

SUPPORTING NEURO- SENSITIVE STUDENTS

A white orchid flower with a green stem and buds, positioned diagonally across the page. The flower is in full bloom, showing its delicate petals and a yellow center with red markings. The stem is green and has several buds at different stages of development. The background is a light, neutral color.

Chatlaanz July
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BACKGROUND

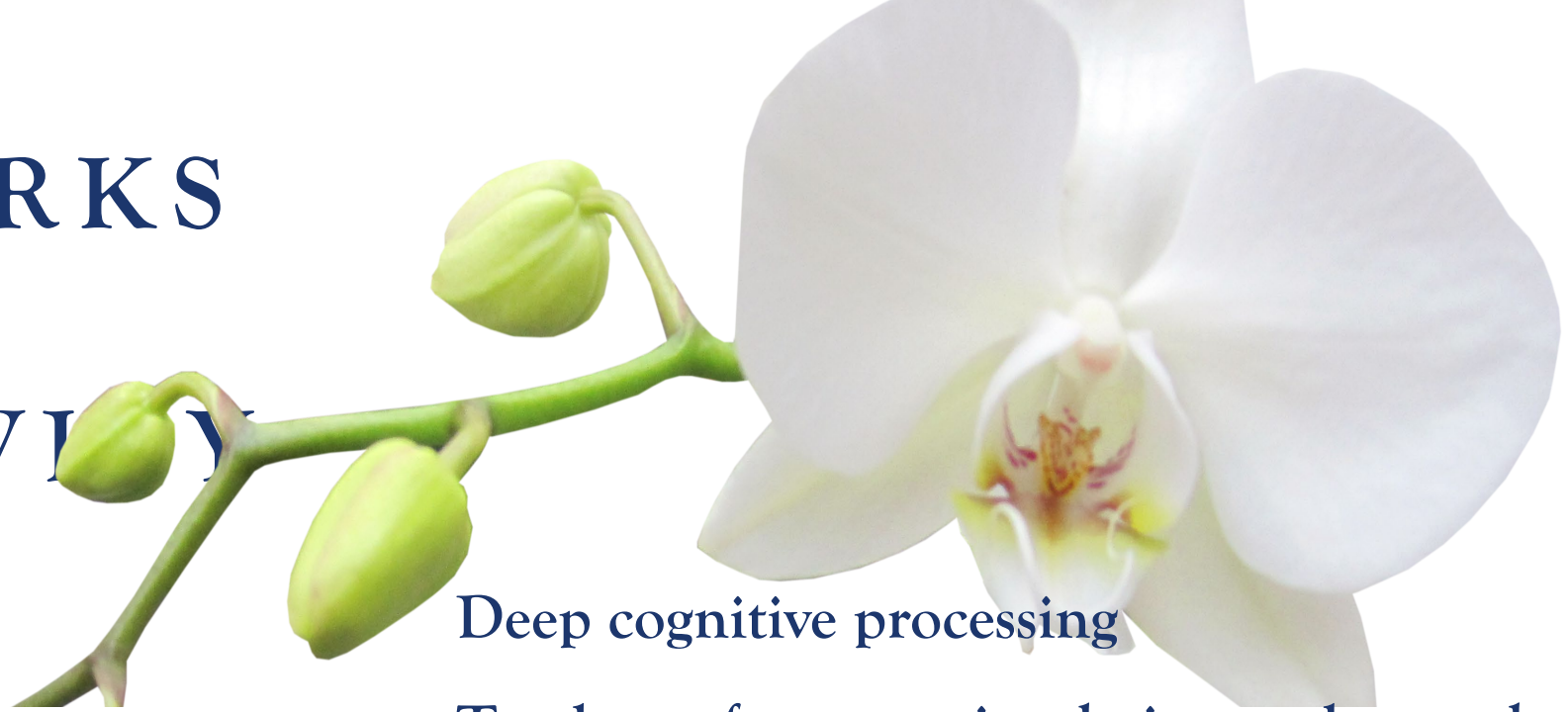


People vary in the way in which they perceive, interpret and react to environmental stimuli (Greven et al., 2019)

