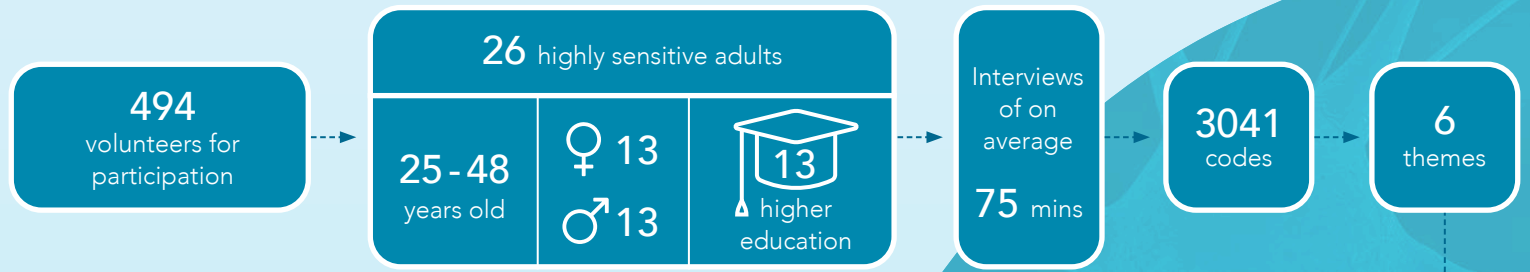


How high sensitivity is experienced by adults

What is high sensitivity?

Everyone is sensitive to environmental stimuli, but the degree to which we are sensitive differs between individuals. Highly sensitive people are more sensitive than most people to both positive and negative environmental information, such as sensory and social stimuli. About 1 in 5 people is a *highly sensitive person (HSP)*. In science, HSP is referred to as *Sensory Processing Sensitivity*.

A scientific study:



1 Emotional responding

- Strong negative emotions
- Strong positive emotions
- Taking more time to process emotions



Very small things, I can intensely enjoy those, yeah. Small things that people often overlook. A breeze through your hair for example, or the sun that shines, or leaves that make that rustling sound when you walk over them in autumn.

2 Relatedness to others

- Noticing or feeling people's emotions
- Attention to others
- Understanding people's emotions and intentions
- Acting on empathy
- Feeling connected with others



When I work together with colleagues for example, I very quickly know like: this colleague likes this, this colleague likes that. So, I often get told that collaborating is nice, because I, of course, think like: oh, that one likes to do things that way, and that one likes to do things that way. But more often than not I forget to think about my own interests.

3 Thinking

- Worrying and ruminating
- Thinking and reflecting a lot
- Need for depth and meaning



I'm very philosophical, I think [...]. When talking about a topic, I like to speak about it in depth, rather than quickly switching from one subject to another.

4 Overstimulation

- Overstimulation by sensory stimuli and social stimuli
- Effect of overstimulation on cognition and mood



I cannot work when the radio is on. At the beginning of Corona, me and my boyfriend both worked downstairs and the radio was on and my boyfriend was on the phone, well I could not do anything. I would look at him like how can you work with the radio on? Well, it is very normal for him, he is absolutely not highly sensitive. So I really need to have silence, else I cannot focus.

5 Perceiving details

- Perceiving a greater quantity of information
- Perceiving information in greater detail



You notice a lot more details of things. For example, my wife showed me a picture this morning, a baby picture, never seen it before. Who is that?, she asks. I say: that's your father. But I've only known her father since he was a grownup. She asked: I hadn't even recognised him. How did you know? Well, his eyes, his ears, I guess... I dunno.

6 Global aspects

- Self and identity
- Feeling stressed
- Feeling tired



HSP really encompasses your entire being.

What else came out of the study:

- The interviewed adults found out they were highly sensitive when they were about 30 years old.
- Most of the HSP characteristics mentioned above were viewed positively, or both positively and negatively. Overstimulation, tiredness, and stress were viewed as exclusively negative.
- What was the effect of finding out you are highly sensitive? Explanation for feelings and behavior, recognition, better coping with negative sides of being highly sensitive, higher level of well-being

30 years old



Like the puzzle pieces fell into place.



design: Jeanne design

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