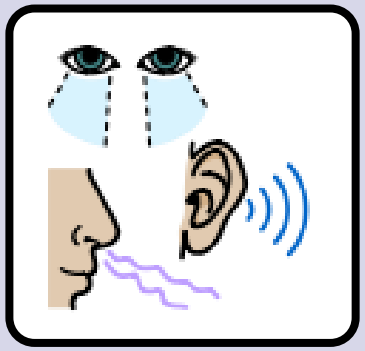
"INSPIRING SUCCESSFUL FUTURES FOR ALL"

WOODBRIDGE TRUST

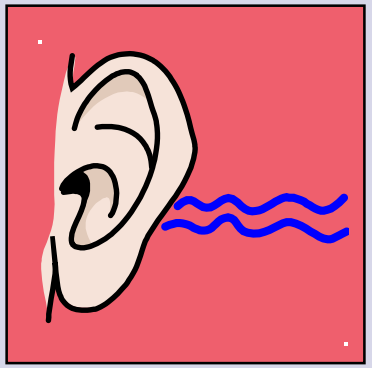
LADYWOOD OUTREACH

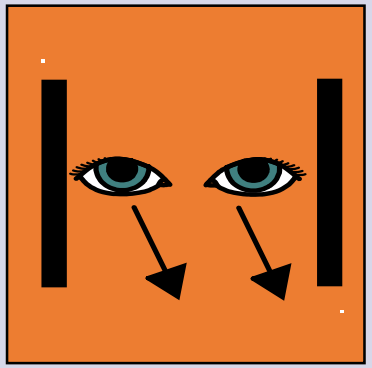
Sensory Circuits

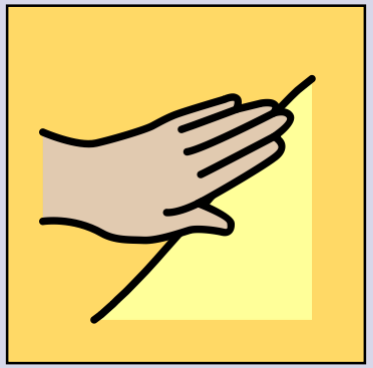
Tre Burch
Ladywood Outreach Service



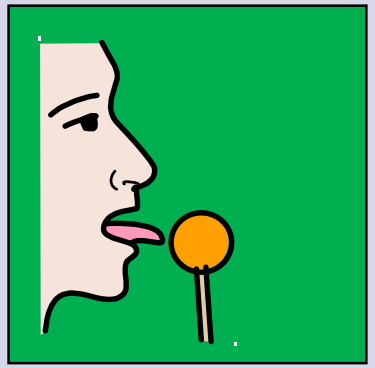
Sensory Perception



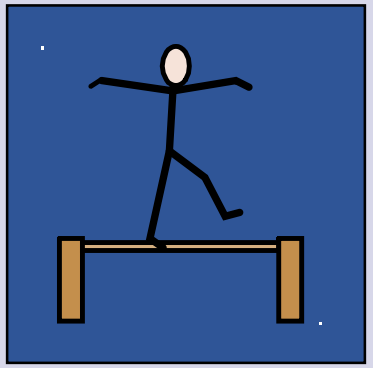








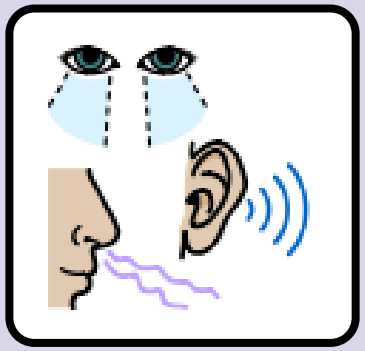






WOODBRIDGE TRUST

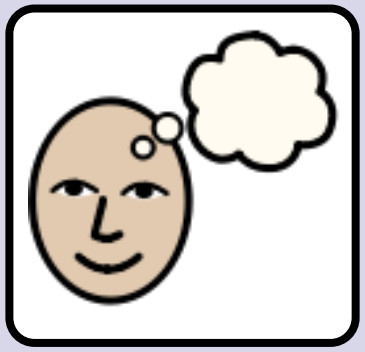
LADYWOOD OUTREACH



Sensory Perception

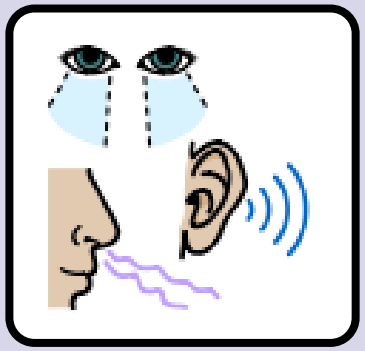
We all have:

- sensory differences
- fluctuating arousal levels
- strategies we use to regulate



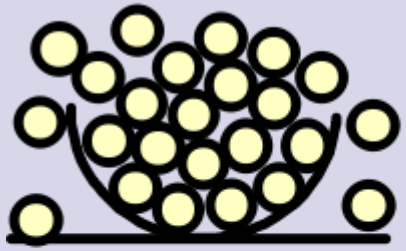
"What really helps people understand over responsive sensory problems is asking them to imagine extreme examples of what it feels like: Imagine wearing scratchy sandpaper clothes that make you itch all over, all day. Imagine washing your face in a bucket of perfume. Imagine feeling as if you're going to fall off a cliff when you walk a few steps. Imagine sitting right near the stage, next to a rock band's amplifier."

Temple Grandin



Sensory Perception

Hyp**er**sensitive
=
Over sensitive

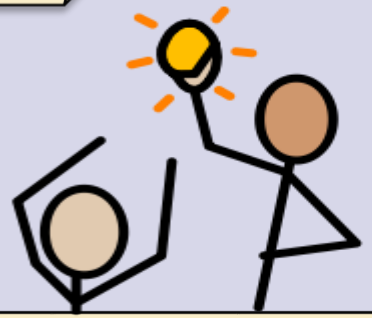




Avoids extra information

Hyp**o**sensitive
=
Under sensitive





Seeks more information

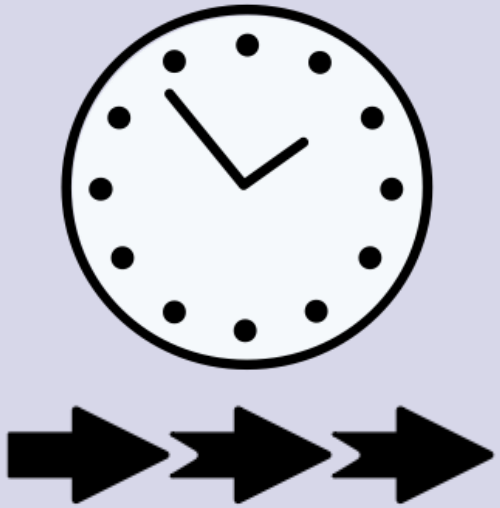


Sensory Perception

Auditory



Cochlea



24/7

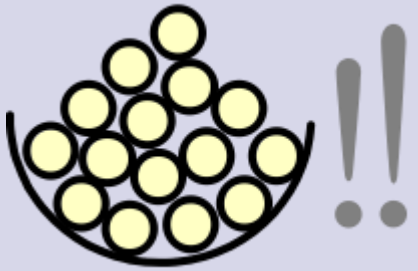


filter



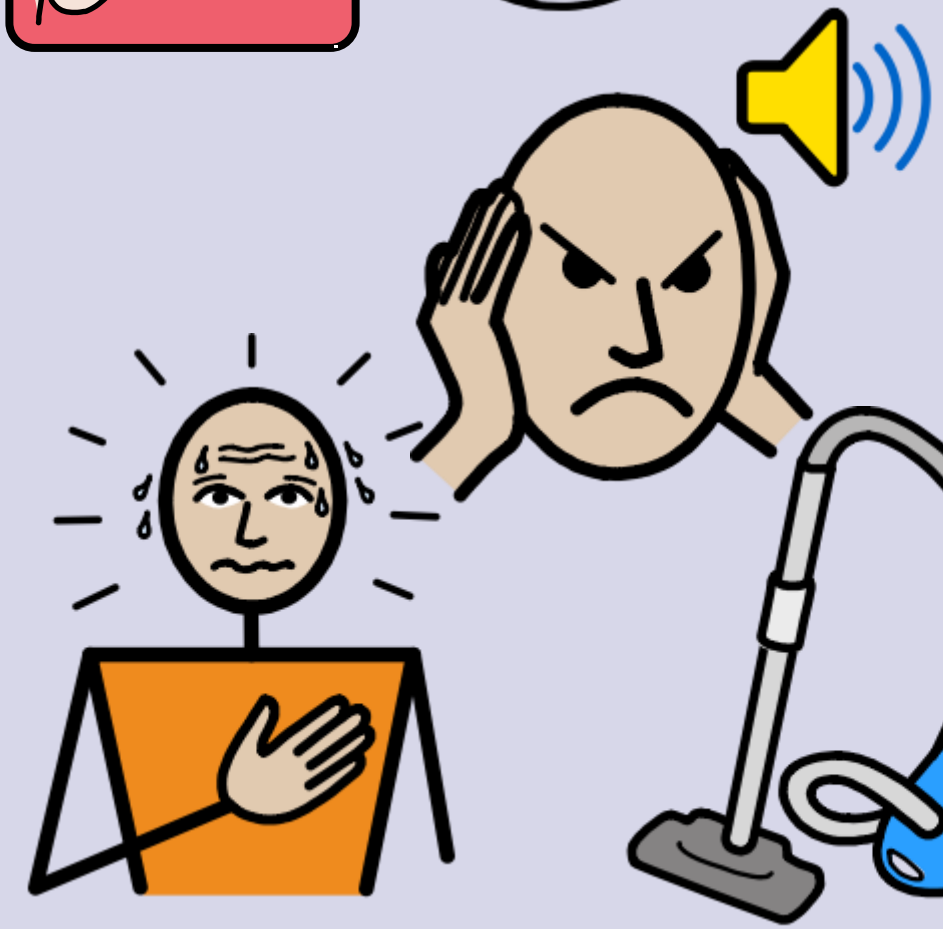
danger!

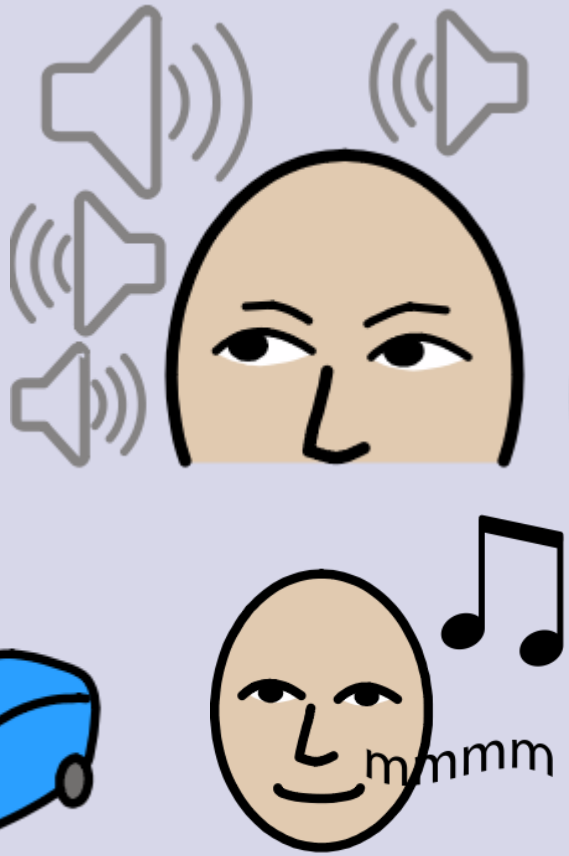




Sensory Perception

Auditory: Higher Sensitivity



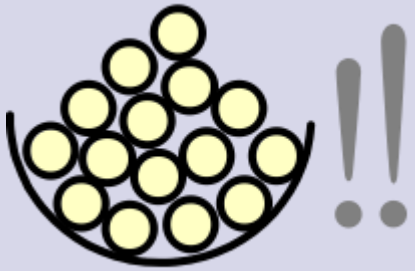


Sometimes if a toilet is flushed it feels like a train is going to run over me!

