

SENSITIVITY QUESTIONNAIRE

Pre-Session Screening

Client Name: _____ Date: _____ Clinician: _____

Directions

Using the following scale, circle the number that best represents your experience.

Statement	1 Completely Disagree	2 Mostly Disagree	3 Somewhat Disagree	4 Neutral	5 Somewhat Agree	6 Mostly Agree	7 Completely Agree
1. As a child, most people considered me as sensitive and/or shy.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
2. Adapting to change is harder for me than it seems to be for others.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
3. I am very affected by harsh, bright lights.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
4. Time pressure and a lot of things to do at once overwhelms me.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
5. I seem to notice much more about the environment than others do.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
6. Other people's moods have a strong impact on me.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
7. If I cannot go at my own pace, I may become disinterested in a task or activity.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
8. I find myself angry or irritated with people more often than I'd like.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
9. I startle easily and am affected by loud noises.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
10. I am strongly affected by pungent odors and coarse, scratchy fabrics.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
11. I'm easily physiologically aroused.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
12. It bothers me when people are late.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
13. I tend to have different values than other people. I value compassion over materialism.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
14. When people say they can 'feel energy' or 'pick up on certain vibrations,' I know exactly what they mean.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
15. Heightened physiological arousal is often too much for me to tolerate, and I feel the need to get away to calm down.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
16. Chaos wears me out. I need calm and order to function well.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
17. My empathy makes it hard for me to set boundaries.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
18. Small talk drains me. I'd rather talk about something deeper or not at all.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
19. I have a problem controlling hostile impulses.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
20. I am at my best in a stable, predictable environment. Constant busyness and change wear me down.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)

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21. I suffer from an autoimmune disorder such as Hashimoto's thyroiditis, pernicious anemia, Addison's disease, Type I diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, multiple sclerosis or Celiac disease.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
22. When there is a lot going on around me, I have trouble staying relaxed and comfortable.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
23. Knowing what would make people more comfortable in a given environment seems almost intuitive to me.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
24. Integrity is very important to me.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
25. Sometimes I NEED to be alone, shut out all sensory input and just chill out.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)

Scoring: Add the circled numbers. Total: _____ (range 25~175). The higher the score, the higher the sensitivity.

About High Sensitivity

A total score of greater than 125 indicates a tendency towards high sensitivity. However, individual scores may vary depending on gender, age, cultural background and other characteristics. Importantly, the score does not represent a precise indication or diagnosis but shows the likely position along a continuum of sensitivity.

The Four Aspects of High Sensitivity (DOES)

Aron summarizes the trait in four aspects. **D ~ Depth of processing.** The foundation of the trait. Highly sensitive people process information more thoroughly, relating what they notice to past experience, whether or not they are aware of doing it. This shows up as strong intuition and as slower, more careful deliberate decisions. Brain imaging finds greater activation in regions associated with deeper processing, including the insula, which integrates inner states, emotion, and outer events.

O ~ Overstimulation. Noticing more means wearing out sooner. Situations that are complicated, intense, or prolonged exhaust highly sensitive people faster than others, and many learn to avoid them. This is a consequence of unusually good sensory processing, not a sensory processing problem, and it should not be confused with disorder.

E ~ Emotional responsivity and empathy. Highly sensitive people react more strongly to both positive and negative experience, and especially to the positive ~ a pattern amplified by a good childhood, which Pluess and Belsky call vantage sensitivity. Imaging shows greater mirror neuron activity in response to others' emotion. The stronger emotion is not a liability; it is what motivates and sustains the deep processing itself.

S ~ Sensing the subtle. Highly sensitive people notice what others miss ~ nonverbal cues, small changes, subtle meaning. This is not about extraordinary sense organs; the trait lives in the brain's more careful processing of sensory information, which is why its formal name is sensory processing sensitivity. When overstimulated, this awareness drops until the person gets a break.

Derived from Aron's HSP Questionnaire (1997) & Richey's HSS (1999). Adapted in Curran, L. (2022). CP Ch. 2. DOES summary from Aron's Author's Note to The Highly Sensitive Person.