



## Sensodyne's Sensory Inclusion Initiative

As the experts in tooth sensitivity, we're on a mission to build sensory inclusion in oral care, connecting patients with dentists who understand their needs.

### GET TO KNOW YOUR PATIENTS: HOW TO TALK ABOUT SENSORY NEEDS AND ACCOMMODATIONS

Patients with sensory sensitivities may struggle to communicate their needs to their dentists.

#### What are sensory sensitivities?

Sensory sensitivity occurs when everyday life is affected or limited by how a person experiences the world around them through their senses. While sensory sensitivity looks different for everyone, it can make even daily activities extremely difficult, let alone something as high-sensory as a dental appointment. This is true for many people and can be especially pronounced for many neurodivergent individuals or for those with certain disabilities or other conditions that may impact sensory processing.



By taking the initiative and creating space for discussion, you can invite patients to open up about their needs. Below we've included some recommendations to help effectively communicate accommodations your office offers, and to support your patients in expressing their sensory preferences.

- 1. Review and revise intake forms** to be inclusive of sensory needs. Update existing patient intake forms to include specific questions about sensory sensitivities and provide a section where patients can specify their needs and preferences regarding sensory accommodations.
- 2. Set expectations around the appointment with patients in advance.** Open and proactive communication about what will occur during a set appointment, even a standard cleaning, can help a patient with sensory needs prepare. We recommend reaching out to patients in advance of an appointment to discuss their sensory sensitivities and any specific accommodations they might require. During that conversation, clearly explain what they can expect during their visit (including what procedures will be done and how long they will be there) and include the measures taken to accommodate their sensitivities and any sensory tools available during their appointment.

**3. Throughout an appointment, communicate about what is happening, what tools are being used, and check in on how they are feeling.** One of the best things you can do is prepare the patient for what is happening before it occurs. Let patients know when something bright, loud or uncomfortable is going to occur and be sure they are comfortable with what is happening. Some patients may not recognize their sensitivity until it's too late, so it's important to check in often and adjust based on their feedback.

**4. If patients begin to seem uncomfortable, anxious, or demonstrate sudden communication difficulties, pause and offer resources to help them regulate their emotions and senses.**

As a caregiver, it's important that we read the shifts in body language of our patients, especially those with sensory sensitivity as they may begin to struggle with verbalizing their experiences. If you notice a patient is uncomfortable and struggling to communicate, provide cue cards where they can indicate how they are feeling or their levels of discomfort. You can also leverage tools like Koji, an AI-generated communication tool and talker from our partner KultureCity. To access the tool, download KultureCity App and select Koji on the bottom right of the home page. This will open to the AI Talker and a variety of other communication tools beneficial for those who do not use verbal speech as their primary mode of communication.



If you haven't already, we encourage you to enroll in the **American Dental Association's (ADA) CERP-certified continuing education course** on neurodiversity, sensory inclusion, and oral health. The course provides 6-hours of essential information, from how to manage patient needs, to common medications, to billing and coding. Learn more about the ADA and the training available by visiting [engage.ada.org/courses/541/view](https://engage.ada.org/courses/541/view)

Once you've completed the ADA training, you can register with KultureCity to receive additional supports, including:

- Inclusion in the searchable **KultureCity App** to let patients know you're prioritizing sensory sensitive care
- **Sensodyne x KultureCity Sensory Inclusive™ Certified** signage and window cling
- Sensory bags inclusive of tools to help support people during the in-office experience

To learn more about **KultureCity** and the **Sensodyne x KultureCity Sensory Inclusive™ Certification**, please visit [kulturecity.org/sensodyne-sensory-inclusion-initiative](https://kulturecity.org/sensodyne-sensory-inclusion-initiative)