WOODBRIDGE TRUST

LADYWOOD OUTREACH





Sensory Perception

Auditory: Higher Sensitivity







Decrease environmental noise

Soft furnishings to absorb noise

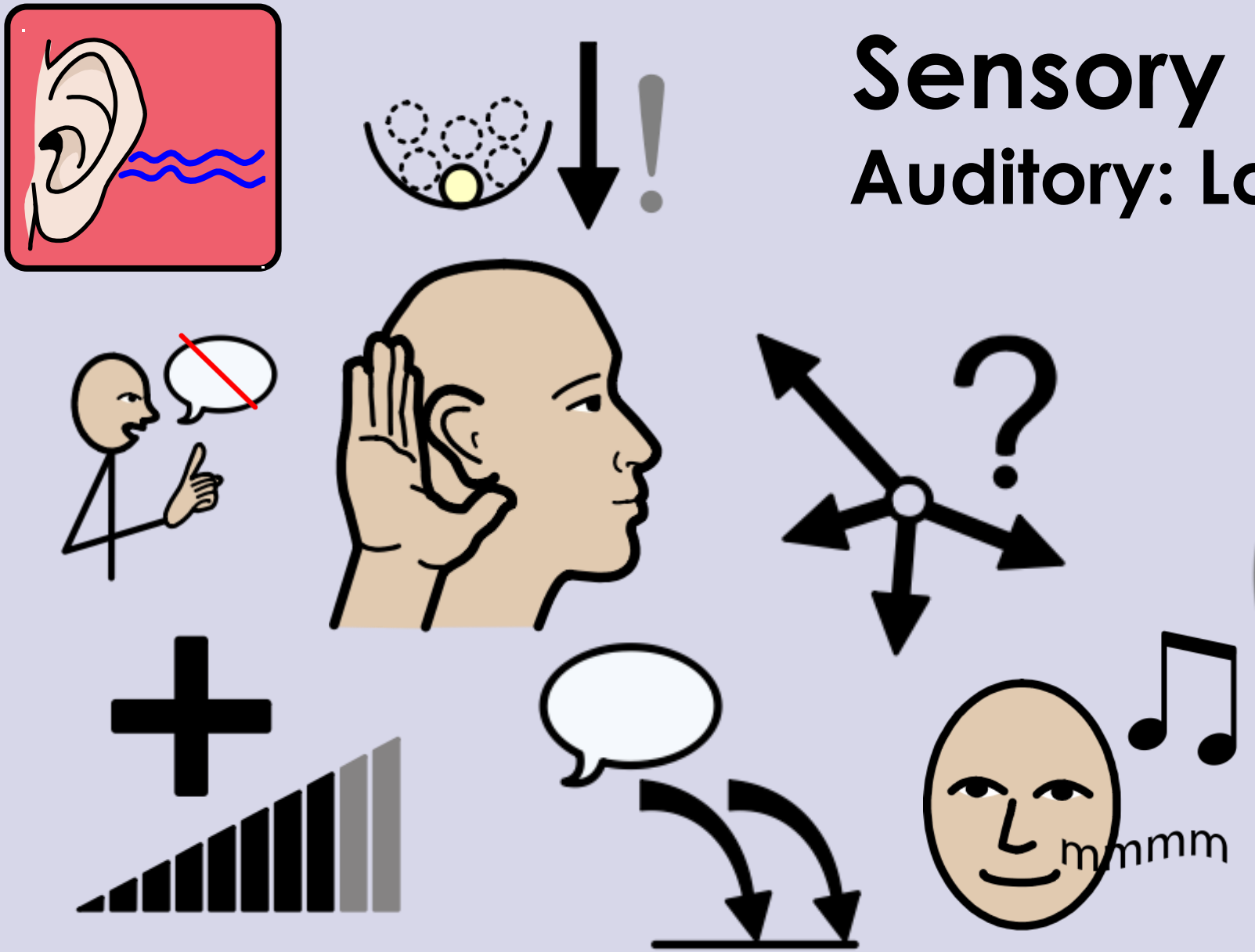
Headphones / ear buds

Direct attention

Consider environment for tasks

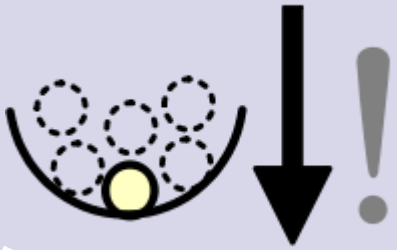
Sensory Perception

Auditory: Lower Sensitivity



I don't know where sounds are coming from





Sensory Perception

Auditory: Lower Sensitivity



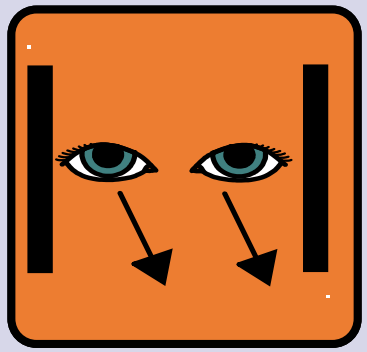
Visual supports for instructions

Use touch / gesture to gain attention

Direct attention to stimuli

WOODBRIDGE TRUST

LADYWOOD OUTREACH

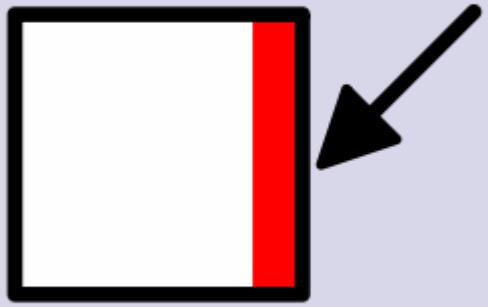


Sensory Perception

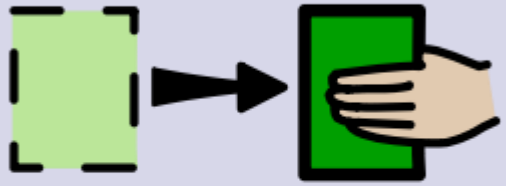
Visual



Eyes



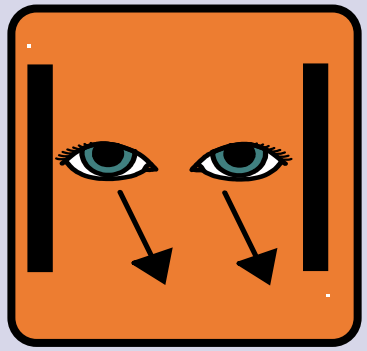
Peripheral

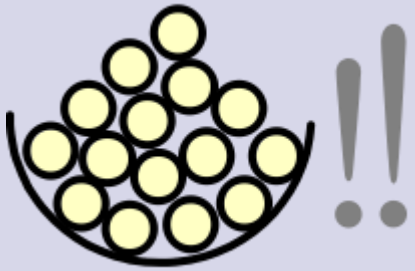


Distance and movement



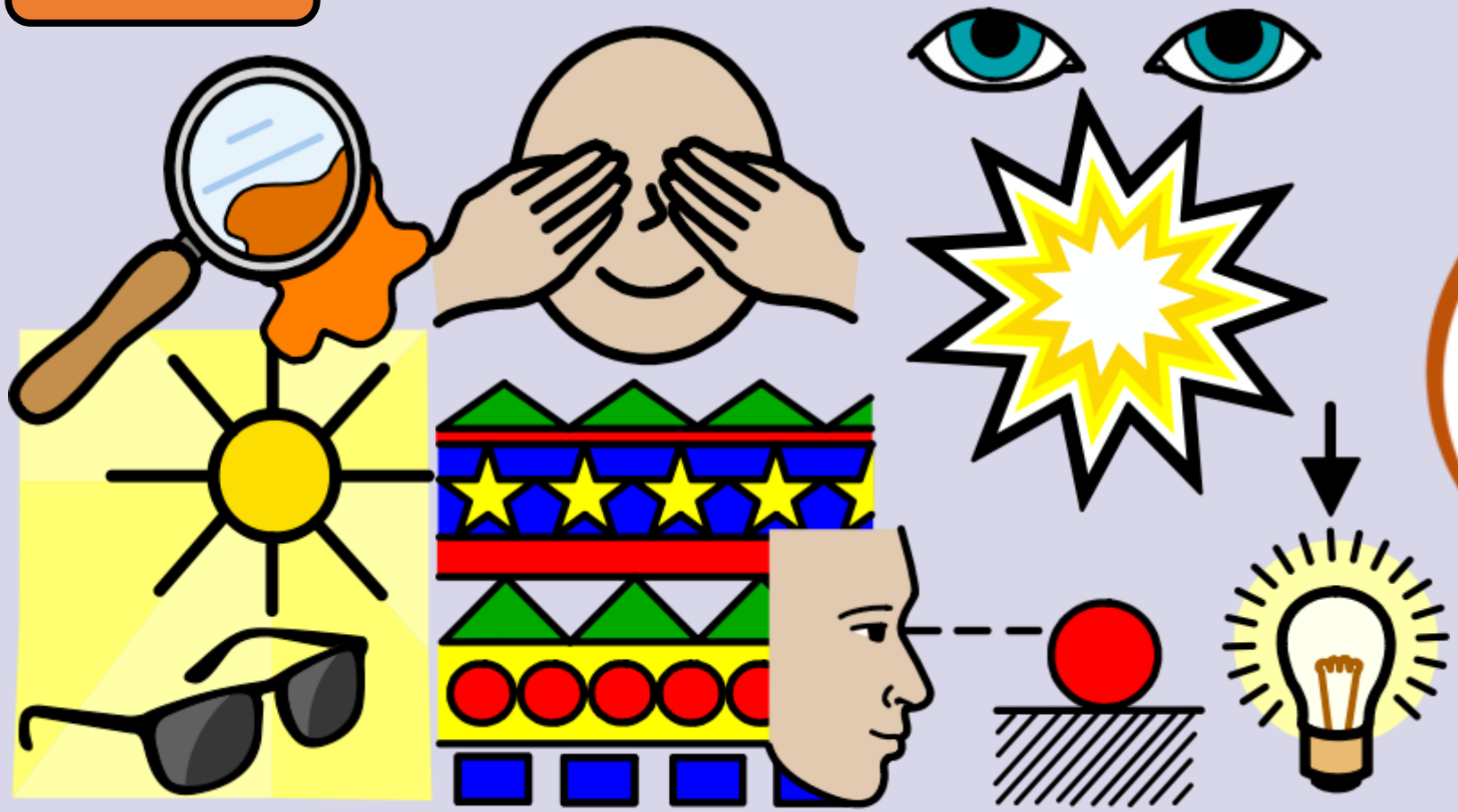
Colour, shape and pattern





