

Sensory Overload

When everything feels too much

A teen-friendly guide for noise, crowds, bright lights, and getting regulated again.

SAME YOU. BRIGHT THINGS AHEAD. ♥

Different brains experience the world differently. And that's okay. ♥

VALID SEEN RESPECTED ENOUGH ALWAYS ♥

1 What sensory overload can feel like

Everyone's experience is different. It might feel like:

-  **Too loud**
Normal sounds feel painful or jarring.
-  **Too bright**
Lights can feel harsh or overwhelming.
-  **Itchy or uncomfortable**
Clothes, textures or tags can feel irritating.
-  **Crowded**
Lots of people can feel intense or unsafe.
-  **Overwhelmed**
It's hard to think, focus or make decisions.
-  **Snappy**
You might feel easily irritated.
-  **Shut down**
You might go quiet, withdraw or feel numb.
-  **Wanting to escape**
You might feel a strong urge to leave the situation.

It's not all in your head. Your feelings are real. ♥



2 Why it happens

Your nervous system is taking in more than it can handle right now.

Your brain and body are always noticing sights, sounds, smells, touch, movement and what's happening around you. Sometimes, especially in busy or stressful environments, it all comes in at once. When there's more input than your system can process, you can feel overwhelmed. This isn't a choice and it's not a weakness. It's your nervous system trying to protect you.

Same world. Different sensitivity. Both are valid. ♥



SENSITIVE
AWARE
CREATIVE
THOUGHTFUL
STRONG ♥

3 What helps in the moment

Simple strategies that can help you feel more regulated:

-  **Use headphones**
Block or lower loud noises.
-  **Step out**
Take a break and find a quieter space.
-  **Fewer inputs**
Dim lights, close your eyes or reduce what's coming in.
-  **Pressure or grounding**
Squeeze a stress ball, hug a pillow or press your hands together.
-  **Cold water**
Splash your face or hold something cold.
-  **Breathe out longer**
Try 4 in, 6 out (or make your exhale a little longer).
-  **Focus on one thing**
Look at a specific object, texture or colour around you.
-  **Be kind to yourself**
Give yourself time. It's okay to take a moment.

Small steps make a big difference. ♥

4 Build your sensory toolkit

Keep a few of these items with you (at school, in your bag or at home).

-  **Fidgets**
Something to keep your hands busy.
-  **Gum**
Can help with focus and calm.
-  **Hoodie**
Adds comfort and a sense of safety.
-  **Sunglasses**
Help with bright lights.
-  **Playlist**
Calming music or noise-cancelling sounds.
-  **Water bottle**
Stay hydrated (it helps more than you think!).
-  **Scent**
A calming smell (like lavender) can help.
-  **Quiet corner plan**
Know where you can go to reset (at school, home or in public).



Find what works for you. Your toolkit can be unique to your needs!

5 At school or in public

You have options. Here are some ideas:

-  **Ask for a break**
It's okay to step away when you need to.
-  **Use the washroom or counselling office**
These can be good quiet spaces.
-  **Sit near the edge**
Choose a spot with fewer people and an easy exit if possible.
-  **Plan your exits**
Know where the doors are and have a plan.
-  **Tell one trusted adult**
Let a teacher, school counsellor or adult know what helps you.

You are allowed to take up space and take care of your needs. ♥

6 Helpful reminder

"Overload is not drama. It is your system asking for less." ♥



Quieter moments brighter days same you. ♥

CALMER
KINDER
BRAVER
HAPPIER
YOU GOT THIS ♥