

# HAVE MORE N.A.P.S.S.

AN ENERGY AUDITING AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

A = AUDIT  
M = MANAGEMENT

A

## 1. NUTRITION

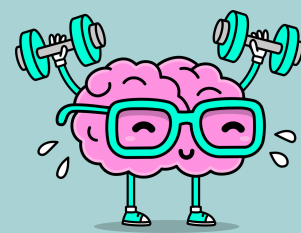
What is your current food intake like? Are you interested in new fancy culinary adventures? Or are you noticing eating more of your regular comfort foods?



A/M

## 2. ACTIVITIES

What does your daily and weekly and monthly schedule look like? What kind of activities are booked in and do you enjoy them?



A/M

## 3. PAUSE & PASSION

Not all pauses have to be a nap, meditation or hiding in a dark cupboard. It might also be engaging your brain in your favourite hobby and get into a flow state.



M

## 4. STRATEGIES

Figure out your does and don'ts in life; your rules for living. What kind of strategies need to be in place to protect and preserve your energy?



M

## 5. SLEEP

Are you getting enough sleep? Are you maintaining good sleep hygiene? If not, what can be done to support yourself?



Think of these five steps as your internal battery (like a phone) that you want to keep as close to 100% charged as possible.

Achieving this is a mix between auditing your daily actions and behaviours and managing them.

Disclaimer:

If you've met one autistic person, you've met one autistic person! Not everything you read or everything I write will resonate. Take what you like and need and leave the rest. Alter, change and mould what you find in life to work for you ❤️

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# 1. NUTRITION

## AUDIT

When a GP talks to you about nutrition - the food you eat - they might suggest more healthy options to maximize your energy, and do with that advice as you like. But that's not what having more NAPSS is about. NAPSS is a compassionate approach to noticing what's happening in the moment and being kind to yourself according to your bodily signals. If you're super excited about the new taco restaurant opening, you're probably doing pretty good in terms of energy management, but if you're only eating your favourite food, don't tell yourself off (even if it's only crisps) and don't try to force yourself to eat better or more varied (at least not as part of the NAPSS system), but notice your bodily signal that you're really stressed and doing the best you can and look for other ways to sort your NAPSS so you can increase your energy. N is an auditing (taking note of) signal.

# 2. ACTIVITIES

## AUDIT/MANAGEMENT

First audit your daily, weekly and monthly activities - do you have too much on? Are they things you want to or feel you have to do?

Then, start taking charge and managing your days according to your needs. Does showering stress you out in the morning? Could you shower less, shower at night, wash in a different way or make the whole bathroom experience less sensory overwhelming?

Are the kids doing 101 activities? Could they do less? Could someone help more with getting the kids to and from their activities?

Do you have too many hobbies and not enough time? Would you rather that or have more energy? Sometimes looking after ourselves means making boring choices.

# 3. P&P

## AUDIT/MANAGEMENT

Do you ensure enough rest throughout your day (pauses)? Do you go outside when working from the office to take a breather? Lock yourself in the bathroom with your headphones on to catch an auditory break?

Do you ensure you're doing stuff you love every day or close to every day?

Engaging in your passion(s) and getting into a flow state is part of how autistic people regulate and recharge.

# 4. STRATEGIES

## AUDIT/MANAGEMENT

Have you ever thought about the things you do that you hate? Giving hugs, wearing tight clothes, answering phone calls, multitasking... Sometimes we've been doing things we don't like for so long because we feel we have to (masking) that we've forgot we can say no.

What kind of 'rules' do you govern your life by? And do they respect your sensory needs?

First, audit (take stock) and then create new strategies to manage your energy levels.

I used to do admin (answering emails and catching up on stuff) while travelling on the train.

But eventually I learned that it'd taken up so much of my energy that upon arriving at my destination I'd be tired, grumpy and overwhelmed. So regardless of what logic tells me, I'm not allowed to do admin on loud, busy, smelly trains but only daydream (ideally with headphones on).

# 5. SLEEP

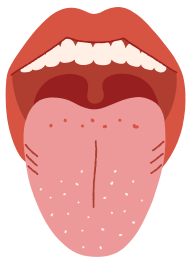
## AUDIT/MANAGEMENT

Would we all like better sleep? This is a tricky one!

First of all, audit your sleeping environment. Do you know what temperature your bedroom should ideally be at when sleeping? Do you sleep alone or next to someone who disrupts your sleep? Do you feel safe and cosy in your bedroom? Are you aware of how light impacts your sleep? Especially LED lights from screens? Do you stick to a regular sleep schedule? Do you consider what you drink/eat before bed and how close to bedtime you do that? Anything there that needs to change? Do you lie awake with loads of stressful thoughts, ruminating and worried? Have you looked at strategies for managing bedtime anxiety or spoken to a therapist about it?