Sensory Perception

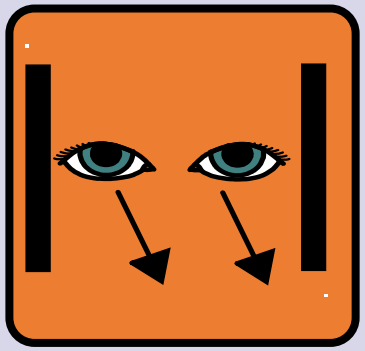
Visual: Higher Sensitivity

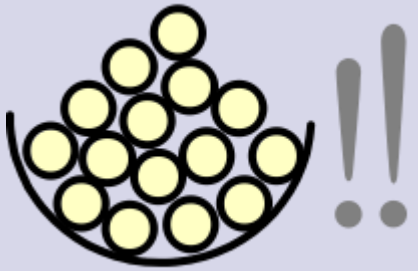


Bright lights make my eyes feel heavy and give me a headache

WOODBRIDGE TRUST

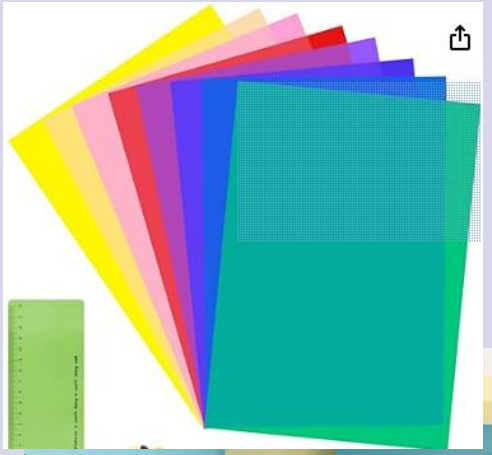
LADYWOOD OUTREACH





Sensory Perception

Visual: Higher Sensitivity







Decrease lighting

Minimise environmental clutter

Minimise clutter on worksheets

Consider Irlen support

Use verbal cues

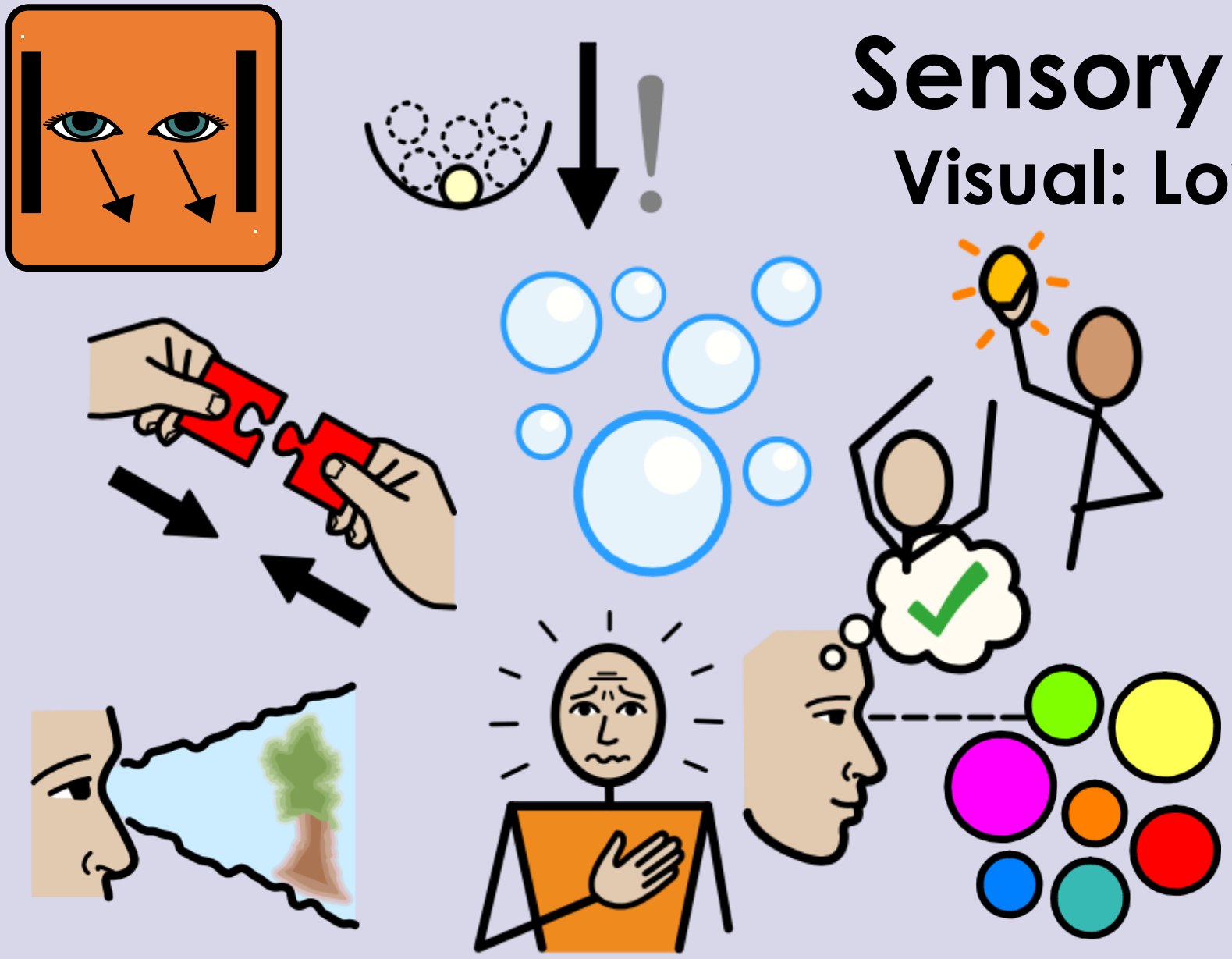
Brightness and colour on whiteboards

WOODBRIDGE TRUST

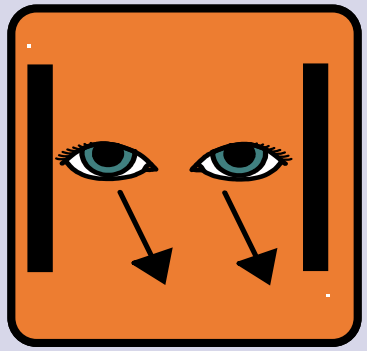
LADYWOOD OUTREACH

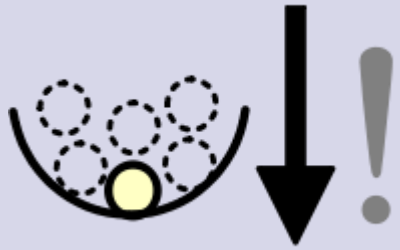
Sensory Perception

Visual: Lower Sensitivity



I find it difficult to work out where I am going in busy spaces





Sensory Perception

Visual: Lower Sensitivity







- Use visual activities to stimulate and engage
- Use colour, highlighting and pictures to draw attention
- Use contrast to support spatial awareness

