

	Sensory Experience	Leveled Up Concept	Challenges	Strengths
Auditory	<p>Hypersensitivity Energy level likely to be influenced by sounds (e.g., loud, unexpected or constant sounds may be overwhelming and amp up or deplete energy; preferred sounds, rhythmic qualities or quiet may amp up or level down energy)</p>	<p>Hi-Definition Hearing</p>	<p>Personal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Perceives greater range of type and quality of sounds and noise which creates large amounts of auditory input to be processed ● Perceives noise and sounds at higher volume which is more likely to cause discomfort ● May be more difficult to focus on ONE sound (e.g., difficulty hearing speech sounds in noisy environment) ● May hear sounds that others do not and may have difficulty communicating this experience / discomfort <p>Potential Activity / Environmental Mismatches</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Restaurants, airports, cafeterias, indoor recess, grocery store, work zones, high-traffic areas, close proximity to others, certain frequencies/pitch of voices/sounds, multiple conversations occurring at once 	<p>Personal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hears sounds that others do not ● Picks up nuanced sound characteristics of nature, instrumentation, and music ● May have perfect pitch and/or ability to play musical instruments by ear ● May be easily able to discriminate between and identify different sounds ● May be easily able to identify location of sounds <p>Potential Activity / Environmental Matches</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Locations engineered for acoustics, quiet spaces, playing or listening to music, singing, playing instruments, matching voices or sounds, listening to nature, making vocal sounds, playing with echos, rhyme or rhythmically appealing spoken word
Visual	<p>Hypersensitivity Energy level likely to be influenced by visual stimuli (e.g., visual qualities of certain patterns, colors, or brightness may amp up or deplete energy; other preferred visual qualities may amp up or level down energy)</p>	<p>High Acuity Lenses</p>	<p>Personal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● May experience patterns, colors, motion or activity as nauseating, painful, sickening, anxiety-inducing ● May have strong preference for visual environment to remain consistent but often with little control over that consistency ● May have difficulty transitioning visual attention from details of preferred object/ sight to another activity or environment <p>Potential Activity / Environmental Mismatches</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Crowds and crowded places, grocery stores, fluorescent lighting, rooms/spaces with a lot of clutter, environments with competing patterns, colors and/or shapes, activities that are not visually stimulating, flash photography, bright settings on screens (e.g., computer, TV, etc), glare off windows/mirrors/shiny objects, direct sunlight and high white light from cloud cover 	<p>Personal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Perceives patterns, symmetry, and beauty that is overlooked by others ● Picks up on fine visual details ● Perceives subtle visual changes and differences ● May find things easily in busy and complicated visual environments ● May have impeccable visual recall for objects, environments, activities (e.g., photographic memory) ● May have extremely good visual tracking of objects through space ● May learn very quickly when visual information provided (visual learner) ● May experience intense sights through other senses (e.g., feeling, tasting that which is seen) <p>Potential Activity / Environmental Matches</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Nature, outdoors, running water, museums, architecture, technology or mechanical build, environments in which the individual can watch the trajectory of flying objects (e.g., sports, balls, watching meteor showers, watching snow or rain fall), observing from all angles, drawing or recreating preferred visual stimuli

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Tactile	<p>Hypersensitivity Energy level likely to be influenced by tactile stimuli (e.g., unexpected touch may amp up or deplete energy; preferred textures may amp up or level down energy)</p>	All the Feels	<p>Personal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Perceives touch and pressure as painful, sickening, suffocating (e.g., tags like knives) ● May experience environmental textures (e.g., carpeting, material, etc) as noxious and dangerous ● May register and respond to human touch inconstantly, resulting in confusion and avoidance ● May have a difficulty time finding comfortable clothing ● May not be able to tolerate mess on hands/ body <p>Potential Activity / Environmental Mismatches</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Activities and environments that require being surrounded by others or in close proximity to others (e.g., standing in line, sharing tables and desks), activities and environments that involve messy textures, scratchy materials, light touch, imposed touch, hand over hand assistance, objects on or around wrists, neck, head, ankles, etc. (e.g., bracelets, lanyards/cords, elastic bands, collars, cuffs, headbands). 	<p>Personal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● May have strong preference for and find comfort in particular textures, materials, and pressures ● May have strong associations with and remember things by touch or feel ● May “feel” other senses (e.g., experience touch sensations or make associations when seeing certain textures, etc) ● May quickly determine if a texture is pleasant or dangerous ● May be able to discriminate and describe subtle differences in texture, material, and pressure <p>Potential Activity / Environmental Matches</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Nature/ outdoor environments, activities that involve exploring by touching and feeling objects within comfort zone, touching and feeling objects with more than just fingers and hands (e.g., face, specific spot on arm, etc.), learning kinesthetically, activities and environments that include preferred textures (e.g., animals, stuffed animals, sand, putty)
Olfactory	<p>Hypersensitivity Energy level likely to be influenced by aromas (e.g., aromas that are often considered pleasant or neutral may be overwhelming and deplete or amp up energy; preferred, familiar and meaningful scents may amp up or level down energy)</p>	Super Sniffer	<p>Personal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Perceives a greater range of type and quality of smells which creates more environmental stimuli to process ● May experience lingering scents (e.g., scent may attach itself to individual / individual's clothing and become inescapable). May drive individual to escape the environment (e.g., run away, strip off clothes) ● May experience involuntary reactions such as gagging, nausea, vomiting, light-headedness in response to aromas may trigger <p>Potential Activity / Environmental Mismatches</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cafeterias/lunch rooms, restaurants, movie theatre, malls and shops, hospital/ doctor's office, hair spray, perfume/cologne, body washes, cigarette smoke, cleaning products, markers, paints, gasoline 	<p>Personal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● May have strong associations and vivid memories triggered by scent ● May perceive subtle scents frequently missed by others ● May have strong preferences and find comfort in certain smells ● May quick determine nature and qualities of a smell with high accuracy (e.g., knowing if recipes or foods are balanced by smell alone) <p>Potential Activity / Environmental Matches</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Nature, fresh air, familiar smells, smells of preferred toys, blankets, and objects, smells of pets and loved ones, preferred foods.

