SENSORY REACTIVITY SPECTRUM

DOMAIN 1: SENSORY & EMOTIONAL PROCESSING

SIGNAL ⚠️

Heightened sensitivity to noise, movement, and visual density can overload cognitive capacity when exposure is continuous and unbuffered.

TYPICAL EXPERIENCES
"AFTER A DAY OF CAMERA-ON MEETINGS MY BRAIN JUST STOPS WORKING." / "NOISE AND VISUAL MOVEMENT DRAIN ME FASTER THAN THE TASK ITSELF."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Camera-optional as default (not available upon request—standard practice)
2. Provide quiet zones for deep work (designated spaces, not shared open areas)
3. Eliminate mandatory open-office presence for focus-critical tasks
4. Treat sensory tools as performance supports (headphones, tinted screens, fidgets = standard equipment)
5. Signal high-density contexts in advance (calendar tags: "high sensory load meeting")

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – NERO™ MODEL

1 **Notice & Exhale** – Recognize overload moment, slow breath to 4-count inhale/6-count exhale

2 **Reorient** –Shift attention to one relevant stimulus (close extra tabs, turn toward one speaker)

3 **Organize** – Choose single next action based on current capacity (write it down, do it, or defer it)

When the environment fits, focus becomes effortless. �””

Alexandra Robuste

EMOTIONAL PROCESSING TEMPO

DOMAIN 1: SENSORY & EMOTIONAL PROCESSING

SIGNAL ⚠️

Emotional insight often arrives after the moment, especially under pressure, making real-time responses less accurate.

TYPICAL EXPERIENCES
"PEOPLE ASK HOW I FEEL, BUT I ONLY KNOW HOURS LATER." / "IN THE MOMENT I CAN'T ACCESS HOW I ACTUALLY FEEL."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Separate emotional check-ins from decision-making (different meetings, different purposes)
2. Offer follow-up channels (Slack thread "delayed responses" = ok)
3. Frame delayed replies as valid processing style (explicitly name in team norms)
4. Don't require immediate emotional reactions after conflict (24h pause as standard)
5. Build pause space into emotional conversations (schedule Part 2 before ending Part 1)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – SLOW THE MOMENT

1 **Pause** – Name the absence of clarity aloud or internally ("I don't have clarity yet")

2 **Return** – Set specific return time (calendar invite, not vague "later")

3 **Respond** – Answer after integration, referencing the pause ("After thinking this through...")

Some people don't feel less — they feel later. "

EMOTIONAL ABSORPTION

SIGNAL ⚠️

Strong empathic resonance can blur emotional boundaries and create exhaustion even without active engagement.

TYPICAL EXPERIENCES
"I LEAVE MEETINGS FEELING EVERYTHING EVERYONE FELT." / "EVEN LISTENING DRAINS ME EMOTIONALLY."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Make emotional responsibility explicit (regulation is not implicitly shared)
2. Reduce constant co-regulation demands (meetings & collab. work)
3. Limit exposure to highly emotional settings (max 2 emotionally dense meetings per day)
4. Use written/async formats for emotional topics (Loom video vs live call for heavy feedback)
5. Schedule decompression windows after intense interactions (15min blocked calendar time immediately after)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – RESET LANGUAGE™

1 **Identify Your Reset Language** – Choose regulation method from five types: movement, cognitive structure, touch, sound, spatial change (different room, outdoors)

2 **Regulate Before Responding** – Apply chosen reset until emotional intensity drops (minimum 5min, track your baseline return time)

3 **Respond with Separation** – Engage from grounded state, checking: "Is this mine to carry?"

Empathy is not carrying everyone else's feelings. ❞

Alexandra Robuste

RECOVERY TIME SENSITIVITY

SIGNAL ⚠️

Some nervous systems require extended time to return to baseline after activation, especially following social or emotional load.