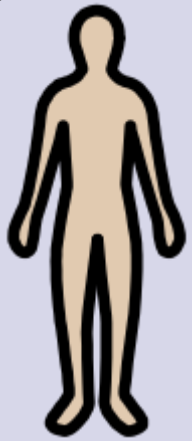
WOODBRIDGE TRUST

LADYWOOD OUTREACH



Sensory Perception

Touch



Skin all over the body



Temperature



Pain



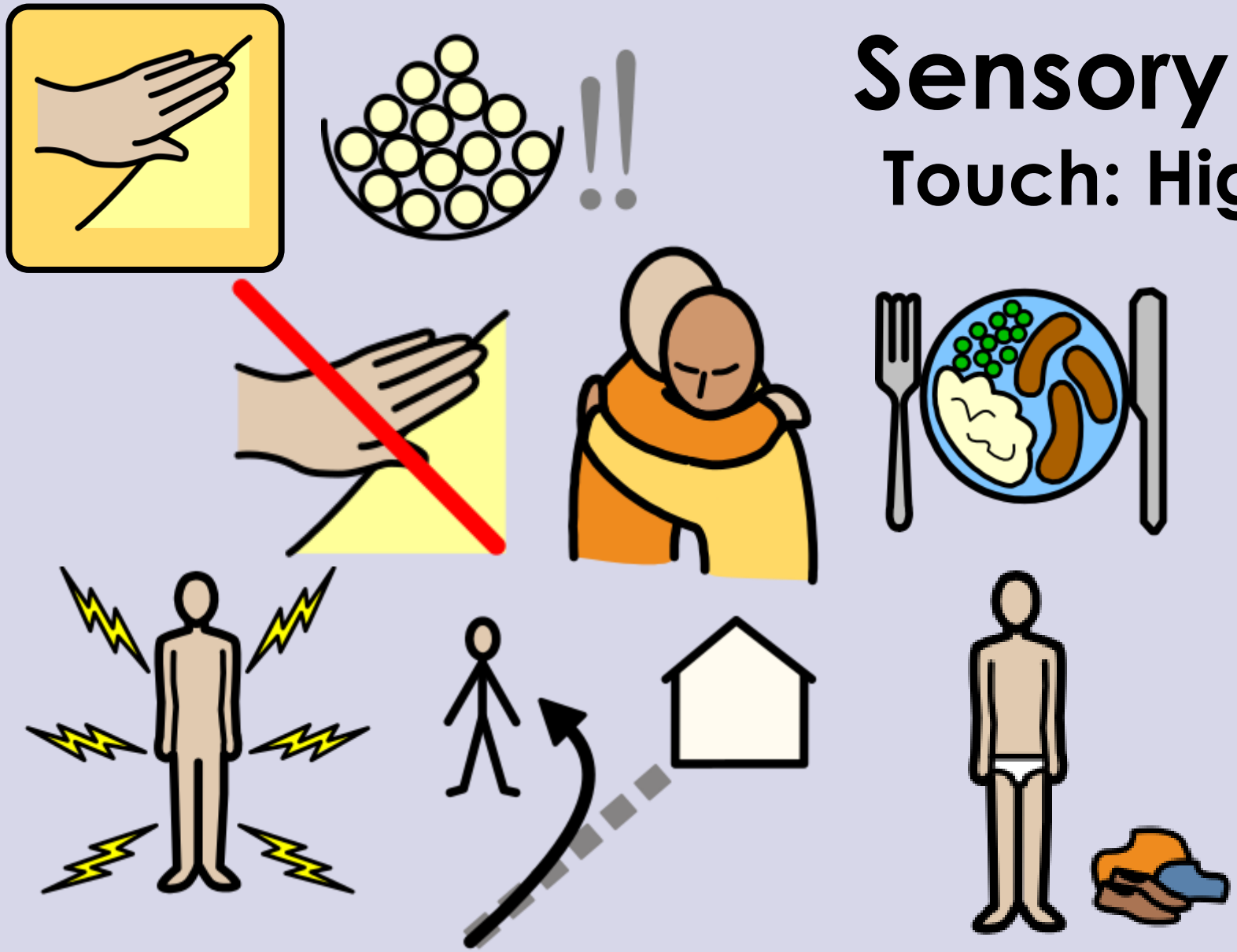
Sense of space

WOODBRIDGE TRUST

LADYWOOD OUTREACH

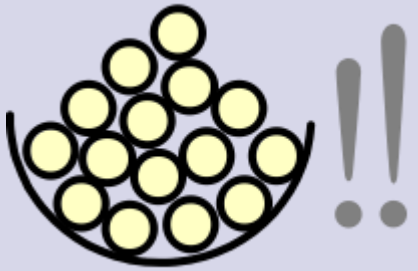
Sensory Perception

Touch: Higher Sensitivity



Light touch can feel like a whole load of spiders trying to crawl out of my skin





Sensory Perception

Touch: Higher Sensitivity







Warn of any possibilities of touch

Allow students to move through the school at quieter times

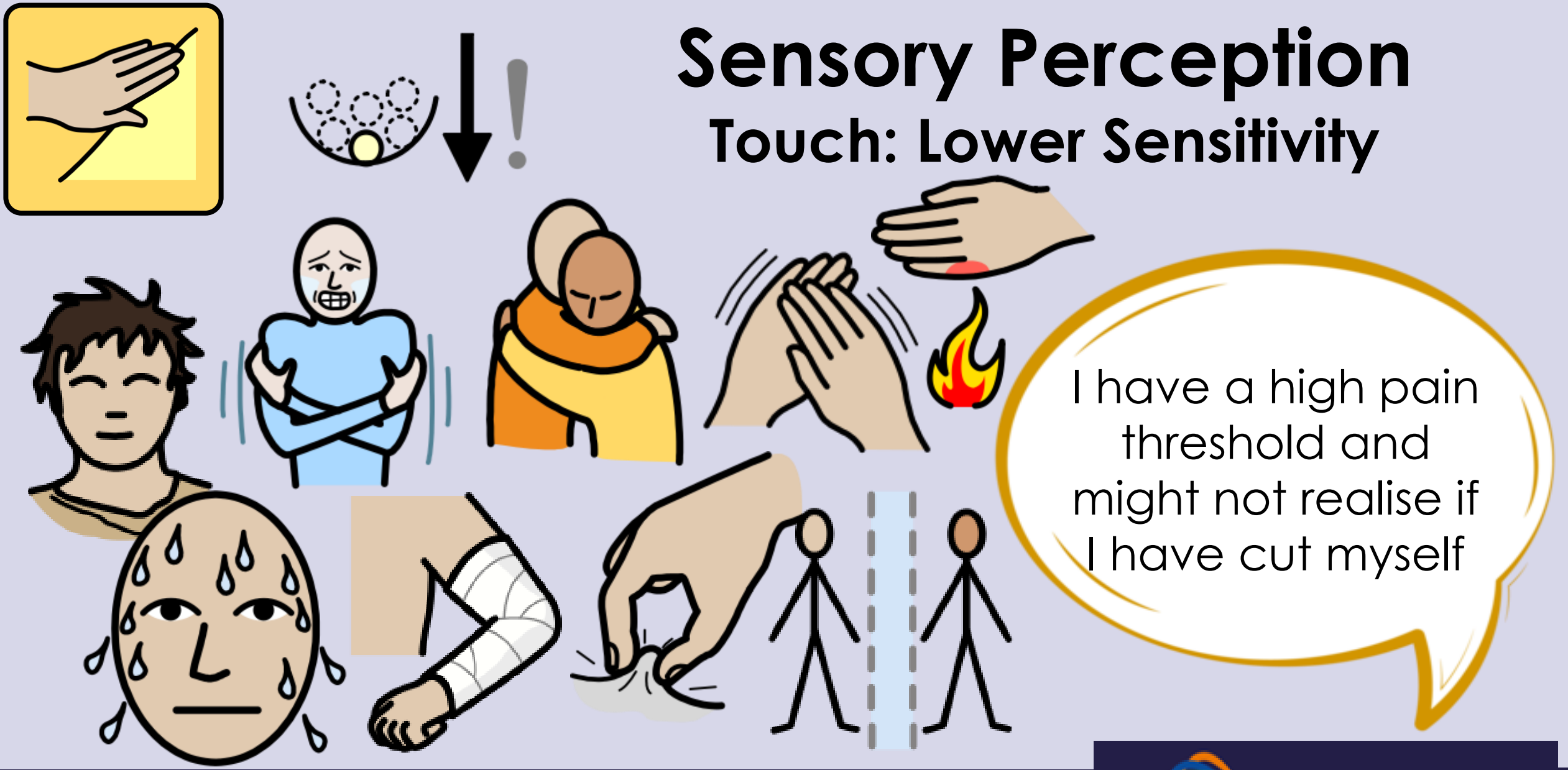
Ensure personal space

Adaptations to uniform

Food preferences

Sensory Perception

Touch: Lower Sensitivity

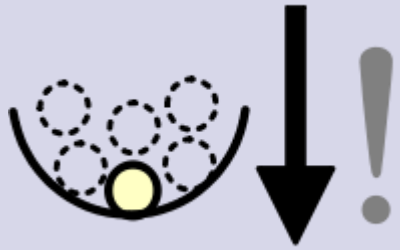


I have a high pain threshold and might not realise if I have cut myself

WOODBRIDGE TRUST

LADYWOOD OUTREACH





Sensory Perception

Touch: Lower Sensitivity







Provide tactile stimuli e.g. fabrics / fidget toys

Provide alternatives to hand rubbing e.g. moisturiser

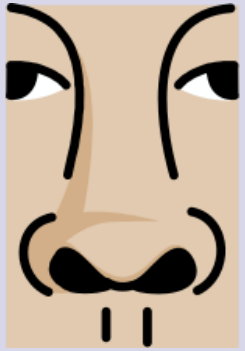
Use weighted blankets / massage to provide pressure

Awareness of temperature / pain



Sensory Perception

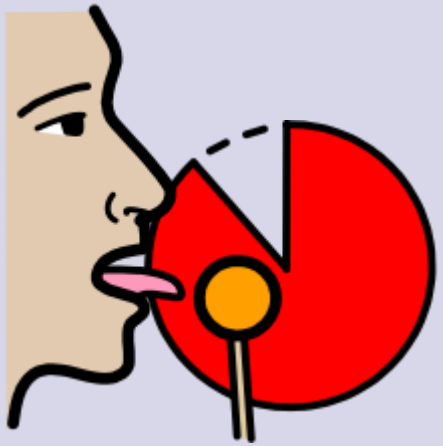
Olfactory



In nose



Connection to limbic system



80% of taste

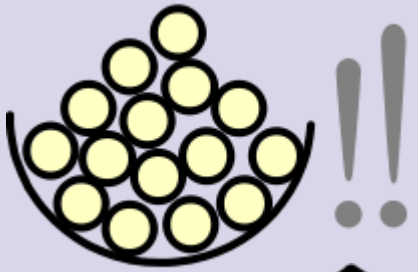


Danger!

Sensory Perception

Olfactory: Higher Sensitivity



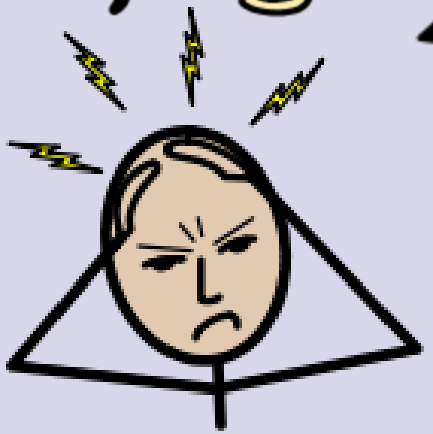


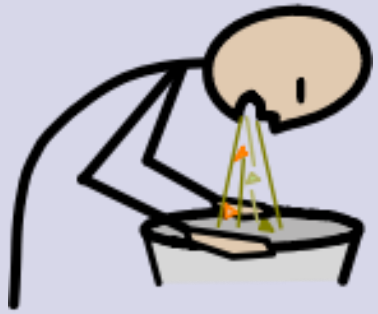


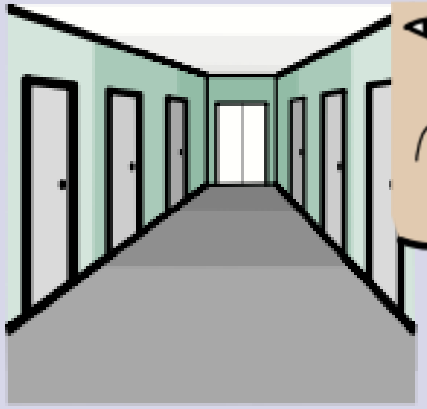








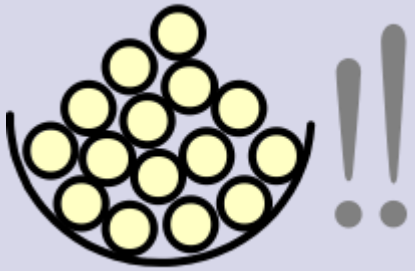






Particular smells like coffee make me feel physically sick



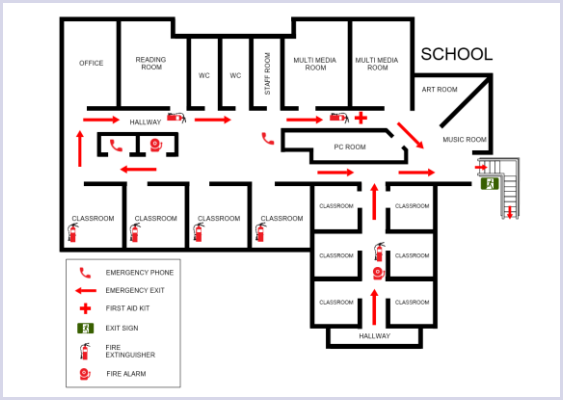


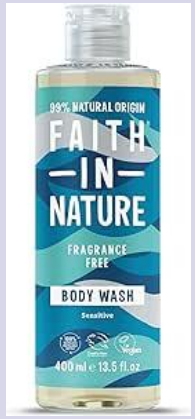
Sensory Perception

Olfactory: Higher Sensitivity







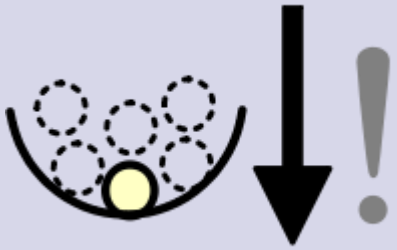


- Adapted access to different areas of school
- Non-fragranced cleaning products and toiletries
- Seating plans
- Ventilation
- Time out pass

WOODBRIDGE TRUST

LADYWOOD OUTREACH

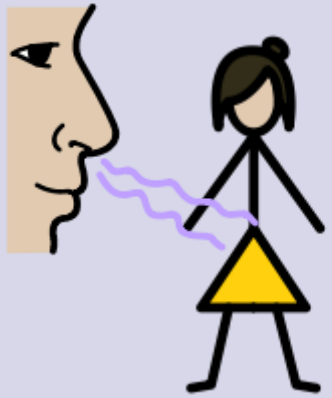




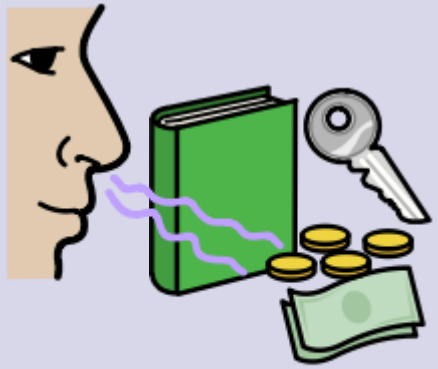
Sensory Perception

Olfactory: Lower Sensitivity









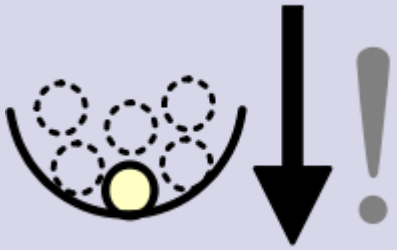


I enjoy smelling my mum's different perfumes.