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Proprioception	<p>Hypersensitivity Energy level likely to be influenced by one's body position and movements (e.g., lack of control or being forced into positions may deplete or amp up energy, engaging in preferred movement may amp up or level down energy).</p>	<p>Locational Awareness</p>	<p>Personal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● May feel uncomfortable in certain positions (e.g., may avoid positions that require joint compression or traction) ● May have difficulty determining how much force is needed to successfully engage in an activity (e.g., may use less than necessary) <p>Potential Activity / Environmental Mismatches</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Environments that restrict movement, activities that involve involuntary / forced movement, hand over hand assistance, weight lifting, calisthenics, rough and tumble play 	<p>Personal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Acutely aware of body position ● May have excellent balance and/or ability to intentionally control movement ● May be a highly kinesthetic and experiential learner <p>Potential Activity / Environmental Matches</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Outside environments with space to move, climbing, walking, running, jumping, sports, dance, martial arts, gymnastics
Vestibular	<p>Hypersensitivity Energy level likely to be influenced by moving in space (e.g., heights and random / imposed movement may deplete or amp up energy; preferred volitional movements may amp up or level down energy).</p>	<p>Precision Radar</p>	<p>Personal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● May perceive and be functionally impacted by subtle, position, altitude, and atmospheric pressure changes ● May experience nausea and anxiety in response to perceived changes to pressure, tectonics, and altitude ● May feel motion when things move in visual field <p>Potential Activity / Environmental Mismatches</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Airplanes, cars, or other forms of transport where motion is imposed, heights, being underground or underwater (e.g., scuba diving, caves), environments with volatile weather, atmospheric pressure or that are on fault lines, activities that involve spinning / frequent change in position (e.g., dancing) 	<p>Personal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Acutely aware of position in space ● Feels subtle shifts in position in space others may not ● May feel slight changes in barometric pressure ● May perceive plate tectonics, tremors and far-off earthquakes that are not felt by others ● May be able to intentionally move through space seamlessly <p>Potential Activity / Environmental Matches</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Activities involving volitional movement Dance, spinning, yoga, movement patterns, environments in which the individual can change position at their own discretion,

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Proprioception/ Vestibular	<p>Hyposensitivity <i>Energy level likely to be influenced by moving body through space (e.g., not being able to move may amp up or deplete energy; repetitive preferred patterns of movement may amp up or level down energy).</i></p>	<p>Super seeker</p>	<p>Personal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● May not notice or feel bumps, bruises, cuts or more severe injuries ● May be accident prone ● May take risks during play and may be unaware of what could be dangerous to self/ others (may lack concept of danger or harm completely) ● May have difficulty judging appropriate force, range of motion, proximity to others (e.g., may use more than necessary to engage in activity) <p>Potential Activity / Environmental Mismatches</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Environments that limit or restrict input and movement (especially for long durations), inability to carry out a movement as envisioned (due to environmental limitations, task demands, instructions, etc.), “fragile,” breakable environment, environments with real threats (e.g., potential for falling, serious impact to hard surfaces, sharp or otherwise dangerous surroundings to which the individual will be unaware). 	<p>Personal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● May develop incredible coordination and be capable of mastering highly advanced movements ● May have high tolerance (and need) for physical activity ● Movement may be extremely regulating for energy ● May use movement as an important form of expression and identity ● May experience health benefits associated with increased activity and movement <p>Potential Activity / Environmental Matches</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Environments that allow for exploring how to move one’s body (e.g., sports, P.E., yoga, dance, theatre, natural play), carrying out movement patterns, physical activities that involve high amounts of moving or with heavy resistance (e.g., running, trampoline, weight lifting)

Notes.

1. These do not occur in isolation from one another and the combination of any two or more will result in unique strengths and challenges.
2. Consider the combination of these systems when thinking about memories, post-traumatic stress, and positive and negative experiences. This, too, comes with challenges and strengths including extremely painful and realistic imagery of negative experiences where all of the sensory qualities can be felt again intensely, as well as the ability to recall through all senses especially pleasant memories. Do not underestimate the power of this kind of vivid recall, particularly when trauma is part of someone’s profile.
3. This is another form that you could fill out specific to yourself, or your autistic loved one, student, client, etc. Always work with the autistic individual to complete these forms when possible and appropriate to do so, or make sure those filling out the form know the individual well.
4. Thinking through this perspective and form specific to an autistic person can be helpful for creating individualized Power UP! And Power Down plans.

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