

Go to Guide – Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) – sensory overload.

Purpose of this guide: This guide has been created to support and guide teachers when supporting students with ASD – sensory overload. Here at Capel Manor college, we currently have around 223 students who have declared ASD, therefore it is likely that you may have a student in one of your classes with ASD – sensory overload..

What is ASD – sensory overload?

Processing everyday sensory information can be difficult for autistic people. Any of their senses may be over – or under sensitive, or both, at different times. These sensory differences can affect how they feel and act, and can have a profound effect on a person's life.

Too much information –

Sometimes an autistic person may behave in a way that you would not immediately link to sensory differences. A person who finds it difficult to process everyday sensory information can experience sensory overload, or information overload. Too much information can cause stress, anxiety, and possibly physical pain. This can result in withdrawal, distressed behavior or melt downs.

If someone is having a meltdown, or not responding, do not judge them. There are things that you can do to help. This can make a world of difference to autistic people and their families. Often, small changes to the environmental can make a difference. Creating a sensory profile may help you to work out what changes are needed. Three points to remember are:

1. **Be aware** – look at the environment to see if it is creating difficulties. Can you change anything?
2. **Be creative** – think of some positive sensory experiences.
3. **Be prepared** – Tell the person about possible sensory stimuli they may experience in different environments.

More information can be found on interacting with Autism at :

<http://www.interactingwithautism.com/section/understanding/sensory/1>

Tips on supporting students with ASD – sensory overload:

- Have a seating plan so that the student is in the same seat for all classes with you.
- Move the other students not the ASD learner when doing group work
- Give instructions in lists, breaking it down into manageable chunks
- Don't ask open ended questions, give student time to answer and process the information
- Use language that is concrete rather than abstract
- Back up fast verbal information with lists, pictures, flow charts or a written summary