# INFO DUMP

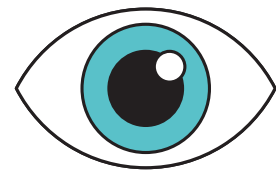
As autistic people, we're keenly aware of our sensory profile and processing of these senses. You might feel like needles are being embedded in your brain when someone whistles or chews loudly or that your brain is on fire if you're near a smell you hate. We can be extra sensitive to sunlight, labels in clothes, and food textures, being branded fussy eaters when, in reality, it might just be a texture thing. Despite our keen awareness that the world's sensory inputs can cause us distress, we're sometimes not aware of our sensory profile in great detail. Likewise, many of us aren't aware of the proprioceptive (where is my body in space), vestibular (how am I moving my body) and interoceptive (what's going on inside my body) senses.



TASTE (GUSTATORY)



SMELL (OLFACTORY)



SIGHT (VISUAL)



HEARING (AUDITORY)



TOUCH (TACTILE)

## OUR 8 SENSES



PROPRIOCEPTIVE  
(WHERE IS MY BODY IN SPACE)



VESTIBULAR  
(HOW AM I MOVING MY BODY?)



INTEROCEPTIVE  
(WHAT'S GOING ON INSIDE MY BODY?)

There are many answers to what it means to be autistic. For me, one of these answers is that allistic people (non-autistics) have their sensory profile set at volume 40-60 (imagine a stereo volume dial), and we autistic people have it at 80 as a daily standard, regularly going up to 100.



Part of regulating ourselves and managing our energy is to know how to protect our sensory profile, including how to add more of those soothing senses to our lives.

We might also be better at noticing what we're very sensitive towards (what we have a low threshold towards), where we're quick to respond = hypersensitive.

This might mean we're quicker to move away from something that doesn't serve us or it might mean that we have a strong reaction if we're unable to move away from this stimuli (like a meltdown).

However, there might also be stimuli where we're slow to respond or are under-responsive (high threshold) = hyposensitive.

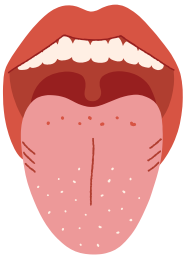
This might mean that we're slow to remove ourselves from a sensory environment that doesn't serve us, and we might become extra clumsy, zone out or shut down. We might also end up feeling the impact of a sensory trigger for an extended time because we didn't respond as quickly as we did when feeling hypersensitive.

The more distressed or dysregulated we are, the harder it can be to notice if one or more of our senses have been triggered, and equally hard to think how to regulate ourselves again. This is why you might want to use the NAPSS system to become more active in auditing your daily life rather than being a passive passenger.

There are several free sensory profile tests online to help you become more clear on which of your sensory needs are stronger than others and how to protect or engage more with them.

Before I knew I was autistic, I was much quicker at stating things I hated (loud chewing, farts, busy trains, the texture of cauliflower, clothes labels, etc), but I was less aware of things that soothed me and, therefore, less likely to engage with them to regulate myself (the sound of the ocean, a marshmallow-soft bed, floating in warm water, the smell of clothes dried outside, etc) and there were things I didn't realise were sensory triggers because it didn't seem to bother other people (strong winds (the feeling of being pushed), inconsistent heavy raindrops, walking near busy roads, unwanted touch, etc), and so I'd just get really angry or have a meltdown without understanding why and it'd cause problems in my relationships because people thought I was being a hothead or unpleasant, and since I didn't understand these triggers either, I concluded I was just a rubbish person, adding to more dysregulation.

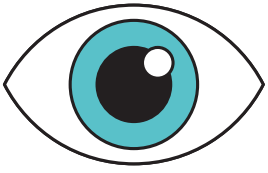
# WORKSHEETS



WHAT COMFORTS OR SOOTHES ME?  
WHAT ENERGISES OR ALERTS ME?  
WHAT DISTRESSES OR UPSETS ME?



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What are some of the tell-tell signs that you might be dysregulated? Might your handwriting change? Might you feel like you're going from 0-100 emotionally? Might you be zoning out more and feeling disengaged from your daily life? Might you have more unpleasant dreams? Has your internal chatter changed?

# 1. NUTRITION

## AUDIT

What is/are my comfort food(s)?

# 2. ACTIVITIES

## AUDIT/MANAGEMENT

List activities and rate them in terms of energy drain (low to high):

# 3. P&P

## AUDIT/MANAGEMENT

What does a good pause look like to you? Napping or knitting? Hiding or playing?

List favourite relaxing activities:

# 4. STRATEGIES

## AUDIT/MANAGEMENT

What might be some 'rules for living' for you? Things you do because they're expected of you but you hate? Or activities you engage with to be 'productive' but they actually make you feel worse and thus less productive? Sacrifices you make for your professional life that harms your private life?

# 5. SLEEP

## AUDIT/MANAGEMENT

What sleep hygiene areas could you improve on?

Bedroom temperature?

Bedroom darkness/brightness?

Regular bedtime routine/sleep schedule?

Screen time?

Relaxing activities leading to bed?

Sleep disturbances (like a partner snoring or a cat doing zoomies at 3 am)?

Waking at 4 am with incessant internal chatter (could you journal before bedtime to get some of these thoughts out? Listen to an audiobook to distract yourself? Move your body?)

Practice meditation breathing?)

What do you eat/drink at the end of day, like caffeinated drinks, and how close to bedtime?

Could any of these choices impact your sleep?