WOODBRIDGE TRUST

LADYWOOD OUTREACH





Sensory Perception

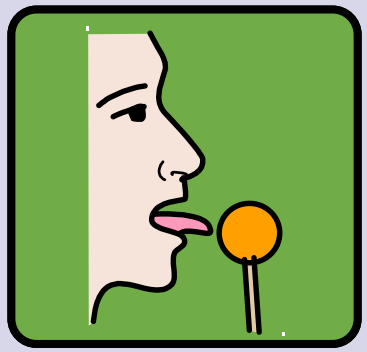
Olfactory: Lower Sensitivity







- Dedicate time to exploring smells to stimulate olfactory senses
- Use aromatherapy oils / necklace
- Use preferred scents to support focus and calming
- Communicate when there are strong smells student is unaware of



Sensory Perception

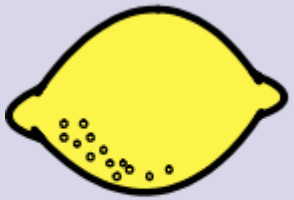
Gustatory



Tongue



Sweet



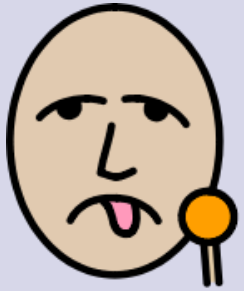
Sour



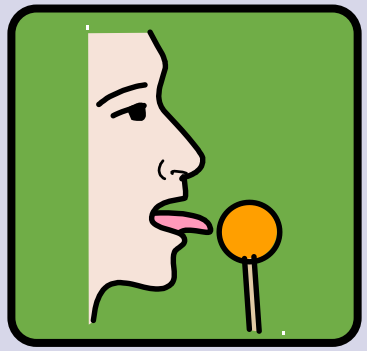
Danger!

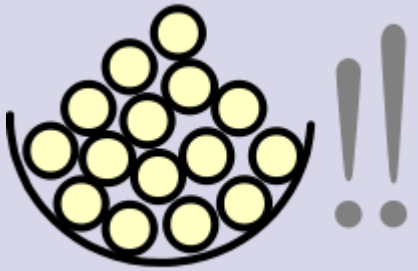


Salty



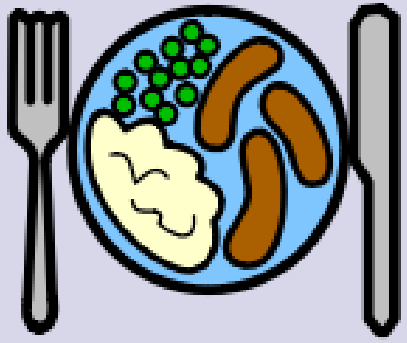
Bitter

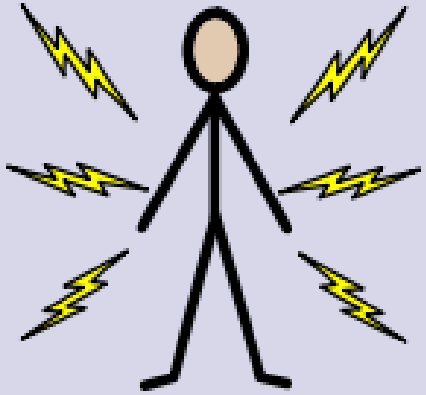




Sensory Perception

Gustatory: Higher Sensitivity



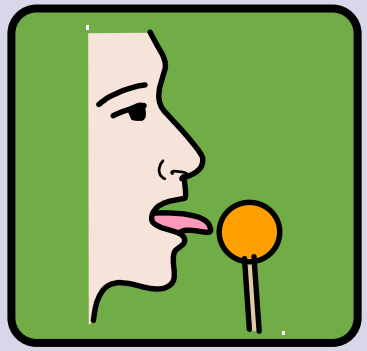


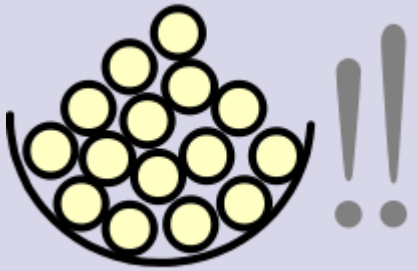






I like to eat my food one taste at a time. I feel overwhelmed if tastes mix up.





Sensory Perception

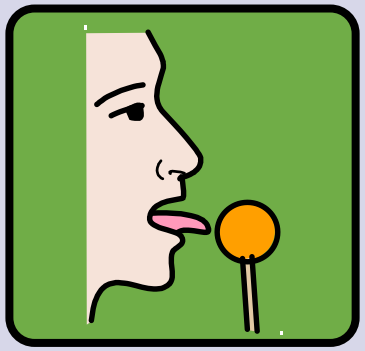
Gustatory: Higher Sensitivity



- Use plates with dividers to serve food
- Unflavoured toothpaste
- Avoid pressure around food
- Provide calm space for eating
- Consider a “food widening” intervention

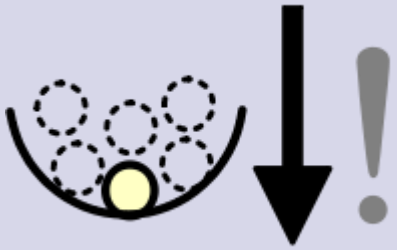
WOODBRIDGE TRUST

LADYWOOD OUTREACH



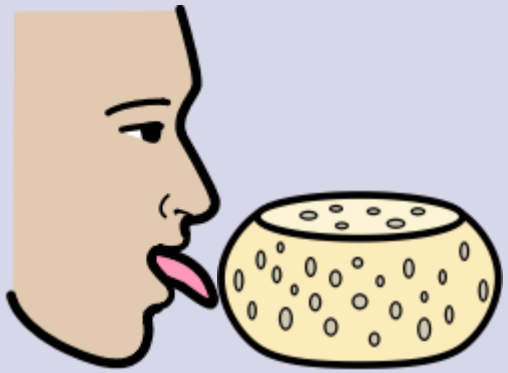
Sensory Perception

Gustatory: Lower Sensitivity



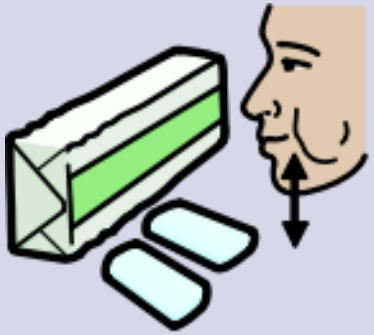


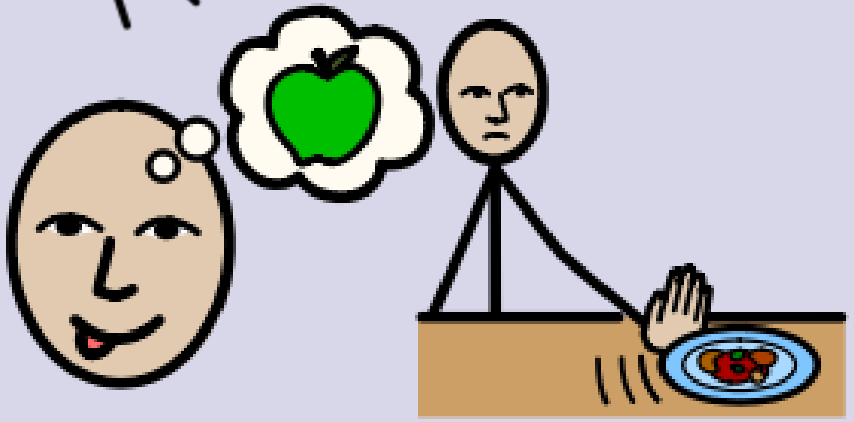








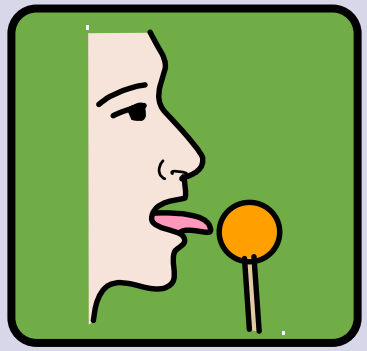


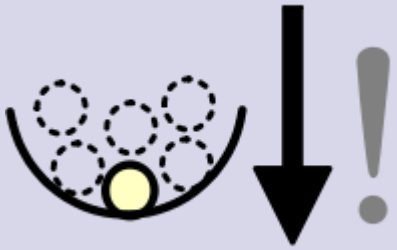


I find that most foods are quite boring. I prefer big flavours like spices.

WOODBRIDGE TRUST

LADYWOOD OUTREACH





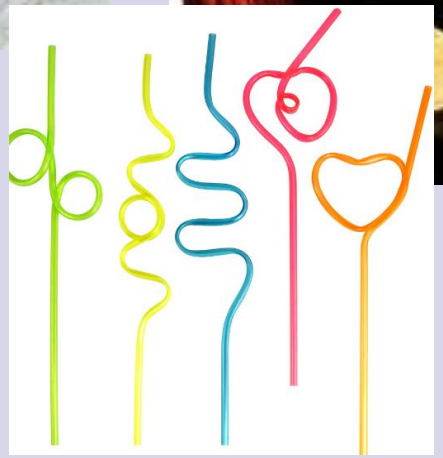
Sensory Perception

Gustatory: Lower Sensitivity

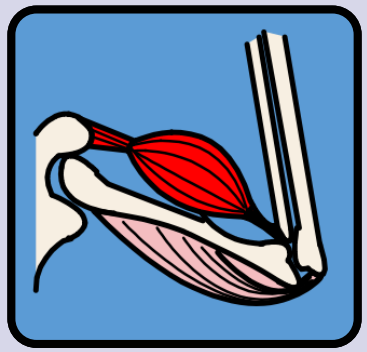








- Encourage oral motor activities to support awareness
- Provide options for strong tasting foods
- Offer foods with a variety of textures

