

Sensory Street



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1. Information about the Project

Sensory Street is a Wellcome Trust funded project at the University of Oxford. We want to work with the autistic community to create an event to help people experience what it is like to have sensory processing difficulties in a creative and interesting way. In our focus groups we want to learn more about what it means to be an autistic person with sensory processing difficulties, how the sensory aspects of an environment can affect you and how we can help people to learn about sensory processing in autism.

2. Objectives of the Focus Group

- Identify locations that present significant sensory challenges for autistic people
- Understand the sensory aspects of the environment associated with specific locations that present the biggest challenges
- Understand more about what enabling adjustments for a sensory environment might look like
- Learn about which audiences autistic people would like to be better informed about sensory needs

3. People Involved in the Focus Groups

The focus groups will consist of up to six people. There will be two people from our research team in each focus group. Keren will be at all the focus groups and will be leading the group. Keren will ask the questions while the other researcher (Catherine or Cathy) will be monitoring the chat and doing the recording. The other people in the group will be autistic people invited to the session by email.

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Keren



Catherine



Cathy



4. Focus Group Plan

1. Introduction of group members
 - a. Keren and Catherine or Cathy (depending on group)
 - b. Group members will be asked to introduce themselves - name and where you are from and/or interests. You do not have to do this if you do not want to or you could add this information into the chat
2. Introduction to the group
 - a. We will discuss the purpose of the group and our objectives
 - b. We will talk about the terminology that we will use in the group such as autistic person vs. person with autism Respect terminology people use
 - c. We will remind you that you can leave if you want to at any time or take a break and then come back later
 - d. We will discuss the timings/structure of the session and what to expect. We expect the group to last approximately one hour
3. Rules of the Group
 - a. We will read out some possible rules of the group (these are outlined below)
 - b. At this point we can discuss any of these rules and agree any additional rules based on how we want to work and what we agree is appropriate
4. Discussion where people can share your thoughts and experiences.
 - a. Possible questions for this section are outlined below. We expect to ask all of these questions during the focus group but this may not be necessary depending on people's responses. We also may ask follow-up questions based on people's answers

5. Example Code of Conduct (Group Rules)

1. To ensure everyone gets a chance to speak, we will ask you to:
 - a. Mute your microphones until it is your turn if possible. This will reduce unnecessary background noise.
 - b. Indicate when you wish to speak by raising a 'virtual hand', or by waving your hand or alerting in the text chat. Keren will let you know when you can come

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on and speak. But we want to create a discussion so please indicate you would like to speak at any point

- c. If Keren feels like the conversation is going off-topic, or that others need to convey their opinions, then she may move on to another person / topic. She will let you know if she is going to do this.
2. There is no requirement to be visible on video if you do not feel comfortable. However, we will ask you to verify who you are via audio. After this point you can use the chat function to communicate in the group if you prefer.
3. If you want to say something in response to someone, please raise a 'virtual hand' or type in the chat sidebar until it is your turn to speak. We can also read out any questions or comments for you. And Cathy/Catherine will bring comments from the chat into the discussion and ask if you would like to expand
4. Do not send private messages to anyone other than the hosts of the group. This is so we are aware of all conversations that are happening.
5. This is a positive online space. If the session is becoming negative or distressing, the hosts will step in.
6. Please keep your phone on silent throughout the session
7. Please feel free to mute the session and take a break from main chat discussion if you need. You can message the hosts privately if you would like to let them know you are doing this.
8. This is a safe space. Members may speak about their own experiences so please do not share sensitive information that others may disclose in the session.
9. If you disclose something of concern in the session, one of the hosts will reach out to you individually.
10. Everyone experiences the world differently. It is okay to have differences, and differing opinions will be treated respectfully. Please respect other people's opinions and how they identify.
11. Please do not swear or use rude language.
12. If you do or say something inappropriate on video, audio or chat, we will remove you from the session and again, reach out to you individually.

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13. Please do not forward on any invites to the session. Only people who have applied and been accepted will be admitted.
14. Make sure that there is nothing in your background that you do not want to be seen by others. You can choose to blur your background or use a virtual background if you prefer

6. Focus Group Possible Questions

You can give multiple answers to each question and you can raise your virtual hand or write comments in the chat in response to what others have said

1. Which environments present sensory challenges to you?
2. Are there any places you particularly avoid/struggle to tolerate because of sensory aspects of the environment?
 - a. *What about the sensory environment makes you avoid/struggle to tolerate these places?*
 - b. *What changes could be made to improve sensory aspects of these environments?*
 - c. *Pick a type of environment and tell me how you would make it better*
3. Are there any places you like going because of sensory aspects of the environment?
 - a. *What about the sensory environment makes you like these places?*
4. What do neurotypical people often not know about sensory processing differences?
5. Anything else you would like to tell us about experience

7. What is a Microsoft Teams Meeting?

For this project we aim to use Microsoft Teams to host our virtual focus groups. This platform works in a similar way to Zoom, and you can choose to use the chat function, video and audio to interact with people throughout the session.

We have chosen to use Teams where possible as it means that the recording of the session will be encrypted and can be stored securely within the University's IT system. The meeting organiser will be able to control who can record the meeting, meaning that you cannot be recorded by other people in the group without your consent.

You will be invited to join the team meeting via a link which may look like this:

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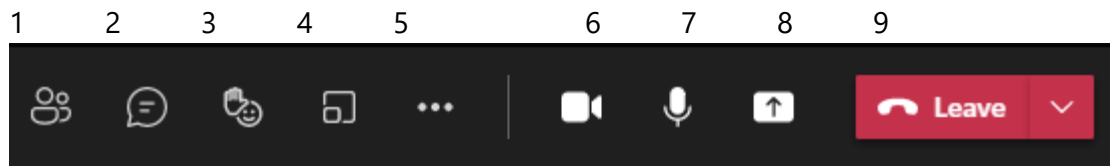
Microsoft Teams meeting

Join on your computer or mobile app

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Click on this link to join the meeting either online or through the desktop app. If you have the app already it should open there automatically. If you do not have a Teams account you should have the option to add your name and join as a guest. At first, you may go to a lobby where a person in the meeting can admit you to the call.

Teams functions in a similar way to other video platforms such as Zoom. In the top corner you should have a toolbar that looks like this:



1. This will show you all the participants in the group
2. This will show you the meeting chat
3. Here you can react to the conversation, such as by raising your hand
4. This one enables people to create breakout rooms
5. This button enables you to use additional actions such as changing your view of the group or adding a background effect. Not all of these options may be available to you as a guest
6. Here you can turn your video on/off. There is also the option to blur your background or add a virtual background
7. Here you can turn your microphone on/off
8. Here you can share your screen to show information. The Microsoft whiteboard is also included here
9. You can use this button to leave the meeting if you wish