NEURODIVERSITY & SENSORY ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT[1]

GOAL: This environmental audit challenges you to experience spaces and places from a different perspective. As you travel through the environment, think about how you might experience it differently, if you were more sensitive to sights, sounds, feelings, smells, and other sensory inputs. What might be more challenging? What might be intolerable? And, most importantly, what changes could we implement to make these spaces more welcoming and productive for all people.

While conducting this activity, we challenge you to find a way to experience the environment in a new way. Spend time just listening to the sounds around you. Or spend a minute trying to identify everything you can smell. Think about what each smell and sound would be like if it were significantly amplified. Would you still be comfortable? If not, why?

DIRECTIONS:
We will break into small groups and conduct sensory audits in 3-4 locations. You may use your paper audit or complete the audit online using the Google Form linked here:
1. Philadelphia Marriott Lobby (We are here!)
2. Reading Terminal Market (1136 Arch Street)
3. Pennsylvania Convention Center (Broad Street Atrium, 123 N Broad Street)
4. Love Park (if needed) (Arch Street at 15th Street)

After completing your audit, please reconvene in the Marriott Lobby by 10:30 AM.

COMPLETING THE ENVIRONMENTAL AUDIT
This tool helps assess sensory accessibility in various environments and helps identify interventions improving the environment for people experiencing sensory sensitivities. The audit also helps us consider environmental factors from different perspectives. Using this tool can help make our workplaces, schools, homes, and public/ civic spaces more comfortable and enjoyable for people who are more sensitive to the sights, sounds, and smells around us. Please use the audit as a starting place - it is not meant to be exhaustive or authoritative.

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[1] Adapted from BBC UX&D CAPE "Sensory Environment Checklist"

The audit is best accomplished as a group activity, because we all experience things differently. Use the checklist items as opportunities to hear and learn from your group members. Try to put yourself in the shoes of those who might be more sensitive to each checklist item you are considering.

The audit addresses elements in six primary categories - visual, auditory, olfactory, tactile, position/movement, and sensory modulation. The audit walks you through several questions for each category, asking you to provide a score between 1 and 5 for that element, with 1 being the least accommodating to someone experiencing sensory sensitivity and 5 being the most accommodating or comfortable. The audit also asks you to consider if reasonable accommodations or changes can be made to improve the environment for that factor.

If you're not sure what to look for, review the information and images in the orientation packet! Your findings will be aggregated into a report and shared with city planners (and this group).

Environmental Factor	Considerations	Score	Potential Modifications	Notes
VISUAL				
Lighting				
What is the quality of indoor lighting?	Is the area/room too dark or too bright? Do lighting, fixtures, and furnishings generate harsh reflections? Are fluorescent lights used?	1 2 3 4 5	Use LED lights Replace reflective surfaces or furnishings	
Do indoor lights flicker?	Are fluorescent (or other) lights noticeably flickering, poorly maintained, or not working?	1 2 3 4 5	Use LED instead of fluorescent lights If fluorescent lights must be used, ensure they do not flicker	

Environmental Factor	Considerations	Score	Potential Modifications	Notes
Can indoor lighting be adjusted?	Are lighting levels fixed (i.e., on or off are the only options)?	1 2 3 4 5	Install light fixtures allowing people to self-select the level of light	
Are there areas of strong sunlight?	Is strong outdoor light visible? Can outdoor light be shaded?	1 2 3 4 5	Install plain window blinds (avoid patterned blinds) Provide/ allow sunglasses	
Are meeting rooms glass or transparent?	Are glass meeting rooms located in busy locations? Are there alternative meeting spaces with opaque walls?	1 2 3 4 5	Install blinds to minimize distractions Locate meeting rooms in less trafficked areas	
Decor				
Is the decor visually overwhelming?	Are there strong or irritating patterns? Are colors extremely bright or contrasted? Are there reflective, shiny surfaces?	1 2 3 4 5	Replace distracting or vibrant decor with low contrast materials/ patterns Replace strong or abrasive colors (Bright colors, neon colors, shiny surfaces) Choose in low-arousal colors, such as cream and pastel shades	

Environmental Factor	Considerations	Score	Potential Modifications	Notes
Is signage simple and clear?	Are signs hard to read or too complicated?	1 2 3 4 5	Use color-coding, symbols, and graphics Avoid misleading arrows and maps	
Is the floor plan/ room layout neat and easy to negotiate?	Are rooms cluttered or crowded with furniture? Are corridors/rooms confusing or hard to navigate?	1 2 3 4 5	Follow simple floor plans for laying out furniture/ equipment Provide space between furniture Eliminate clutter	
Is there a variety of designated quiet spaces and/or screened areas?	Does the facility lack designated quiet spaces/ areas?	1 2 3 4 5	Provide screened off areas for quiet space Designate sensory/ quiet rooms	
Are alternative evacuation plans promoted/ made available?	Are evacuation plans or emergency information hard to read or too complicated? Are alternative resources or accessibility contacts advertised on emergency information?	1 2 3 4 5	Provide evacuation support; clear, simple route signage; noise and crowd mitigation; and perform frequent drills	
AUDITORY				
Can loud/ repetitive equipment or machinery sounds be heard?	Can you hear water taps, lights, electrical equipment, copiers or computers? Are the quietest settings used?	1 2 3 4 5	Minimize sounds and hums from faucets, lights, electrical equipment, copiers and computers	