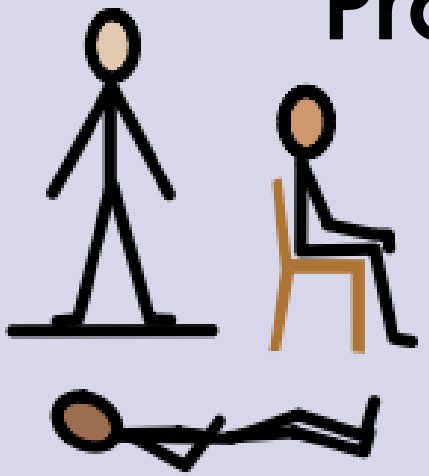


Sensory Perception

Proprioception



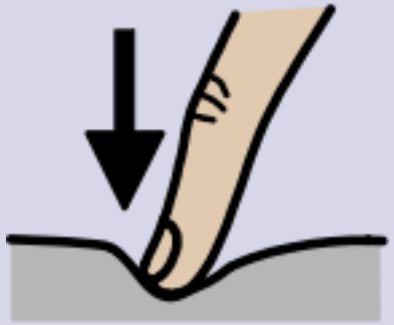
Muscles and joints



Position



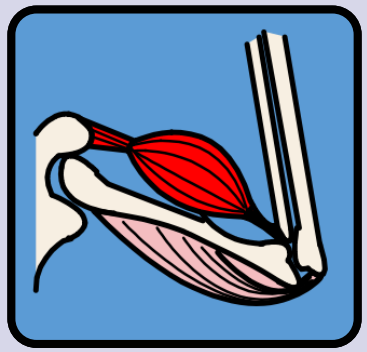
Movement

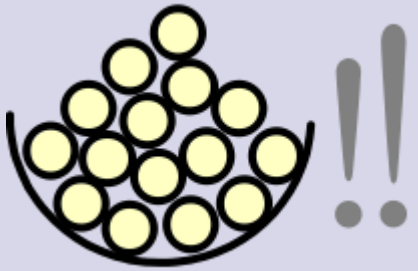


Pressure



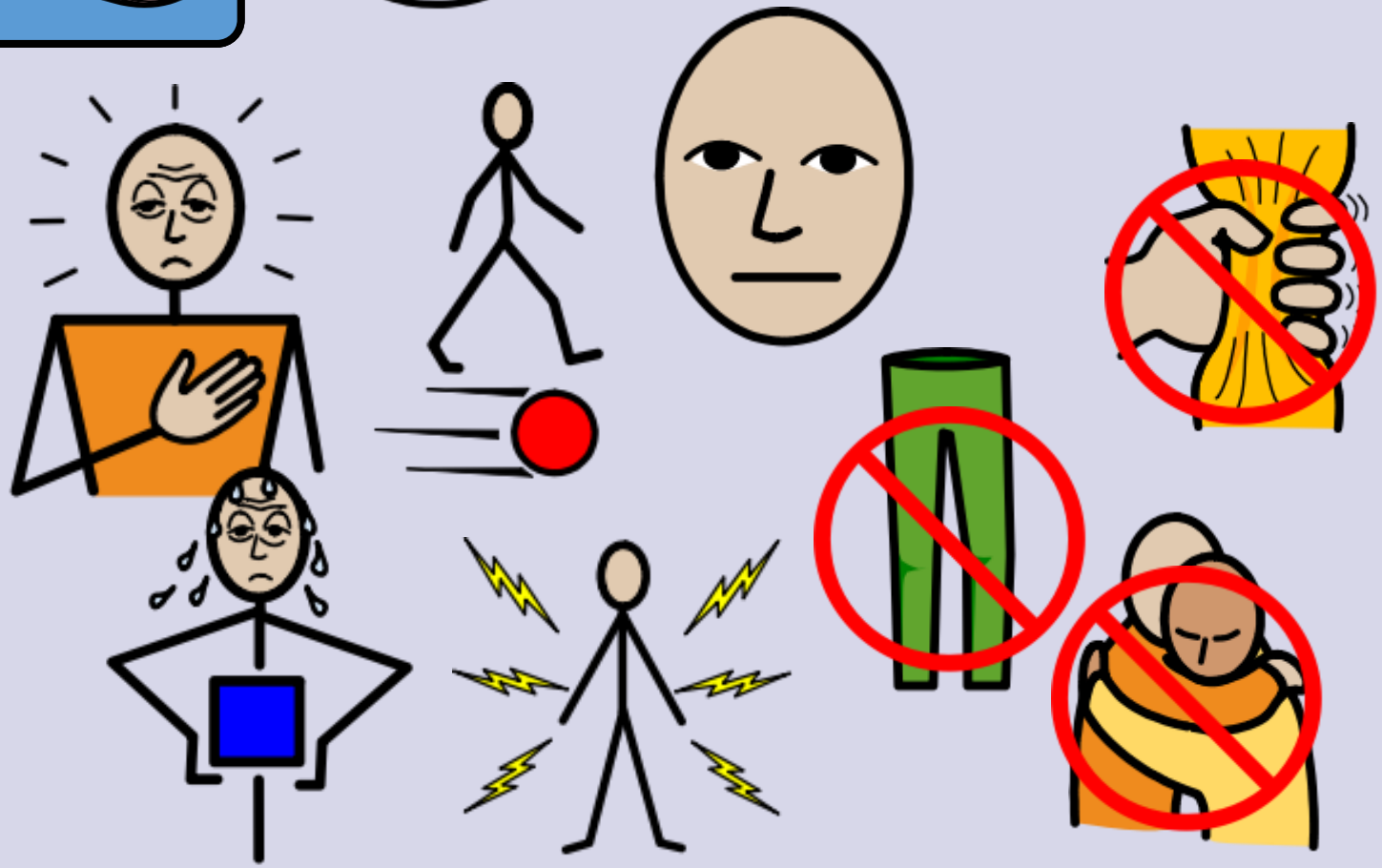
Often used to calm other senses





Sensory Perception

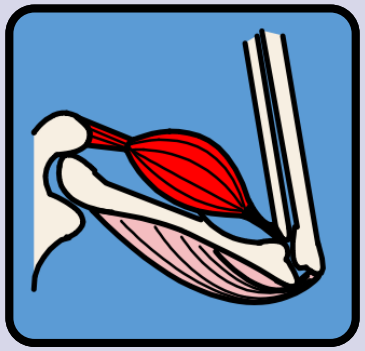
Proprioception: Higher Sensitivity

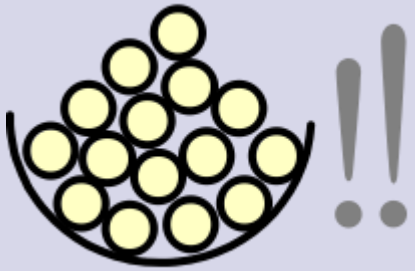


Moving through the school and doing PE make me feel extremely tired.

WOODBRIDGE TRUST

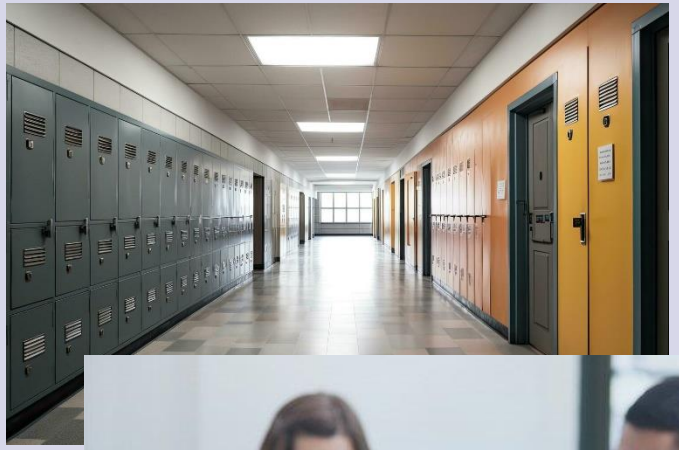
LADYWOOD OUTREACH





Sensory Perception

Proprioception: Higher Sensitivity





Provide relaxation time and space after movement activities (e.g. PE)

Use a corridor pass to avoid busy corridors and allow time for slower movements

Avoid sanctions for poor posture

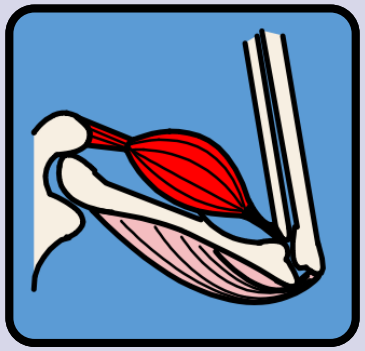
Be aware of the impact of physical fatigue on focus and emotional regulation

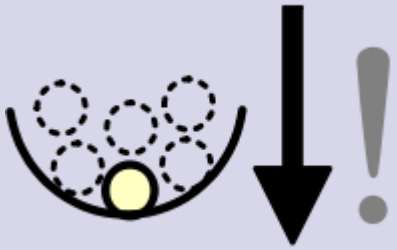
WOODBRIDGE TRUST

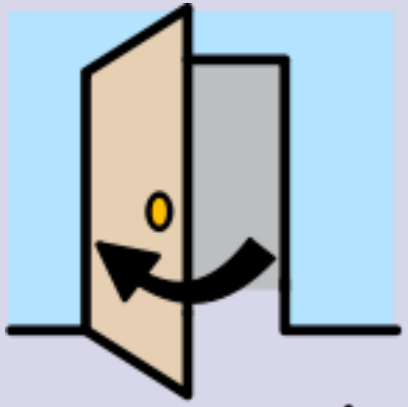
LADYWOOD OUTREACH

Sensory Perception

Proprioception: Lower Sensitivity

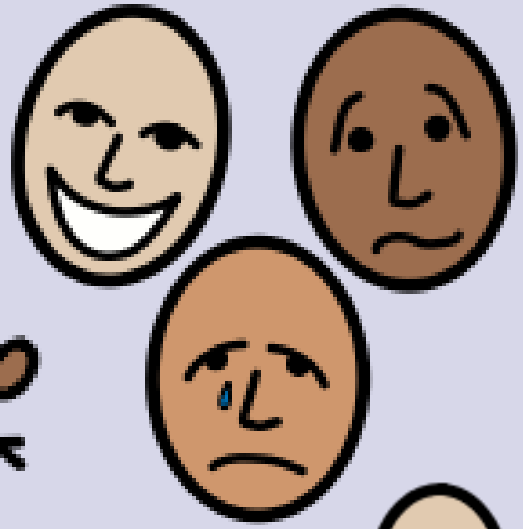












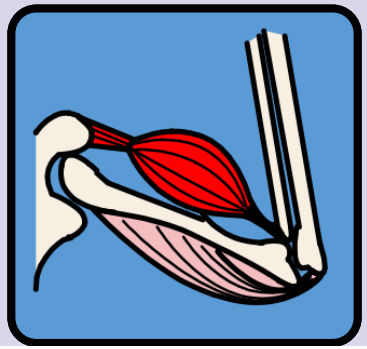


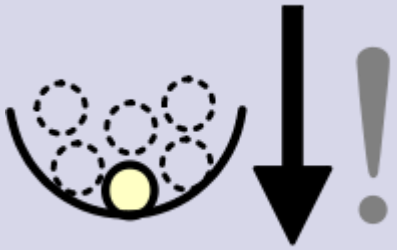


I can't see all of myself at the same time. Until I look in the mirror I have no idea what I look like or who I am.

