



Sensory-Friendly Event Guide

Create an event that is more accessible and inclusive!



**Sensory
Friendly
Solutions**



Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Understanding Sensory-Friendly Practices.....	4
What Are Sensory Experience Statements?.....	5
How to Create a Sensory Experience Statement.....	6
Sensory Experience by Sense.....	7
• Sight	
• Hearing	
• Taste	
• Touch	
• Smell	
• Movement	
• Balance	
• Interoception	
Additional Considerations.....	23
Sensory-Friendly Event Review.....	25
Simple Ways to Start.....	26



Introduction

Welcome to the Sensory-Friendly Event Guide!

- **Creating a sensory-friendly event starts with understanding its sensory experience.**
- **This guide will help you explain the sensory experience at your event so guests can make informed choices about their participation.**
- **Sharing information about the sensory experience at your event, makes it more sensory-friendly, accessible and inclusive.**
- **In this guide, you will learn how to write sensory experience statements for 8 senses: sight, hearing, taste, touch, smell, movement, balance, and interoception.**



Understanding Sensory-Friendly Practices

Being sensory-friendly means considering the sensory preferences of your guests. Consider these eight senses:



Sight



Hearing



Taste



Touch



Smell



Movement



Balance



Interoception

There's no one-size-fits-all approach for sensory preferences or needs.

By accommodating different sensory preferences, you start to create events that feel inclusive and welcoming for all sensory needs.

What Are Sensory Experience Statements?

A sensory experience statement gives guests clear information about what sensory elements they can expect at your event.

It can cover any of the eight senses.

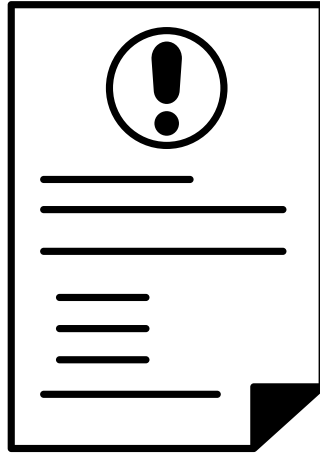
A sensory experience statement can describe both:

- **sensory-friendly features**
 - **Ex. quiet zones or dim lighting**
- **sensory-rich features**
 - **Ex. live music or flashing lights**

Use this guide to create clear, helpful sensory experience statements for your event!



How to Create a Sensory Experience Statement



1) Describe what the environment looks, sounds, and feels like.

2) Highlight any potential sensory triggers.

3) Identify areas or tools that offer relief.

4) Consider each of the eight senses.

Sight



Your visual world is full of life with bright colors, detailed patterns, and wide landscapes. However, some people can feel overwhelmed by bright lights, flashing screens, or crowded areas.

Consider the following:

- What will guests see at your event?
- Bright lights, natural lighting, or darkness?
- Consider things like flashing lights, screen displays, and any high-contrast areas.
- Is there a lot of visual clutter or are there calm, open spaces?

Example Statement for Sight



During the day, visitors will see bright spaces with large digital displays. In the evening, soft lighting will be used. Flashing lights will be marked on the event map. Quiet zones with dim lighting will be available for those seeking a calmer environment.



Hearing



Picture a world filled with different sounds—conversations, music, and the sounds of nature. However, for some people, loud or sudden noises and crowded places can be stressful.

Consider the following:

- What will guests hear at your event?
- Will there be loud or sudden noises, background music, or announcements?
- How noisy will it get during peak times?
- Will there be designated quiet areas?

Example Statement for Hearing



Attendees will hear background music throughout the event. Announcements will be made over loudspeakers and live music will be played in certain areas. Quiet zones will be available for guests who want a break from sound and noise.



Taste



Taste lets us savor the world, from chocolate's sweetness to lemon's tang. Yet, some may dislike certain textures or flavors, such as spicy foods.

Consider the following:

- What food and drink options will be available at your event?
- Will there be any strong flavours or textures that could be challenging?
- Can attendees bring their own snacks?

Example Statement for Taste



Our event will feature a variety of food options, including local food trucks. Water stations will be available throughout the venue. Guests are welcome to bring their own snacks if preferred.



Touch



Feel the warmth of a hug, a gentle breeze, or the rough texture of a wool sweater—touch is a strong sensation. However, some people may not enjoy hugs or find clothing tags uncomfortable.

Consider the following:

- What will the tactile experience be like at your event?
- Will guests be able to touch interactive exhibits?
- What will the temperature be like, and is there shade or protection from the elements?

