



# Low-Demand Session Structure Templates

*Designing sessions that preserve regulation, access, and  
ethical safety*

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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.

Low-demand sessions assume:

- variable nervous-system capacity
- delayed processing
- state-dependent access to language
- high masking risk under pressure

The aim is not to lower standards.

It is to **lower unnecessary load** so real work can happen.

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## Core design principles (non-negotiable)

1. **Structure replaces urgency**
2. **Permission replaces performance**
3. **Containment replaces intensity**
4. **Pacing replaces pressure**
5. **Clarity replaces interpretation**

If a session requires people to “push through”, it is no longer low-demand.

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## Template 1. Ultra-Low-Demand Holding Session

*(For shutdown risk, depletion, or high stress)*

### **Purpose:**

Containment and safety only. No agenda.

### **Length:**

30–45 minutes

### **Structure:**

1. Arrival & orientation (5 min)
  - Name session length
  - Name that nothing is required
  - Explicit permission to be quiet
2. Presence phase (15–20 min)
  - Minimal prompts
  - Optional grounding
  - Silence allowed
3. Gentle check-in (optional, near end)
  - “Is there anything you want noted?”
  - No follow-up questions
4. Clear close (5 min)
  - Name end

- Name next contact (or no next step)

**Practitioner stance:**

Witness, not intervene.

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## Template 2. Regulation-First Session

*(For dysregulation, escalation risk, or post-incident work)*

**Purpose:**

Stabilise state before any content.

**Length:**

50–75 minutes

**Structure:**

1. Arrival & safety framing (5 min)
  - “This is not a problem-solving session.”
2. Regulation buffer (5–10 min)
  - Body-based settling
  - No narrative
3. Limited content window (20–30 min)
  - One topic only
  - Practitioner tracks activation
  - Stop before overload
4. Integration & discharge (10–15 min)
  - What settled
  - What remains unfinished (no fixing)

**Rule:**

If regulation drops, content stops.

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## Template 3. Single-Focus Contained Session

*(For decision-making or ethical reflection)*

**Purpose:**

Clarity without overload.

**Length:**

60 minutes

**Structure:**

1. Purpose framing (5 min)
  - What this session *is* / *isn't*
2. One focus only (30–35 min)
  - No additional issues introduced
  - Written support encouraged
3. Pause & reflect (10 min)
  - Silence allowed
  - No pressure to conclude
4. Close with containment (5–10 min)
  - Name what is decided
  - Name what is deferred

**Safeguard:**

Multiple topics = overload.

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## Template 4. Processing-Delay-Protected Session

*(For clients/practitioners with delayed integration)*

**Purpose:**

Allow thinking to happen after the session.

**Length:**

45–60 minutes

**Structure:**

1. Arrival & permission setting (5 min)
  - “No need to decide today.”
2. Information or exploration (20–25 min)
  - Slow pace
  - No rapid questioning
3. Reflection pause (5–10 min)
  - No speaking required
4. Written follow-up agreed (5 min)
  - Decisions deferred
  - Summary promised

**Key feature:**

Outcome happens **later**, not live.

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## Template 5. Low-Demand Group Session

*(For supervision, training, or reflective groups)*

**Purpose:**

Shared space without performance.

**Group size:**

4–6 ideal

**Structure:**

1. Orientation & safety markers (5–10 min)
  - Passing normalised
  - No cold-calling
2. One shared focus (30–40 min)
  - Facilitator controls pacing
  - Turn-taking explicit
3. Integration round (optional)
  - One sentence or pass
4. Clear close & discharge (5 min)

**Facilitator role:**

Contain dynamics, not extract insight.

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## Template 6. Shutdown-Safe Session

*(When speech, cognition, or engagement is limited)*

**Purpose:**

Maintain connection without demand.

**Length:**

20–40 minutes

**Structure:**

1. Arrival acknowledgment
  - “You don’t need to talk.”
2. Quiet co-presence
  - Minimal prompts
  - Optional grounding
3. End with reassurance
  - “Nothing else is required.”

**Important:**

No processing, no agenda.

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## Template 7. End-of-Capacity Session

*(When stopping early is the intervention)*

**Purpose:**

Prevent harm by ending well.

**Structure:**

1. Name capacity limit
2. Validate stopping
3. Close clearly
4. Plan rest or follow-up

Stopping is **success**, not failure.

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## **What makes sessions accidentally high-demand (avoid)**

- open-ended “how does that feel?” prompts
- multiple questions without pause
- time pressure near the end
- emotional challenge during dysregulation
- silence used as pressure
- unstructured group discussion

Low-demand work requires **active containment**, not passivity.

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## **Indicators these structures are working**

You'll notice:

- less masking
- earlier boundary-setting
- fewer post-session crashes
- more accurate information
- improved retention
- calmer endings

These are **system effects**, not motivation gains.

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## **Practitioner reminder**

Low-demand does not mean low-quality.

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It means:

- safer access
- truer data
- better ethics
- sustainable practice

If people can stay regulated, they can stay honest.