WOODBRIDGE TRUST

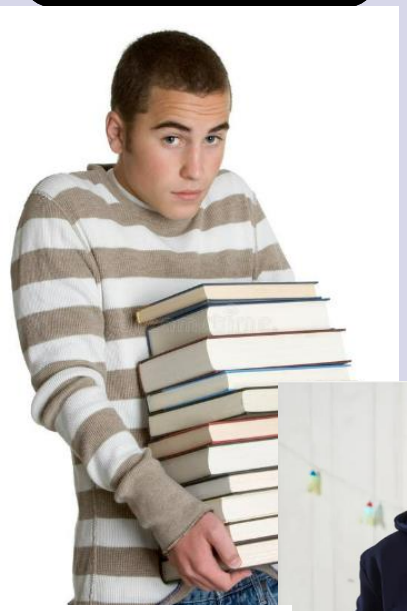
LADYWOOD OUTREACH





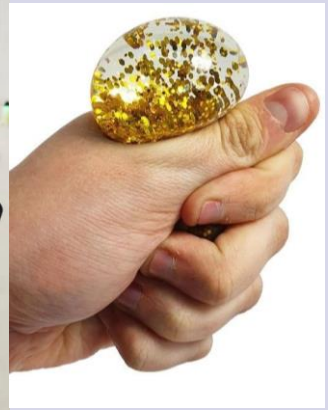
Sensory Perception

Proprioception: Lower Sensitivity







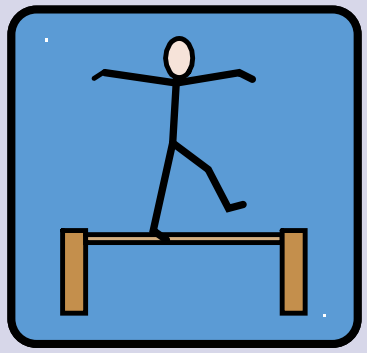




- Weighted blankets / pads / clothes
- Heavy “jobs”
- Purposeful movement / exercise
- Use movement activities within class
- Resistance bands on chairs
- Noticing need for movement to aid concentration
- Standing desks

WOODBRIDGE TRUST

LADYWOOD OUTREACH

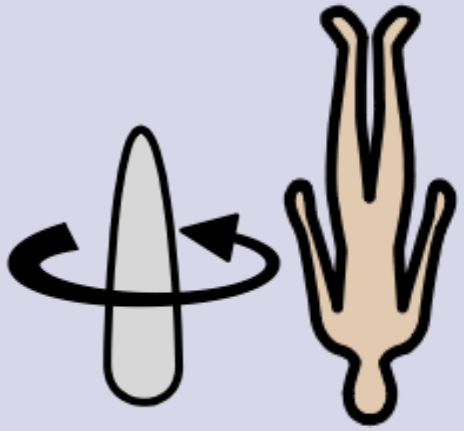


Sensory Perception

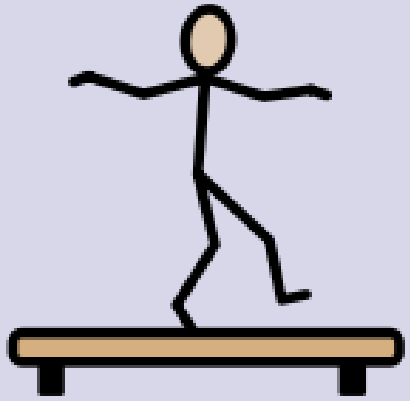
Vestibular



Inner ear



Rotation



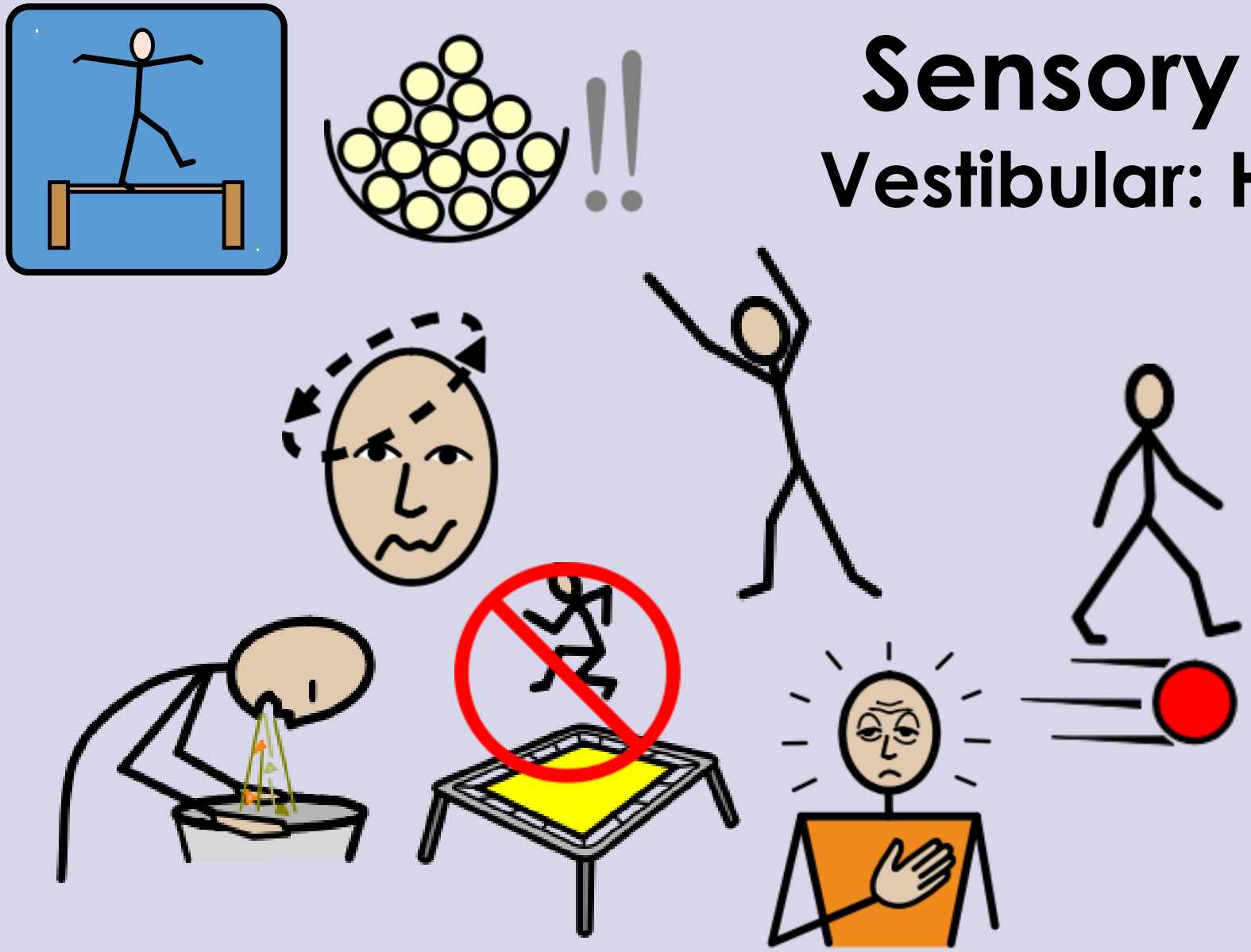
Balance



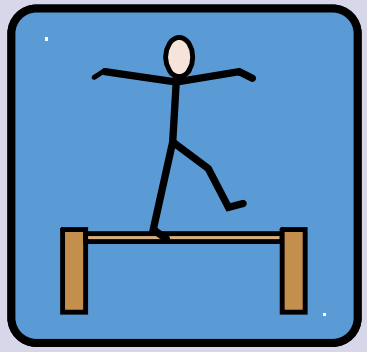
Co-ordination

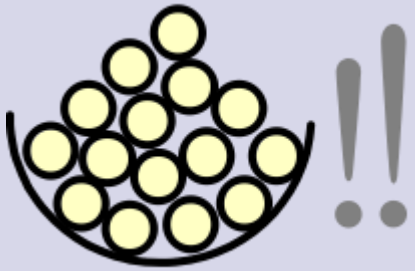
Sensory Perception

Vestibular: Higher Sensitivity



I get car sick really easily. Even escalators, lifts and trampolines make me queasy.

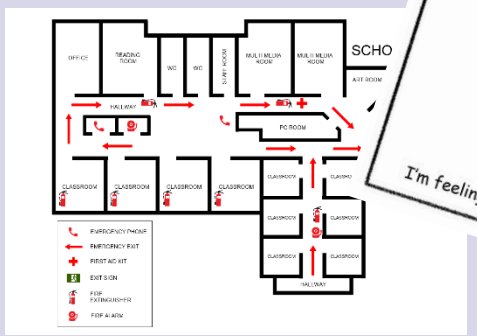




Sensory Perception

Vestibular: Higher Sensitivity







Ensure movement activities are predictable

Provide alternatives to fast unpredictable movement in PE / breaks

Consider movement around school

Allow student to withdraw from physical activity if they are overwhelmed

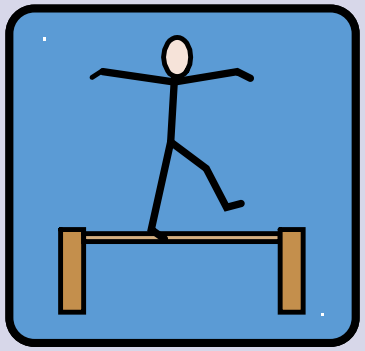
Provide calming time after movement

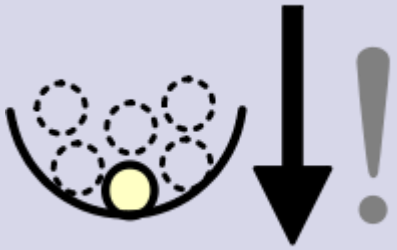
WOODBRIDGE TRUST

LADYWOOD OUTREACH

Sensory Perception

Vestibular: Lower Sensitivity















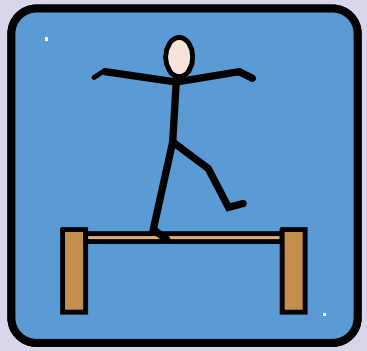


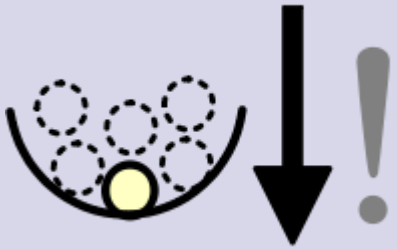




WOODBRIDGE TRUST

LADYWOOD OUTREACH



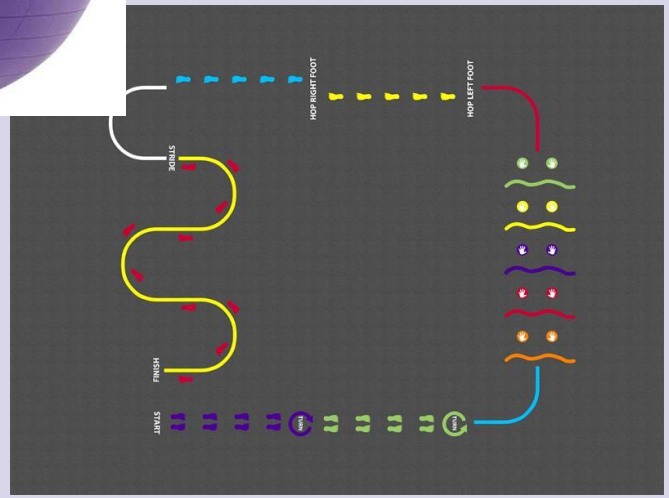


Sensory Perception

Vestibular: Lower Sensitivity







Provide opportunities for movement breaks – movement paths

Use movement activities within class

Notice the need for movement to aid concentration

Use wobble cushions / exercise balls for seating and avoiding swinging on chairs

WOODBRIDGE TRUST

LADYWOOD OUTREACH

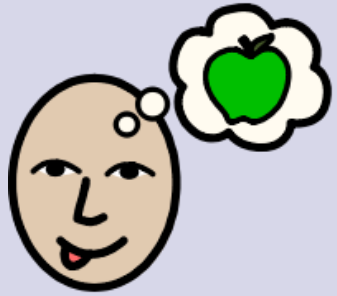


Sensory Perception

Interoception



Internal organs



Hunger



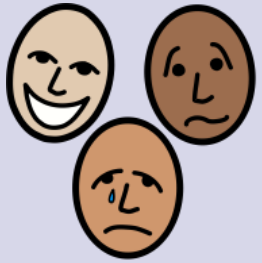
Thirst



Toileting



Temperature



Emotions

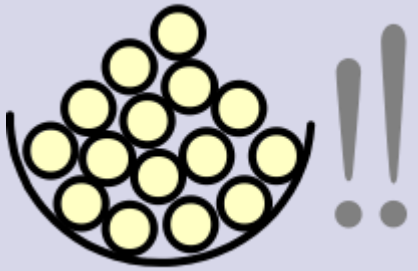


Fatigue

Sensory Perception

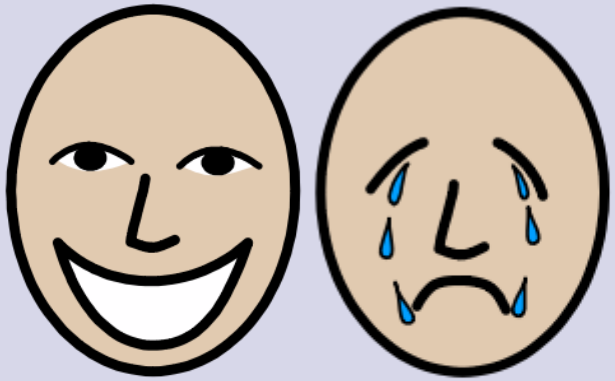
Interoception: Higher Sensitivity















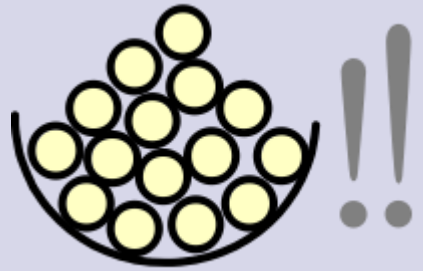


I often feel hungry and really need to eat something quickly or I become "hangry"

