



Sensory Capacity Mapping Sheets

A structured way to understand sensory load, tolerance, and risk across environments

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Important note

This resource is intended to support understanding and good practice in neuro-inclusive workplace design. It provides general guidance and does not constitute legal, medical, or clinical advice. Organisations should apply the principles in line with their own policies, regulatory obligations, and professional judgement.

Sensory capacity mapping identifies **how much input a nervous system can tolerate before regulation is compromised...** and *where* that threshold is most likely to be exceeded.

This is not about preferences.
It's about **functional capacity and safety**.

How to use these sheets (important)

- Use **one sheet per context** (work, home, clinic, school, travel)
- Complete collaboratively where possible
- Revisit over time... capacity is **state-dependent**
- Use outputs to **change environments**, not people

Do not treat this as static or diagnostic.

Sheet 1. Sensory Channels Overview

(Baseline capacity scan)

For each channel, mark **current tolerance**, not ideal conditions.

Sensory Channel	Low Capacity	Variable	High Capacity	Notes
Light	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Sound	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Visual complexity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Touch / texture	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Temperature	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	_____
Smell	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Movement / proximity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Social density	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

Practitioner note:

Low capacity ≠ dislike. It signals **high processing cost**.

Sheet 2. Early Warning Signals

(Pre-escalation indicators)

What shows up **before** overload or shutdown?

Tick all that apply:

- Irritability
- Cognitive fog
- Reduced speech
- Increased stimming
- Sensory seeking
- Avoidance
- Emotional flooding
- Physical tension
- Dissociation
- Fatigue spike

Client / practitioner descriptors (own words):

These signals are **intervention points**, not failures.

Sheet 3. Sensory Load Triggers by Environment

(Context-specific risk mapping)

Environment:

- Workplace Clinic School Home Public Other: _____

High-load elements present (tick):

- Fluorescent lighting
- Background noise
- Interruptions
- Visual clutter
- Temperature shifts
- Social monitoring
- Time pressure
- Unpredictability

Which two contribute most to overload here?

1. _____
2. _____

Sheet 4. Capacity Range (Window Mapping)

(State-dependent tolerance)

Complete for **three states**.

State	Capacity Description	What narrows capacity	What widens capacity
Well-resourced	_____	_____	_____
Baseline	_____	_____	_____
Depleted	_____	_____	_____

This prevents over-reliance on “good day” assumptions.

Sheet 5. Sensory Regulation Supports

(What actually helps)

Input that reliably supports regulation (tick):

- Reduced light
- Noise reduction
- Predictable sound
- Compression / weight
- Temperature change
- Movement
- Stillness
- Texture
- Solitude
- Co-regulation



Most effective (top 2):

1. _____
2. _____

Supports that *do not* help (important):

Sheet 6. Capacity Breach Indicators

(Risk and safeguarding lens)

When capacity is exceeded, what happens?

- Meltdown
- Shutdown
- Dissociation
- Verbal escalation
- Withdrawal
- Post-event crash
- Somatic symptoms

Time to recover (typical):

- Minutes Hours Day(s)

This informs **reasonable pacing and expectations**.

Sheet 7. Environmental Adjustments Map

(Design outputs — this is the goal)

For this context, list **non-negotiable adjustments**:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Optional / flexible supports:

Signals that adjustments are no longer sufficient:

This sheet should directly inform **adjustment plans or supervision decisions**.

Sheet 8. Review & Re-Mapping Schedule

Last reviewed: _____

Next review: _____

Trigger for early review (tick):

- Burnout signs

- Role change
- Increased demands
- Health changes
- Repeated dysregulation

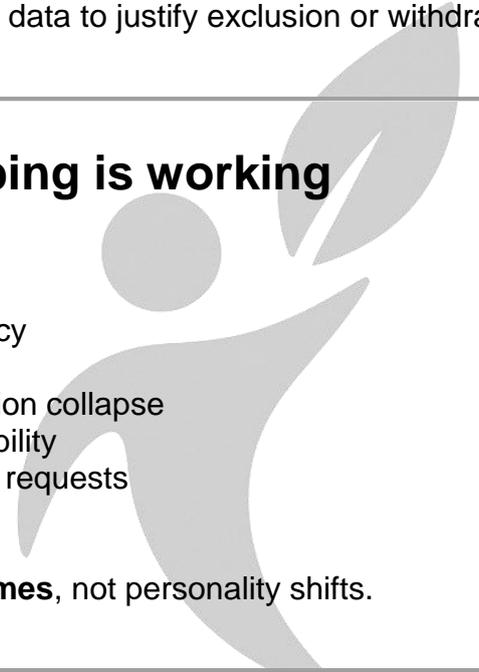
Capacity mapping is **iterative**, not one-off.

Practitioner guidance (critical)

- Treat sensory overload as a **system signal**, not a coping issue
 - Assume capacity is **variable and contextual**
 - Adjust **before** breach, not after
 - Document changes made in response
 - Never use sensory data to justify exclusion or withdrawal of support
-

Indicators mapping is working

You'll observe:

- earlier self-advocacy
 - fewer escalations
 - reduced post-session collapse
 - improved sustainability
 - clearer adjustment requests
 - less masking
- 

These are **design outcomes**, not personality shifts.

Final framing

Sensory capacity mapping is not about comfort.

It's about **preventing harm, protecting access, and designing environments that don't require collapse to be believed.**

If capacity is exceeded repeatedly, the system is misaligned.

These sheets make that visible.