



## Sensory processing signs of difficulty - visual (sight)

You will have heard about our 8 sensory systems: hearing, sight, taste, smell, touch, vestibular, proprioception and interoception. You will have also heard about how we process our sensory information; we receive and organise sensation from the environment, then we process that information and make an effective meaningful response.

Now we can consider what it may look and feel like if we have a difference in our visual sensory system.

### Visual sensory system

Our eyes receive information from the things around us and then communicates this with our brain to make sense of it. Our visual sensory system is not about how well our eyes can see, but about what our brains do with the information it receives.

It is important that thorough eye assessments are undertaken before assuming that the difficulty is due to sensory processing.

### Processing visual sensory information



You will remember that we used cups to describe how we register sensory information.

When we have a little cup it does not take much information before we notice it - your little cup fills up very quickly! We call this over responsive.



When we have a big cup it takes a lot more information for us to notice - it takes more to fill up our cup. We call this under responsive.

Remember that this is not always a problem, and that our ability to register, process and integrate our sensory information can sometimes feel difficult - when we are tired, unwell or overwhelmed it can feel like our cup fills up quickly.

### **Signs of Difficulty:**

Over responsive 	Under responsive 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dislikes bright lights</li><li>• Prefers to wear a hat or sunglasses</li><li>• Prefers the dark</li><li>• Distracted by visual information</li><li>• Has difficulty walking across changes in surfaces</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Likes bright lights, reflections and spinning lights</li><li>• Takes a lot of visual stimulation to react</li><li>• Has difficulty finding individual items within 'busy' environments</li></ul>

## Strategies to support:

Over responsive 	Under responsive 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consider the environment - would an individual workspace help to reduce the distractions?</li><li>• Can anything else in the environment be adapted to reduce the visual distractions?</li><li>• Quiet zone</li><li>• Dark den</li><li>• Experiment with different light sources - is natural light better (avoiding fluorescent lights)</li><li>• Caps/hats with a peak for when outside</li><li>• Glasses with a tint, or sunglasses where able</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Regular opportunity for visual stimulation</li><li>• Light up toys</li><li>• Bubble tubes, fibreoptics</li><li>• Bottles filled with water and glitter, give them a shake!</li><li>• Bright worksheets, using contrasting colours</li><li>• A well-lit workspace</li></ul>