TYPICAL EXPERIENCES
"ONE HARD MEETING CAN COST ME THE REST OF THE DAY." / "I NEED MORE TIME TO RESET THAN PEOPLE ASSUME."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Schedule explicit recovery buffers after intense interactions (block 30min post-meeting in calendar)
2. Don't stack high-stakes conversations (minimum 1hr between emotionally demanding meetings)
3. Offer lighter tasks after intense engagement (post-1:1 = admin work)
4. Treat recovery as performance component (include in project timelines: task time + regulation time)
5. Factor regulation time into workload expectations (deadlines account for reset capacity, not just output speed)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – ENERGY-FOCUS METHOD™

1 **Assess Focus Zone** – Check current energy and attention before acting (use 1-10 scale for both)

2 **Align Priority** – Keep 1-3 priorities in active focus, defer or track others externally (parking lot doc, not active mental load)

3 **Protect Focus** – Filter interruptions using criteria: urgent + important only, rest batched for low-energy window

Recovery is not a luxury after the work; it is part of the work. 🟦🟦

Alexandra Robuste

PREDICTIVE SENSORY ANTICIPATION

SIGNAL ⚠️

Knowing what sensory and emotional load to expect reduces pre-activation stress and stabilizes regulation.

TYPICAL EXPERIENCES
"SURPRISES THROW ME MORE THAN THE CONTENT ITSELF." / "NOT KNOWING WHAT'S COMING DRAINS ME."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Share agendas, formats, participation expectations in advance (< 48h)
2. Signal interaction intensity and social demand ("High-energy brainstorm, 90min, 8 people")
3. Avoid last-minute changes (or explicitly label as "regulation disruption" when unavoidable)
4. Offer participation choices (camera use, speaking roles, contribution format all optional)
5. Preview location, setup, sensory conditions ("Open office space, 12 people, natural light, moderate noise")

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – PRE-VENT™ FRAMEWORK

1 **Recognize Early Signals** – Scan upcoming environment for sensory demands before entering (noise level, lighting, social density, pace)

2 **Adjust Proactively** – Modify one variable in advance (bring headphones, choose seat near exit, set timer for breaks)

3 **Stay Regulated While Engaged** – Anchor attention in present moment using body awareness (feet on floor, breath count) instead of anticipatory stress

Predictability is how safety is created for some nervous systems. 🖊️

AFFECTIVE FLUIDITY

DOMAIN 1: SENSORY & EMOTIONAL PROCESSING

SIGNAL ⚠️

One's own tone may shift with context, energy, and perceived safety while intention and commitment remain stable.

TYPICAL EXPERIENCES
"PEOPLE THINK I CHANGED MY MIND BECAUSE MY TONE CHANGED." / "MY ENERGY CHANGES, MY INTENT DOESN'T"

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Separate tone from commitment when evaluating reliability (enthusiasm ≠ follow-through)
2. Prioritize clarity and follow-through over visible excitement (track deliverables, not energy display)
3. Eliminate forced positivity norms (neutral affect = acceptable)
4. Use written recaps to stabilize understanding (post-meeting doc: decisions, next steps, ownership)
5. Invite explicit commitment statements ("I'm in" or "I need time to decide"–no guessing from tone)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – RAM™

1 **Regulation** – Stabilize emotional shift by slowing interaction (pause conversation, take breath, create internal space)

2 **Awareness** – Observe and name the emotional change without judging ("I'm feeling defensive" or "My energy just dropped")

3 **Meaning** – Form response after emotional movement settles, checking if tone reflects actual position

Tone changes reflect context, not inconsistency.

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Alexandra Robuste

BODY SIGNAL CLARITY

DOMAIN 1: SENSORY & EMOTIONAL PROCESSING

SIGNAL ⚠️

Internal body signals are often detected late, delaying boundary-setting and increasing overload risk.

> **TYPICAL EXPERIENCES**
> "I ONLY REALIZE I'M DONE WHEN I CRASH." / "MY BODY WARNS ME AFTER IT'S ALREADY TOO MUCH."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Build brief body check-ins into workday (3x daily, 2min: morning, midday, end-of-day as team ritual)
2. Allow explicit naming of capacity changes without penalty ("I'm at 60% today" = accepted communication)
3. Don't punish late boundaries (respond with "Thanks for telling me")
4. Normalize posture shifts, camera changes, movement as regulation (standing during calls, camera off for thinking time)
5. Offer grounding practices as team routine (5min breathwork at meeting start, optional participation)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – 4R FRAMEWORK™

1 **Rest** – Treat physical/emotional signals (tension, fatigue, agitation) as early information, take brief pause before continuing

2 **Rhythm & Relevance** – Align tasks with current energy patterns and importance (high-capacity work in peak hours, admin in low-energy windows)

3 **Realignment** – Adjust workload based on body signals (reduce scope, extend deadline, or delegate one task)

Bodies usually know long before calendars do. 🙶

Alexandra Robuste

FEEDBACK RESPONSE ACTIVATION

SIGNAL ⚠️

Feedback can trigger strong nervous system activation that blocks comprehension until regulation is restored.

