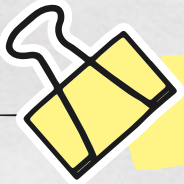


WELLNESS LETTER

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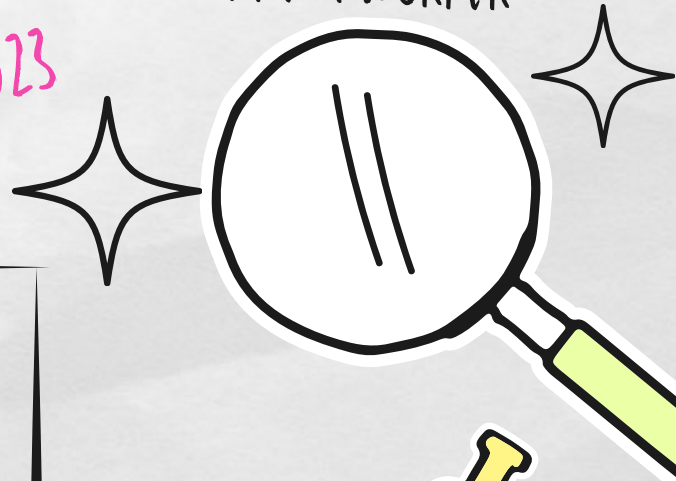


SENSORY OVERLOAD

Sensory overload is when input overstimulates our brain to the point of emotional distress. Meaning the five senses are feeding more than our brain can sort. We can all experience sensory overload, it is not exclusive to people with autism or sensory processing disorder. It is important to recognise the signs of sensory overload so we can work towards getting back to a secure place.

Signs to look out for:

- Difficulty focusing
- Extreme irritability, feeling wound up
- Restlessness
- Stress, fear, anxiety, activated fight or flight
- Difficulty sleeping, fatigue
- Headaches, stomach aches



WHY WE SHOULD CARE

If we ignore these signs of distress, sensory overload may result in impacts to our relationships and decrease our productivity. Persistently high adrenaline levels can make us vulnerable to developing mental health conditions such as anxiety and depression. Plus, can elevate blood pressure, increasing the risk of stroke or heart attack.



WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT

Fortunately, there are many things we can do. Regular maintenance helps which includes keeping our body rested and hydrated. At work we can engage with professional supervision, such as mentoring, or check ins with your line manager. In our personal life we can engage with coaches, therapists, psychologists, and social workers.

Allied health professionals can help to identify triggers, develop coping strategies, notice the signs of being overstimulated, and plan for recovery.

Coping mechanisms that may help to cut down the stimulation include:

- Meditation
- Breathing exercises
- Counting to ten
- Exit strategy (i.e. leaving a noisy room for a break)
- Sensory fidgets to focus on (e.g. stress ball, spinner, slime)
- Messaging or calling our support network
- Engage with sensory break apps



RESOURCES

There are a few apps that may assist with soothing the overwhelmed feeling.

Brain Wave-

assisting kids with sensory breaks

Dropphone-

create your own melodies

Wa Kingyo Goldfish Pond-

engage with visually calming stimuli



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