Sensory Series: Light

Let’s talk about it

Harsh lighting can completely drain a person's focus without them even realising why. For many neurodivergent individuals, visual environments are often much more intense. Standard office lighting can easily trigger severe eye strain, migraines, or a state of constant anxiety.

Older fluorescent tubes are a frequent culprit because they actually flicker. While most people don't notice it, some neurodivergent brains process this rapid pulsing, which can feel like sitting under a strobe light all day. Bright glare from a window or a screen that's too bright can also become an impossible distraction. It leaves the nervous system working overtime just to cope with the brightness.

Adjusting the visual environment helps prevent the hidden exhaustion that comes from simply sitting in a brightly lit room.

Simple shifts in how workspaces are set up can offer huge relief. Letting people sit in dimmer areas or turning off overhead lights in favour of soft desk lamps makes a massive difference. It's also helpful to support colleagues who wear sunglasses, tinted lenses, or baseball caps indoors to block out the glare.

Useful links

- Autism and sensory processing
- Creating Inclusive Spaces: Lighting for Neurodiversity
- Impact of Lighting on Neurodiverse Individuals