

Sensory Overload Soothing Strategies Checklist **A calming guide for children and adults with autism**

✓ **Reduce the Environment**

- ☐ Move to a quieter space
- ☐ Dim lights or use natural lighting
- ☐ Turn off loud appliances (vacuum, blender, TV)
- ☐ Reduce visual clutter or step away from crowds
- ☐ Offer sunglasses or a hat for bright lighting

✓ **Soothing Tools & Supports**

- ☐ Noise-canceling headphones
- ☐ Soft, calming music
- ☐ Weighted blanket, lap pad, or compression vest
- ☐ Fidget toy or sensory object
- ☐ Chewelry or oral sensory tool
- ☐ Soft textured comfort item (plush, textured cloth)

✓ **Calming the Body**

- ☐ Deep breaths together (5 slow breaths)
- ☐ Gentle deep pressure (if preferred)
- ☐ Hand squeezes or “palm press”
- ☐ Slow rocking or swaying
- ☐ Stretching or simple movement breaks
- ☐ Access to a quiet “calm space”



✓ **Supporting Communication**

- ☐ Offer simple choices: “Do you want quiet or dark?”
- ☐ Use visuals or gestures instead of words
- ☐ Give extra time to respond
- ☐ Avoid asking too many questions
- ☐ Use a calm, predictable tone
- ☐ Validate feelings: “It’s okay. That was a lot.”