TYPICAL EXPERIENCES
"AFTER THE FIRST CRITICAL POINT I CAN'T HEAR THE REST." / "I SHUT DOWN BEFORE I CAN UNDERSTAND."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Provide written feedback first (email 24h before conversation)
2. Separate feedback delivery from performance ratings (different meetings, different documentation)
3. Allow time between feedback and discussion (minimum 24h processing window)
4. Focus on observable behavior, not inferred intent ("You missed three deadlines" not "You don't care")
5. Invite follow-up conversations after clarity arrives (schedule Part 2 at end of Part 1)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – SBI-CARE™ FRAMEWORK

1 **Situation & Behavior** – State situation and observable behavior before interpretation ("In yesterday's meeting [**S**], when you interrupted twice [**B**], the team stopped contributing [**I**]")

2 **Clarify & Acknowledge –** Perspective and context are explored before responding, allowing emotional activation to settle and understanding to increase.

3 **Recommend & Encourage** – Shift to learning and next steps (concrete action + growth framing: "Next time, try X" + "This skill develops with practice")

Feedback lands when regulation allows presence.

❝❝

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EXPRESSIVE NEUTRALITY

SIGNAL ⚠️

Inner engagement and commitment may not be visible externally, leading to misinterpretation of motivation or care.

TYPICAL EXPERIENCES
"PEOPLE THINK I DON'T CARE BECAUSE I'M NOT ANIMATED." / "MY FACE DOESN'T SHOW HOW MUCH I'M THINKING."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Decouple engagement from visible expressiveness (evaluate substance, not display)
2. Ask directly about understanding or alignment (don't infer from tone, facial expression, energy)
3. Offer multiple contribution channels (written, async, small group–not only verbal/live)
4. Evaluate output quality, reliability, follow-through (substance)
5. Don't reinforce performative expressiveness as competence standard (quiet = capable)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – LADDER OF INFERENCE

1 **Observe** – Consider only observable facts first (what was said, what was done–not how it looked)

2 **Separate Interpretation** – Pause assumptions, distinguish observation from meaning ("neutral face" ≠ "disengaged")

3 **Verify Meaning** – Confirm engagement through direct questions ("Does this approach work for you?") or outcomes (deliverable quality, deadline met)

Quiet faces often hide the loudest thinking.

"

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SENSORY-EMOTION COUPLING

DOMAIN 1: SENSORY & EMOTIONAL PROCESSING

SIGNAL ⚠️

Emotional state is tightly linked to sensory conditions, which can amplify mood shifts under strain.

TYPICAL EXPERIENCES
"IN LOUD ROOMS I FEEL IRRITABLE AND SLOW." / "THE SPACE CHANGES HOW I FEEL."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Treat environment as performance design variable (not background)
2. Allow personal sensory adjustments without stigma (headphones, lighting changes = legitimate tools)
3. Move key conversations to low-stimulation settings (quiet room for 1:1s, not open floor)
4. Adjust environmental factors before judging attitude or motivation (check context first: "Is this the space, or the person?")
5. Normalize regulation tools as standard equipment (noise-canceling headphones = laptop)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – SPACE-STATE CHECK

1 **Notice the Emotional Shift** – Recognize when mood or regulation drops suddenly (irritability, slowness, tension rising)

2 **Scan the Space** – Check one environmental variable at a time (noise level, lighting, visual clutter, temperature)

3 **Adjust One Thing** – Change one variable before changing your response (headphones on, lights dimmed, move to different room)

Many attitudes are just architecture.

❞

Alexandra Robuste

ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL URGE

DOMAIN 1: SENSORY & EMOTIONAL PROCESSING

SIGNAL ⚠️

Stable structures conserve cognitive bandwidth, while constant change increases sensory and emotional load.

