Sensory Series: Touch

Let’s talk about it

Think about how many things touch your skin during a standard workday. For a neurodivergent person with tactile sensitivity, the physical world can feel 'dialled up to eleven'. The brain often can't mute these physical inputs, which turns minor textures into a source of constant distress.

It's not just about a scratchy clothing label or a stiff uniform, though those can easily derail a whole afternoon of focus. The office environment itself can present unexpected hurdles. A freezing metal desk, a rough chair fabric, or a sudden breeze from the air conditioning can feel deeply unsettling. Physical boundaries matter a lot too, since an unexpected tap on the shoulder can easily startle someone's entire nervous system.

Creating a physically comfortable workspace allows everyone to put their energy into their actual jobs instead of just coping with discomfort.

Giving people autonomy over their immediate environment is a brilliant first step. This might mean allowing casual, soft clothing or letting staff use their own desk mats and chair covers. Respecting personal space by avoiding uninvited physical contact is another simple way to help colleagues feel secure.

Useful links

- Autism and sensory processing
- Sensory - Touch
- Tactile