

Text-Only Diagram: Sensory Barriers

The environment may overload or distress people. Sensory barriers can make it harder for people to understand information, stay regulated, communicate, or take part.

Core message

Sensory access is part of participation. People may need quieter, calmer, more predictable environments so they can take part with dignity, safety, and choice.

Text diagram pathway

Bright lights -> Soft lighting. Loud noise -> Quiet option. Crowded spaces -> More space. Strong smells -> Fragrance-free option. No quiet area -> Quiet space. Unpredictable changes -> Clear schedule.

Sensory barriers and better access supports

Sensory barrier	What it can feel like	Better access support
Bright lights	Lights may feel painful, distracting, tiring, or overwhelming.	Use soft lighting, reduce glare, offer natural light, or allow sunglasses / caps where appropriate.
Loud noise	Noise can make it hard to think, listen, communicate, or stay calm.	Offer a quiet option, reduce background noise, use smaller groups, or provide headphones / breaks.
Crowded spaces	Crowds can increase stress, reduce personal space, and make communication harder.	Offer more space, quieter times, seating choices, or a lower-crowd pathway.
Strong smells	Smells can cause distress, nausea, pain, distraction, or sensory overload.	Use fragrance-free spaces, avoid strong scents, and communicate scent expectations.
No quiet area	People may have nowhere to rest, regulate, recover, or communicate safely.	Provide a quiet space, low-stimulation area, or clear break option.
Unpredictable changes	Unexpected changes can increase anxiety and make participation harder.	Use a clear schedule, visual timetable, advance notice, and calm updates when plans change.

Quick check

- What sensory barrier might make participation harder?
- What would make the space calmer, clearer, or more predictable?
- Who should be asked whether the change helps?

- What is one small change we can try first?

Accessible description

A text-only diagram titled Sensory Barriers. It lists environmental barriers such as bright lights, loud noise, crowded spaces, strong smells, no quiet area, and unpredictable changes. Each barrier is paired with a better access support such as soft lighting, quiet options, more space, fragrance-free spaces, a quiet area, and a clear schedule.