TYPICAL EXPERIENCES
"WHEN EVERYTHING CHANGES AT ONCE I CAN'T THINK." / "INSTABILITY DRAINS MY CAPACITY."

DESIGN RESPONSES

1. Keep structural anchors stable during change periods (define constants: meeting cadence, reporting structure, core team)
2. Communicate changes early with clear rationale (minimum 2 weeks notice + explanation of why)
3. Phase rollouts to avoid simultaneous disruption (change one at a time)
4. Involve affected individuals in planning adjustments (gather input before rollout, not after complaints)
5. Avoid cosmetic reorganizations that increase complexity (change only when functionally necessary)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – STOP TECHNIQUE

1 **Stop & Breathe** – Pause the impulse to immediately fix or control (take one slow breath before acting)

2 **Observe** – Recognize urge as stress response, not required action (notice tension and thoughts without following them)

3 **Proceed** – Choose action intentionally based on relevance and capacity (ask: "Does this actually need to change right now?")

Stability supports thinking.

Alexandra Robuste

RELATIONAL REJECTION SENSITIVITY

SIGNAL ⚠️

Ambiguous social signals can trigger rapid emotional escalation and threat interpretation.

TYPICAL EXPERIENCES
"SILENCE MAKES ME ASSUME I DID SOMETHING WRONG." / "I READ DANGER INTO PAUSES."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Use explicit wording instead of implied meaning (state clearly, don't hint or assume inference)
2. Normalize clarification requests without penalty (frame questions as competence: "Good catch–what did you need to know?")
3. Build response-latency norms into team culture (silence = processing time, not avoidance or anger)
4. Provide context for delays ("Swamped until Friday, will reply then")
5. Separate task feedback from relational signals deliberately (performance discussion ≠ relationship assessment)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – RSD CIRCUIT BREAKER™

1 **Ground** – Regulate body before creating meaning (use 4-7-8 breathing, cold water on wrists, feet-on-floor grounding)

2 **Decouple** – Separate event from interpretation (ambiguous input = incomplete data, not rejection)

3 **Recode** – Choose deliberate interpretation and response after activation decreases (ask: "What else could this mean?")

Safety repairs faster than feedback.

"

EMOTIONAL MASKING EXHAUSTION

SIGNAL ⚠️

Sustained emotional masking creates invisible fatigue and depletes regulatory capacity over time.

TYPICAL EXPERIENCES
"PEOPLE THINK I'M FINE, BUT IT COSTS ME EVERYTHING." / "LOOKING OKAY IS EXHAUSTING."

DESIGN RESPONSES

1. Normalize honest state reporting without penalty (valued feedback)
2. Reduce forced positivity or constant emotional performance norms (neutral = professionally acceptable)
3. Separate evaluation from emotional check-ins (disclosure ≠ performance review consequence)
4. Offer simple state scales instead of narrative disclosure (1-10 energy + focus scale vs story explanation)
5. Create safe mask-off spaces or moments (Friday afternoons = low-performance-expectation window)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – INM™ NEEDS CHECK

1 **Identify the Mismatch** – Review situation through needs lens using INM Needs Wheel: identify which psychological, relational, or environmental need is unmet and driving masking behavior

2 **Adjust Structure Instead of Effort** – Introduce one structural change to reduce performance demand (clearer expectations, reduced social ambiguity, permission for neutral expression)

3 **Align Contribution with Capacity –** Shift engagement from impression management to value delivery in sustainable way (energy returns whithout constant self-monitoring)

Looking fine can be unpaid emotional labour.

"

INFO–NOISE CONFUSION

SIGNAL ⚠️

Sensory input and information streams merge under load, reducing clarity before facts are processed.

TYPICAL EXPERIENCES
"WHEN EVERYTHING TALKS AT ONCE I LOSE THE THREAD." / "I CAN'T SEPARATE SIGNAL FROM NOISE."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Separate information delivery from discussion time (<24h before)
2. Reduce parallel communication channels during complex topics (one channel per topic: Slack for quick questions, email for detailed updates)
3. Facilitate turn-taking to avoid overlap (use hand-raising, chat queue, or round-robin structure)
4. Summarize decisions and key points explicitly (end meetings with written recap: decisions, actions, owners)
5. Allow brief exits when overload rises (normalize "I need 5 minutes" without explanation required)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – POWER OF THREE

1 **Reduce** – Condense all incoming information to three relevant points or decisions (park everything else in "later" doc)

2 **Structure** – Order the three elements into clear sequence or priority (number them: 1, 2, 3)

3 **Execute** – Choose one next action from the three priorities (do it now, or schedule it specifically)

Precision thinkers suffer in loud systems.