Biological advantage to having a highly vigilant minority (Ellis & Boyce, 2008)

Sensitivity continuum: low (30%), medium (40%), high (30%) (Lionetti et al.,

HALLMARKS OF HIGH SENSITIVITY



Deep cognitive processing

Tendency for over-stimulation and overwhelm

Emotional connection with information

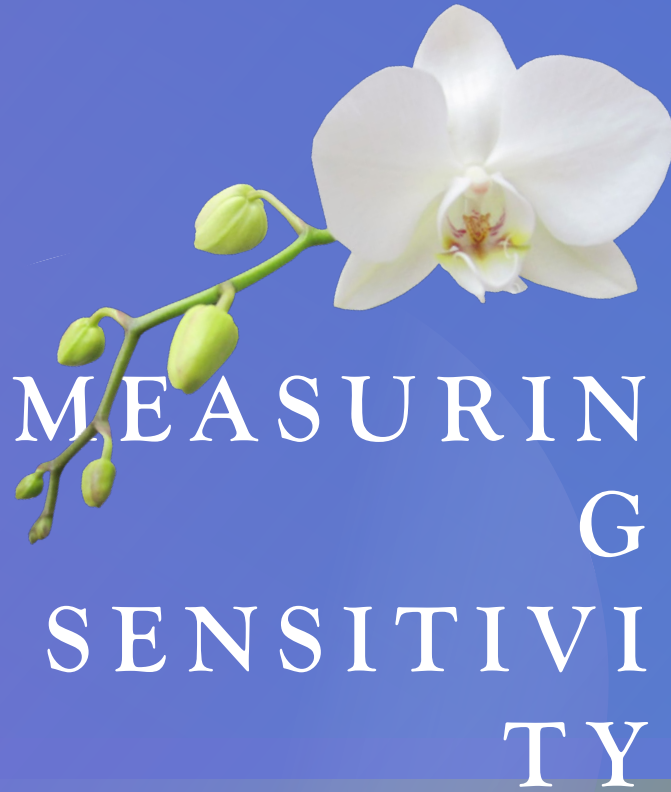
Empathy

Notice environmental subtleties

Tendency to pause and check in new and novel situations

Minority trait not pathological neuro-diverse condition

Greven et al. (2019)



Highly Sensitive Person Scale, short (HSPS-12)
(Pluess et al., 2020)

Self report, 12 items

Likert Scale 1- 7

1= not at all, 7=extremely

Do you seem to be aware of subtleties in your environment?

Are you bothered by intense stimuli, like loud noises or chaotic scenes?

Do changes in your life shake you up?

DEFICIT VIEWS

Cultural differences in valuing sensitivity

Historically, western cultures tend to view sensitivity negatively

You're too sensitive!

Recent research has identified a number of advantages associated with high sensitivity

ADVANTAGES



High levels of sensitivity have been shown to be associated with many elements useful for learning:

Deep cognitive functioning (Boterburg & Warren 2016; Pluess et al., 2020)

Memory and attention (Acevedo et al., 2017)

Heightened awareness of self and others (Acevedo et al., 2018; Aron et al., 2010)

Giftedness (Mendaglio, 2003)

Heightened connection with tasks that are deemed to be meaningful (Jaeger, 2004)

Fine visual distinctions (Jagiellowicz, 2012)

Conscientiousness (Liss et al. 2005; Aron et al., 2016)

Divergent thinking (Bridges and Schendan, 2019b)

CHALLENGES



Tendency to over-think and over-work

Tendency to feeling overwhelmed when there is a lot going on

Need time to process information

Low sensory thresholds

SUPPORTING NEURO-SENSITIVE STUDENTS



Highly sensitive students:

- value independence in learning

- engage with meaningful tasks and learning

- are often bothered by aspects of their physical learning

environment

Institutions provide education on the Environmental Sensitivity

Provide flexible teaching and learning options, eg: Zoom lecture attendance

Limit group-work and presentations

Provide assessment accommodations

Create a sensitive-friendly environment and have sensitivity ambassadors

Consider establishing levels of sensitivity for students who access academic and disability support

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THANK
YOU

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