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Neuroinclusive Employee Experience

Introductory Workplace Journey Review

A Practical Guide for HR & People Leaders

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Introduction

Introductory Workplace Journey Review

This document provides a brief, high-level look at key aspects of the employee experience focused on the physical and sensory environment of office spaces.

It highlights key environmental factors that can affect cognitive load, comfort, and inclusion for neurodivergent employees. This is a high-level, introductory assessment designed to identify potential barriers and opportunities for improvement.

A thoughtful understanding of sensory experience can be a powerful foundation for creating inclusive workplaces.

One useful perspective comes from work on sensory environments in healthcare, the film 'Sensory', which explores autistic people's experiences in hospital settings and demonstrates how lighting, noise, and other environmental factors affect engagement and wellbeing.

You can explore the project here: 'Sensory' Film (Hospitalsenses). (hospitalsenses.co.uk)

This environmental-focused review provides a structured overview of how the office space itself supports or hinders employee well-being, concentration, and a sense of belonging.

1. Entrance & Arrival Areas

Key Considerations:

- Way-finding & Signage: Clear, legible signs with good contrast; consider colour perception and visual simplicity.
- Lighting: Avoid harsh fluorescent lights; natural lighting where possible. Adjustable lighting or softer ambient options can help reduce sensory strain.
- Acoustics: Minimise echo or loud background noise. Consider sound masking or soft materials to reduce noise overload.
- First Impressions: Reception areas should be organised, low-stimulation, and predictable to reduce stress.



2. Workspace Layout

Key Considerations:

- **Desk Arrangement & Personal Space:** Offer options for private workstations, semi-partitioned desks, or quiet zones.
- **Flexibility:** Employees should be able to control elements like screen orientation, chair position, and lighting where possible.
- **Clutter & Visual Stimuli:** Minimize unnecessary decorations or chaotic layouts to reduce cognitive distraction.
- **Pathways:** Clear walking routes to reduce confusion and overstimulation.

3. Lighting & Visual Environment

Key Considerations:

- **Natural vs. Artificial Light:** Maximise daylight; avoid glare on screens.
- **Adjustable Lighting:** Provide dimmable or task-specific lighting options.
- **Contrast & Colour:** Use calm colour palettes; avoid overly bright or clashing patterns.
- **Screen Placement:** Position monitors to minimise glare and reflections.

4. Noise & Acoustic Environment

Key Considerations:

- **Background Noise Levels:** Monitor and reduce loud or unpredictable noises.
- **Quiet Zones:** Provide dedicated quiet spaces for focused work.
- **Acoustic Treatments:** Use carpets, wall panels, or partitions to dampen sound.
- **Meeting Rooms & Collaboration Spaces:** Ensure conversations don't intrude on quiet work areas.

5. Common Areas & Break Spaces

Key Considerations:

- Cafeterias, Kitchens, and Lounges: Consider crowding, noise, and lighting levels.
- Sensory-Friendly Options: Provide low-stimulation areas or “quiet corners.”
- Seating Variety: Different seating types for comfort and sensory needs.
- Predictability: Clear routines and signage reduce uncertainty in shared spaces.

6. Meeting & Collaboration Spaces

Key Considerations:

- Lighting & Acoustics: Adjustable lighting, sound control, and minimal echo.
- Visual Clarity: Clear lines of sight for presentations and participants.
- Seating Flexibility: Options for standing, sitting, or small-group setups.
- Noise Management: Avoid overlapping conversations from adjacent rooms.

Deliverables

This Introductory Workplace Journey Review provides a high-level assessment of the sensory and environmental aspects of your office, highlighting both strengths and opportunities for improvement.

Its purpose is to support decision-making around changes that enhance comfort, focus, and inclusion for all employees.

Key Observations from this Review:

- Certain areas of the office may generate sensory overload (e.g., open-plan spaces with high noise or harsh lighting).
- Limited quiet zones or flexible workspaces can affect focus and inclusion.
- Common areas and meeting spaces may benefit from predictable layout, adjustable lighting, and acoustic improvements.

Next Steps

Next Steps:

1. **Prioritise Key Areas:** Focus on spaces that create the greatest sensory or cognitive challenges.
2. **Implement Practical Adjustments:** Quick wins such as lighting control, quiet zones, or acoustic treatments can have immediate positive impact.
3. **Engage Employees:** Gather feedback from staff to identify specific environmental stressors or preferences.
4. **Plan a Full Assessment:** For a comprehensive, tailored review of all environmental and organisational factors, contact us at **hello@neurodconsultancy.com** to conduct a detailed Workplace Journey Assessment.

Summing Up

Addressing these environmental factors enables organisations to minimise distractions, enhance employee focus, and support an inclusive workplace.

This review provides a foundation for targeted, actionable interventions and informs the planning of a more comprehensive environmental and inclusion assessment.



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