WOODBRIDGE TRUST

LADYWOOD OUTREACH





Sensory Perception

Interoception: Higher Sensitivity





	Feels Like	What Helps
5		• Everyone move away from me and give me time
4	Angry/Upset	• Help me to a quiet space and leave me alone until I am ready
3	Upset, but still in control	• Go for a calming break • Sensory strategies • Have a chat after calming break about what was wrong
2	A bit nervous	• Sensory calming strategies
1	Good	• Keep things how they are • Stick to the sensory diet

Support awareness of escalating emotions and managing responses through visuals

Be aware of need for frequent toilet breaks / eating and drinking to support regulation

Use of chewlry / chewing gum

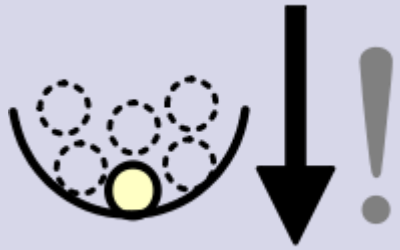
WOODBRIDGE TRUST

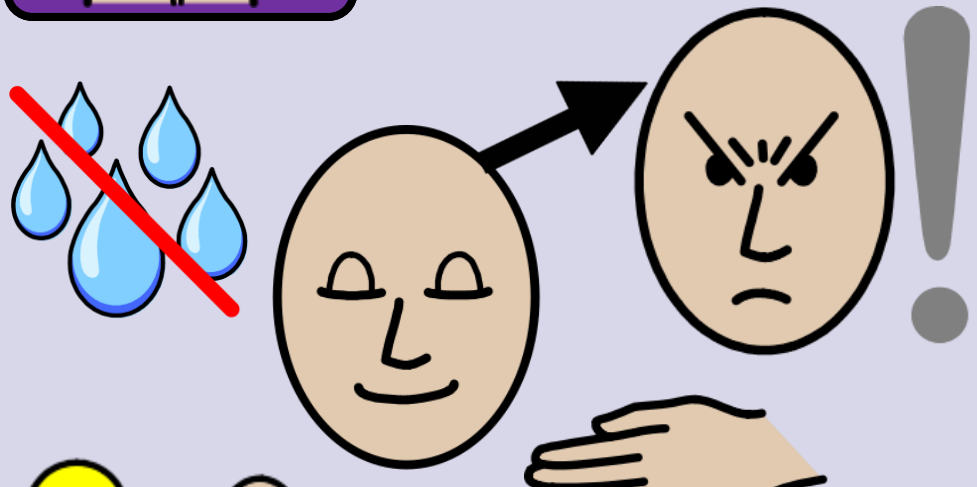
LADYWOOD OUTREACH

Sensory Perception

Interoception: Lower Sensitivity

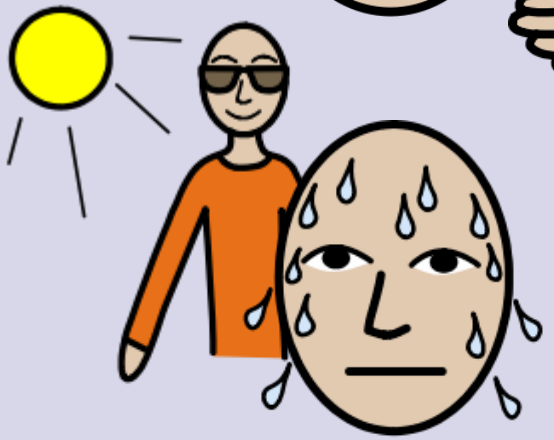














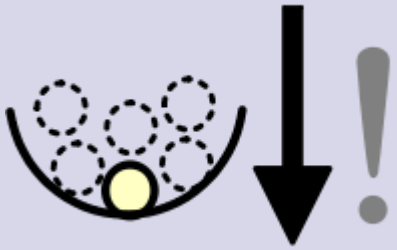


I don't realise when I am getting angry until I am exploding. Then it is too late and the feelings are overwhelming

WOODBRIDGE TRUST

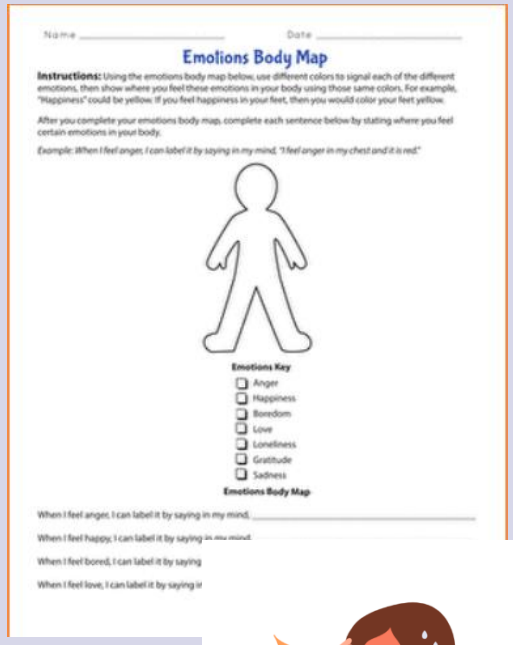
LADYWOOD OUTREACH



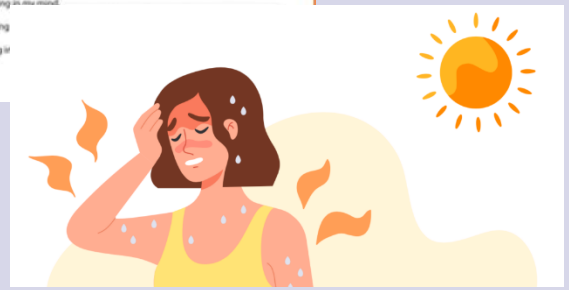


Sensory Perception

Interoception: Lower Sensitivity







Talk explicitly about internal sensations, how they feel and what they might mean

Use prompts to support eating, drinking and toileting

Use visuals to support understanding of emotions

WOODBRIDGE TRUST

LADYWOOD OUTREACH



Sensory Circuits
Why?

- Based on theory of “sensory integration” – Jean Ayres
- Support to organise and integrate senses
- Increase attention for learning
- Decrease fatigue
- Support calming the sensory systems
- Improve emotional regulation



Sensory Circuits
Who?

- Sensory Processing difficulties may affect between 5 – 15% of pupils
- Particularly common with pupils with identified Autism, ADHD, Dyspraxia…
- Many pupils (and adults) could benefit



Sensory Circuits
When?

- Best practice = twice daily (at the start of the day and after lunch)
- Recommended 15-20 minutes
- Certain activities can be used as part of a "sensory diet" during the day
- Should use activities at home too



Sensory Circuits
Where?

- Large enough timetabled space
- PE hall / gym
- Undercover outside space
- Classroom with furniture removed



Sensory Circuits

Equipment – simple essentials

Balls / beanbags / scrunched up paper

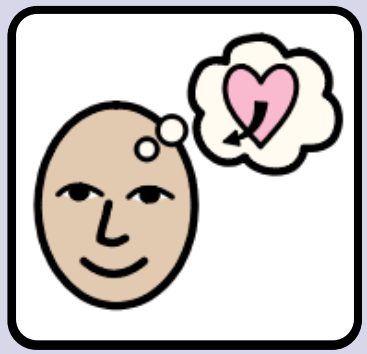
Ropes

Chalk

Cones / markers

Heavy boxes of books

Filled 2 litre bottles



Sensory Circuits

Good to have equipment

Trampette

Balance / wobble boards

Yoga ball

Weighted blankets

Popup tunnel

Resistance bands

Visuals

Blocks / steps

Stepping stones

Hoops

PE Benches

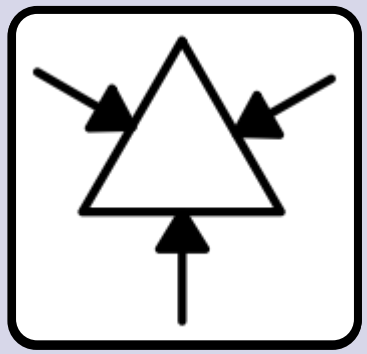
Logs

Timers

Music

WOODBRIDGE TRUST

LADYWOOD OUTREACH



Sensory Circuits

How?



WOODBRIDGE TRUST

LADYWOOD OUTREACH



Sensory Circuits

Alerting

Activities that engage vestibular and proprioceptive senses to prepare pupils to be "alert" and ready

Bouncing on a gym ball
Skipping
Star jumps
Marching
Jumping on a trampette
Step ups
Sprint running
Simple dance routines



Sensory Circuits
Organising

Activities that require planning and sequencing movements

Catching balls / beanbags
Jumping through hoops
Copying "silly" walks
Crawling through a tunnel
Balancing on lines / bench / wobble board
Big chalk drawings
Log / bottle rolling
Cross body dance routines
Following marked paths
Throwing to a target



Sensory Circuits
Calming

Activities that provide pressure
and heavy muscle work

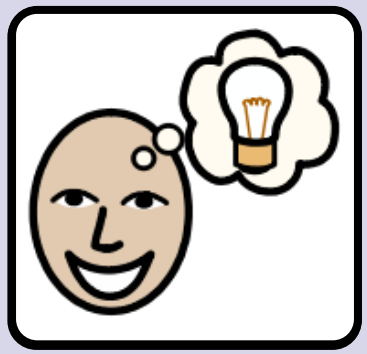
Shoulder / hand / foot massage
Push ups
Resistance bands arms / legs
Lying under weighted blankets / objects
Yoga / Thai Chi movements

Heavy object massage
Rolling over a gym ball
Lifting and carrying



Sensory Circuits - IMPORTANT

- Require an understanding of individual sensory preferences and triggers
- Consider individual tolerance levels
- Students should be supervised to watch for signs of overwhelm
- **ALWAYS** end with a calming activity



Sensory Circuits
Ideas

- Set routines / options / changes - depending on pupils
- Symbol use to support routines
- Music use for different sections
- Link activities with preferences (sport / dance / craft)
- Involve pupils in making resources (e.g. weighted objects / visuals / targets)