How to Understand Sensory Issues in Autism

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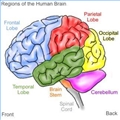
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Sensory Disfunction

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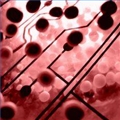
Individuals diagnosed with autism or related pervasive developmental disorders often have difficulty processing sensory input. Sensory issues in autism may lead to negative behaviors and self stimulatory behavior (stims). In order to help people in the autism spectrum who have sensory issues it is [essential](http://www.ehow.com/how_2148049_understand-sensory-issues-autism.html) gain insight to what these individuals may be experiencing.

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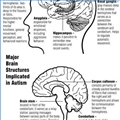
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Asperger syndrome is a developmental disorder that is related to autism. Children with Asperger syndrome… [More](http://www.ehow.com/how_4443567_identify-asperger-syndrome.html)

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Difficulty: Moderate

Instructions

Things You'll Need:

* Exposure to different environments
* Fabrics, materials and textures

The Basics of Sensory Problems

1. Step 1

Get to know the basics about sensory dysfunction. Sensory dysfunction is a disorder in and of itself. Many [children](http://www.ehow.com/children/) who have this condition may exhibit some of the same behaviors as children in the autism spectrum of disorders. However, those who have sensory dysfunction do not have the same deficits communication and social skills.

1. Step 2

Read about sensory issues in autism. Ask therapists, behavior specialists and case managers for insight and literature on the topic. There are many resources available on the Internet as well.

1. Step 3

[](http://i.ehow.com/images/a02/1h/mh/understand-sensory-issues-autism-1.3-800X800.jpg)

Distinguish between hyperactive and hypoactive sensory systems. Individuals with hyperactive sensory systems will typically avoid [activities](http://www.ehow.com/how_2148049_understand-sensory-issues-autism.html) that involve motion while ones who have hypoactive sensory systems will seek out activities that involve motion.

1. Step 4

Make observations of the individual's behavior. A person with sensory issues in the autism spectrum provides clues as to what he needs. Those with hyperactive sensory systems may burrow into couch cushions while those who have hypoactive sensory systems may rock back and forth.

Building Empathy

1. Step 1

Recognize that everyone has some sensory issues. Many people can't tolerate the sound of fingernails running down a chalkboard. Some materials are irritating to some while others are perfectly comfortable touching them. Make note of personal sensory issues.

1. Step 2



Submerge the senses. Touch a variety of textures and fabrics. Listen closely for distant sounds and try to mentally amplify them. Visit stores and take note of the many sights, sounds, textures, temperatures and movements occur.

1. Step 3

Take note of sensory input that is commonly ignored. Certain [fragrances](http://www.ehow.com/how_2148049_understand-sensory-issues-autism.html) go basically undetected by some while others find them overwhelming. Music is commonly filtered out while played at work or in stores. Individuals who have autism might not have sensory systems that know what input to let in and what input to filter out.

1. Step 4

Seek out personal descriptions of sensory issues in autistic people. Some describe the sensory overload as something that builds throughout the day. The more stimulation, the more the individual is "filled" with sensations until it reaches critical mass.

1. Step 5

Note how sensory overload is handled by individuals diagnosed within the autism spectrum. Activities like hand flapping, rocking or hugging a pillow serve to release some of the sensory input.

Read more: [How to Understand Sensory Issues in Autism | eHow.com](http://www.ehow.com/how_2148049_understand-sensory-issues-autism.html#ixzz0tajBgwQm) <http://www.ehow.com/how_2148049_understand-sensory-issues-autism.html#ixzz0tajBgwQm>