Environmental Factor	Considerations	Score	Potential Modifications	Notes
	Is equipment located away from where people are working/ relaxing? Is equipment powered off when not in use?		Move employee away from office machinery, equipment, and other background noises Power off when not in use	
Are there sounds from squeaky chairs and feet?	Can loud or sudden squeaking noises or the noise of chairs on hard floors be heard?	1 2 3 4 5	Minimize sudden/ unexpected squeaking noises and the noise of chairs on hard floors Use carpets where possible Use padded feet on hard floors	
Can loud traffic or other ambient sounds be heard?	Are windows/ doors to the outside old or open?	1 2 3 4 5	Upgrade windows to block outside sounds Provide/ allow earplugs or noise- muffling headphones Provide an environmental sound machine to help mask distracting sounds	
Can you hear sounds from other rooms?	Is excessive noise or sound coming from other rooms/ areas?	1 2 3 4 5	Soundproof rooms to keep sound inside the room Install sound absorbing panels Minimize noise in working areas to avoid distractions	

Environmental Factor	Considerations	Score	Potential Modifications	Notes
Are sounds from crowded areas mitigated/ reasonably contained?	Is there excessive noise in public or gathering spaces that travels into other areas?	1 2 3 4 5	Provide shielded spaces in busy areas to reduce noise Move impacted employees to more private areas or away from high traffic areas Encourage coworkers to keep non-work related conversation to a minimum	
Can any sudden or repetitive loud noises be heard?	Do you hear beeping alarm systems? Is advance warning provided for planned drills? Can loud or repetitive sounds be turned down, stopped, or modulated?	1 2 3 4 5	Install alarm systems with volume control Give advance warning and verbal reminders of loud noises like bells, announcements, or planned fire alarms	
OLFACTORY				
Can you smell the restrooms in places you shouldn't or wouldn't expect to?	Are toilets near working areas? Are restrooms poorly ventilated? Can restroom noise (i.e., hand dryers) be heard outside off restrooms?	1 2 3 4 5	Site toilets away from working areas Install ventilation fans in rest rooms	

Environmental Factor	Considerations	Score	Potential Modifications	Notes
Can you smell food in places you shouldn't or wouldn't expect to?	Are food preparation areas close to working areas? Are microwaves or kitchens generating food odors? Can you see or smell anyone eating?	1 2 3 4 5	Separate food preparation areas from working areas Screen off microwaves and kitchen areas Prohibit eating in open or shared working spaces	
Can you smell paint or cleaning materials in places you shouldn't or wouldn't expect to?	Are paint or cleaning materials stored in or near working areas? Do you observe cleaning or painting? Are harsh chemicals or scented products used for cleaning?	1 2 3 4 5	Store paint and cleaning materials away from public or working areas Conduct cleaning, painting, and maintenance during non-working hours Use only unscented cleaning products	
Can you smell fragrances or scented products in places you shouldn't or wouldn't expect to?	When people get near you, can you smell their fragrance or other cosmetic products? Are hygienic products in the restrooms strongly scented? Are air fresheners, scented candles, incense, potpourri, or other artificial fragrances in use? Can you access fresh air?	1 2 3 4 5	Implement a fragrance-free policy Maintain good indoor air quality and/or provide an air purification system; allow for fresh air breaks Discontinue the use of fragranced products	

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			Provide scent-free meeting rooms and restrooms	
Can you smell waste receptacles or trash in places you shouldn't or wouldn't expect to?	Are there garbage receptacles that need maintenance or emptying? Are trash or waste receptacles located too close to functional spaces?	1 2 3 4 5	Move items likely to generate strong smells away from people and/or working areas Maintain and empty trash and waste receptacles regularly	
TACTILE				
Are furnishings upholstered with textured, coarse, or uncomfortable materials?	Do materials used for seating or furnishings cause discomfort, distraction or pain responses?	1 2 3 4 5	Consider using smooth, soft materials for seating and other soft furnishings	
Are you too hot or too cold?	Is the temperature inappropriate for the event, time of year, etc.? Are temperature levels adjustable or fixed?	1 2 3 4 5	Avoid temperature extremes Provide cool vest or other cooling clothing / heated gloves or other heated clothing Allow workstation fans, air-conditioners, and personal heaters Allow work from home during hot/cold weather	

Environmental Factor	Considerations	Score	Potential Modifications	Notes
POSITION/ MOVEMENT				
Are alternative work spaces and furniture available (beyond traditional table/ chairs)?	Is there a variety of spaces and places where people can comfortably work? Is the floor clean enough for people to use it as an alternative work space? Does meeting/ conference space accommodate alternative seating arrangements?	1 2 3 4 5	Provide areas/ furniture for alternative seating/ movement like clipboards, or clean, comfortable space on the floor (ex. carpet squares or beanbags) Provide alternative seating options, like exercise balls or stand-up desks	
SENSORY MODULATION				
Are sensory tools available or accommodated?	Are fidgets or doodle pads provided in meeting or work spaces? Are sensory tools accommodated/ allowed in this space? Is there signage or information encouraging the use of sensory tools or letting people know it's okay to stand, take a break, move around, etc.?	1 2 3 4 5	Make sensory tools available like mechanical fidgets, scratch pads, etc. Actively encourage the use of handheld sensory tools and/or movement to stimulate and/or calm the senses	
OTHER OBSERVATIONS?				

Environmental Factor	Considerations	Score	Potential Modifications	Notes
Did you see anything else not on this list that you think should be noted?				