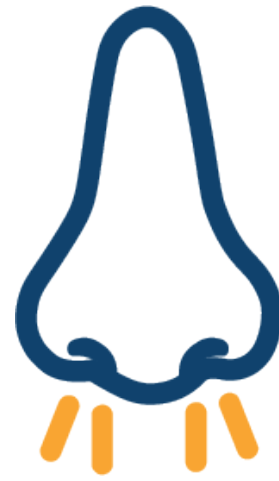
Example Statement for Touch



Guests can engage with interactive exhibits throughout the event. The venue is climate-controlled for comfort, and outdoor areas provide shade. We've designed the space to avoid overcrowding.



Smell



Scents can trigger strong memories, like freshly baked cookies or pine trees. However, strong perfumes and artificial scents can be upsetting and may cause headaches for some.

Consider the following:

- Will there be strong scents at your event?
- Are there food vendors or fragrant plants?
- Do you have scent-free zones for those sensitive to certain smells?

Example Statement for Smell



Guests will enjoy the fresh scent of flowers in the main hall, and food vendors will create delicious aromas. But we also have scent-free zones marked for those with sensitivities where fans and filters will reduce smells.



Movement



Proprioception helps you move accurately, even with your eyes closed, like touching your nose without looking. Some people enjoy active movement, while others prefer to be more still.

Consider the following:

- How will guests move around the space?
- Are pathways wide and accessible?
- Are there areas for resting or sitting?
- Consider both walking and wheelchair access.

Example Statement for Movement



The event space offers wide pathways for easy movement. Seating is available for resting, and shuttles are provided for longer distances. All paths are smooth and clearly marked.



Balance



Your balance keeps you steady while sitting, walking, or even dancing. Motion sickness or a fear of heights shows you that there are differences in how each person’s vestibular system works.

Consider the following:

- Are there different levels at your event space?
- How do guests move between levels—stairs, ramps, elevators?
- Consider how guests with balance issues might navigate the venue.

Example Statement for Balance



Visitors can access different levels using stairs, ramps, or elevators. Handrails are available on steps and ramps, and the layout is designed for easy navigation.



Interoception



Interoception is your body's way of telling you when you're hungry, thirsty, or need to use the toilet. Some people struggle to understand these signals, which can affect their well-being.

Consider the following:

- What facilities are available for guests to manage their physical needs?
- Are toilets accessible?
- Are there family toilets?
- Are there areas for rest and relaxation?

Example Statement for Interoception



We provide both accessible and family-friendly toilets on every level. There are quiet zones for calm activities and active zones for more energetic activities marked on the event map.



Additional Considerations

Share all your accessibility and inclusion features. Here are some examples of more details to include:

- Is there Braille and large-print for printed materials?
- Will videos have audio description?
- Will sign-language interpretation and closed captions be available?
- Are noise-canceling headphones or sensory kits available for loan, rent or purchase?
- Are there specific sensory-friendly hours?
- What other features will help include more guests with disabilities or hidden disabilities?
- What other features will help all guests feel comfortable?



Example Statement



Sensory-friendly hours with lower noise and no bright lights will be available from 2pm to 3pm each day. Noise-canceling headphones can be borrowed at the information desk. Quiet rooms are provided as shown on the event map for those needing a break.



Sensory-Friendly Event Review

- ☐ Have you considered all eight senses?
- ☐ Are sensory experience statements clear and easily understood (test them out!)
- ☐ Have you shared sensory-friendly and accessibility information everywhere? E.g., website, onsite signs, social media, etc.)?

Key Tips:

- Be specific in your statements.
- Use maps, with icons and words to help guests navigate sensory elements.
- Ensure staff and volunteers are trained on sensory-friendly practices.



Simple Ways to Start

Making your event sensory-friendly is easy with a few simple changes that improve accessibility and inclusion for many more people than you might think!

Here are some quick ideas to get started:

- Provide large-print materials.
- Use clear signs with icons.
- Create a quiet space.
- Use scent-free products.
- Offer more seating areas.
- Provide noise-canceling headphones.
- Use good, but soft lighting.



A Message from Our Founder and CEO

Thank you for exploring our resources. As someone with 30 years of healthcare experience and a hearing disability, I understand how crucial it is to create welcoming spaces for everyone.

At Sensory Friendly Solutions, we provide simple, effective solutions through our **Product Recognition**, **Training**, and **Certification**. We're here to support you every step of the way as you work towards sensory-friendly practices and can add concierge consulting to any of our services. Plus, we donate 1% to **The Sensory Foundation** to support sensory-friendly initiatives.



Simple Solutions for Your Success

Take one small step today—learn something new, sign up for a course, or get regular tips from us. Together, we can make the world a little more sensory-friendly!



Christel Seeberger
Founder and CEO
Sensory Friendly Solutions



P.S. Please connect with us and join our community of people around the world who care about accessibility and inclusion.

sensoryfriendly.net

