

Sensory Overload Soothing Strategies Checklist

A calming guide for children and adults with autism

✓ Reduce the Environment

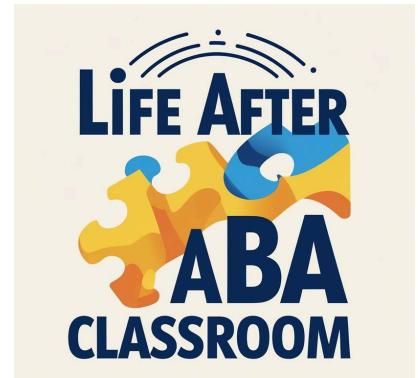
- Move to a quieter space
- Dim lights or use natural lighting
- Turn off loud appliances (vacuum, blender, TV)
- Reduce visual clutter or step away from crowds
- Offer sunglasses or a hat for bright lighting

✓ 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.”