require extra funding.



How To Use The Checklist

- Read through each section and tick or highlight the things that would help you.
- You can focus on the adjustments that will make the biggest difference to your healthcare experience, and, if helpful, rank them in order of importance. This can help providers understand what to prioritise if resources are limited.
- Bring your list to your appointment and use it to collaborate with your clinician.
- You can ask for these adjustments to be documented in your file for future visits.

Sensory Access Checklist for Clients

Senses	My experience	What would make a big difference for me
 <p>VISION Light & Visuals</p>	<p>I am sensitive to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bright or flickering lights ○ Glare ○ Busy or cluttered areas (e.g. many posters on the wall, surfaces with a lot of patterns) ○ Sudden brightness changes 	<p>Please:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ask before turning on lights ○ Use soft or natural light source ○ Warn me if lights can't be changed so I can bring sunglasses, a hat, or tinted glasses ○ Let me sit facing away from bright windows or busy areas ○ Stop oscillating equipment (e.g. fan) ○ Move to a calmer, less busy space if possible
 <p>HEARING Sound & Noise</p>	<p>I am sensitive to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sudden or repetitive noises ○ Background noise and have trouble filtering it over speech sounds ○ I have misophonia / I am misophonic (strong reaction to specific sounds) 	<p>Please:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Turn off radios, TVs in the waiting room when possible ○ Allow me to wait in a quieter space or outside ○ Turn the fan or aircon off possible ○ Let me use ear defenders or noise-cancelling headphones ○ Come to me in the waiting room as I don't expect I will notice if you call my name ○ If a background noise is distracting for me (e.g. buzzing of electricity), turn off the appliance if it's not needed

Senses	My experience	What would make a big difference for me
 <p>SMELL Olfactory</p>	<p>I am sensitive to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Strong scents ○ Specific scents ○ Cleaning products smells ○ Hand sanitiser ○ Medical smells ○ All of the above 	<p>Please:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Avoid wearing perfume or highly scented cosmetics or toiletries ○ Avoid using cleaning sprays or air fresheners before my appointment ○ Offer to meet outside or open a window if possible ○ Warn me if there are strong smells ○ Let me wear a mask or use a familiar scent to mask smells
 <p>TOUCH Tactile</p>	<p>I struggle with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Unexpected touch ○ Light touch ○ Specific textures ○ People in my personal space 	<p>Please:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Touch me as little as possible / avoid casual touch ○ Let me know before any necessary touch or procedure, and explain why it's needed so I can prepare ○ Use firm touch for examinations ○ Use light touch for examinations ○ Let me keep jackets, blankets, or comfort items on ○ Allow me to bring my own pillowcase or blanket for hospital stays
 <p>MOVEMENT & BALANCE Proprioception & Vestibular</p>	<p>I struggle with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ I need to move, fidget, or change position to stay regulated ○ I feel dizzy or disorientated with certain movements or positions 	<p>Please:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Let me choose where and how I sit or stand ○ Give extra time if I need to adjust my position ○ Allow me to move, stretch, stand, or pace during appointments (if medically safe to do so) ○ Ask if I need to move or change position ○ Offer short movement or grounding breaks during long appointments ○ Provide seating options that allows gentle movement (e.g. swivel chair, gym ball, rocking chair)

Senses	My experience	What would make a big difference for me
 <p>TEMPERATURE & INTEROCEPTION (Internal Sensing)</p>	<p>I have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Difficulty regulating body temperature ○ Difficulty recognising or describing pain, hunger, temperature, or other bodily sensations 	<p>Please:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ask about room temperature and let me know whether it is possible to adjust it ○ Offer other ways to help me regulate my temperature (e.g. blanket, glass of cold water) ○ Give me extra time to notice and describe how I feel ○ Ask descriptive questions (e.g. "What does it feel like?") instead of asking for a number ○ Let me use colours, shapes, or other ways to show intensity or quality ○ Let me use body maps, drawings, or notes to describe sensations ○ Check in regularly about my comfort during longer appointments
 <p>GENERAL MULTISENSORY</p>	<p>I have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Overwhelmed, tired, or stressed from busy or unpredictable environments 	<p>Please:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ask at the start what adjustments would help me when you first meet with me (and document them for future visits) ○ Explain procedures and the environment in advance ○ Allow comfort items and / or support people to attend ○ Allow breaks if I feel overwhelmed ○ Give extra time to recover after intense procedures or environments ○ Let me record and share my preferred adjustments for future visits

This checklist is not exhaustive. The EDNA team welcomes feedback if you notice anything missing. We aim to review and update our info sheets every 2-3 years.



Personal Summary



Senses	What would make a big difference for me
 VISION Light & Visuals	
 HEARING Sound & Noise	
 SMELL Olfactory	
 TOUCH Tactile	
 MOVEMENT & BALANCE Proprioception & Vestibular	
 TEMPERATURE & INTEROCEPTION (Internal Sensing)	
 GENERAL MULTISENSORY	