

Supporting Worship Experiences — FOR THOSE WITH — Sensory Sensitivity

Nearly all worship communities serve individuals with sensory sensitivities. This Resource Guide is designed for ministry leaders to create inclusive worship environments and is based on literature review, survey data, and insights from ministry leaders.

WHY & HOW Sensory Sensitivity Matters

Importance of inclusivity in the body of Christ, emphasizing every member's value.

Diverse backgrounds, strengths, and abilities enrich worship experiences.

Simple, practical strategies to enhance worship for individuals with sensory sensitivities.

UNDERSTANDING Sensory Sensitivities

Sensory sensitivity: heightened emotional responsiveness, sensitivity to stimuli.

Not limited to specific diagnoses; it affects 15-20% of the population.

Both strengths (e.g., empathy, deep appreciation for meaning) and challenges (e.g., sensory overload, social difficulties) exist.

STRENGTHS of Individuals with Sensory Sensitivities

Heightened Empathy

Deep Appreciation for Beauty and Meaning

Reflective and Thoughtful Nature

Above-Average Perception and Observation

Commitment to Authenticity and Sincerity

CHALLENGES Faced by Individuals with Sensory Sensitivities

Sensory Overload and Overstimulation

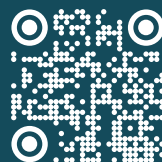
Social Interactions and Navigating Social Dynamics

Emotional Intensity and Vulnerability

Sensitivity to Transitions and Change

Pressure to Conform and Participate

Learn more about how you can support those with
Sensory Sensitivity at samford.edu/go/sensorysensitivity



Seven Key Strategies

1

Create a Sensory-Friendly Space

- Mark quiet zones or retreat areas.
- Provide flexible seating and clear pathways.

2

Provide Self-Regulation Opportunities

- Incorporate moments of silence.
- Offer printed resources on deep breathing and guided prayer.

3

Create an Understanding Community

- Provide access to resources and support groups.
- Establish a sensory buddy program.

4

Offer Flexible Worship Options

- Provide online or smaller gatherings.
- Consider sensory-friendly service options.

5

Provide Sensory-Friendly Resources

- Stock quiet areas with sensory aids.
- Offer handouts explaining church resources.

6

Listen and Communicate Openly

- Assign a designated point of contact.
- Schedule regular check-ins.

7

Work Together to Meet Unique Needs

- Discuss available resources and accommodations.
- Regularly check in for adjustments.

ACTION PLAN DEVELOPMENT:

- Assess current practices and sensory environment.
- Involve individuals with sensory sensitivities in decision-making.
- Adapt strategies to align with denomination beliefs.
- Engage the community for input and prioritize changes.
- Assign responsibilities and set timelines.

CONCLUSION:

- Importance of recognizing and embracing strengths of sensory-sensitive individuals.
- Addressing challenges through gradual adjustments tailored to their needs.
- Providing support fosters inclusivity, belonging, and fuller participation in worship experiences.

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