"

ATTENTION MODULATION

DOMAIN 2: COGNITIVE & TEMPORAL REGULATION

SIGNAL ⚠️

Attention regulation describes how focus is sustained, shifted, or restored under changing internal or environmental demands.

TYPICAL EXPERIENCES
"I CAN FOCUS DEEPLY ON ANALYSIS BUT MY ATTENTION DROPS IN LONG MEETINGS." / "MY FOCUS DEPENDS ON THE SITUATION, NOT EFFORT."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Match task types to attention profiles deliberately (analysis work ≠ meeting work–assign accordingly)
2. Reduce competing sensory/informational input during focus-critical phases (close Slack during deep work windows)
3. Structure meetings with clear agendas and defined scope (send agenda 24h prior, stick to 3 topics max)
4. Allow planned attention resets between cognitively different tasks (15min buffer between strategy call and execution work)
5. Treat attention as condition-dependent resource in workload planning

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – FOCUS TIER MODEL™

1 **Identify the Current Tier** – Assess attention in relation to current capacity using three tiers: stabilization (regulate first), execution (do the task), strategic thinking (big picture). Choose honestly.

2 **Reduce Competing Input** – Remove non-essential stimuli or parallel demands (close extra tabs, turn off notifications, choose one focus area)

3 **Re-engage with Clear Scope** – Return to work through clearly defined next step that matches available capacity (if Tier 1, regulate; if Tier 2, execute one task; if Tier 3, think strategically)

Attention follows conditions, not character.

HYPERFOCUS TENDENCY

DOMAIN 2: COGNITIVE & TEMPORAL REGULATION

SIGNAL ⚠️

Prolonged narrow focus can produce high output while reducing awareness of time, physical needs, and competing responsibilities.

TYPICAL EXPERIENCES
"I LOSE HOURS WHEN I GET INTO SOMETHING I LIKE." / "I FORGET TIME AND MY BODY WHEN I'M FOCUSED."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Define explicit time boundaries around deep focus periods (block 2hr max, not open-ended)
2. Schedule clear stopping points in advance (calendar alert 15min before end time)
3. Pair extended focus with planned recovery or low-demand phases (post-deep-work = admin, not another heavy task)
4. Evaluate outcomes rather than hours worked (quality, not time spent)
5. Protect calendars from critical meetings immediately after deep focus (minimum 30min transition buffer)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – TIMEBOXING

1 **Define the Focus Window** – Set clear start and end time before entering deep focus (use timer: 90min or 2hr maximum)

2 **Externalize Stop Signals** – Use timers, calendar blocks, or external cues to interrupt hyperfocus gently (phone alarm, colleague check-in, scheduled break)

3 **Close and Reorient** – End session with brief review (what got done?) and intentional next step (what's next, and when?). Widen attention deliberately to restore balance.

Focus becomes sustainable when it has borders.

DISTRACTION SENSITIVITY

DOMAIN 2: COGNITIVE & TEMPORAL REGULATION

SIGNAL ⚠️

Sensitivity to external input increases context switching and fragments progress, particularly in notification-heavy environments.

TYPICAL EXPERIENCES
"EVERY NOTIFICATION PULLS ME OUT OF THE TASK." / "I CAN'T STAY WITH ONE THING WHEN ALERTS KEEP COMING."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Reduce notification-driven workflows (turn off non-urgent alerts, batch check email 3x daily)
2. Establish explicit single-task blocks instead of encouraging parallel work (90min focus blocks labeled "Deep Work–no interruptions")
3. Simplify digital and physical workspaces (close unnecessary tabs, clear desk of visual clutter)
4. Set team norms that discourage multitasking as default (meeting norm: one topic at a time, no laptop multitasking)
5. Clarify stimulus-control practices socially (focus blocks = no Slack)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – POMODORO METHOD

1 **Set a Short Focus Interval** – Structure work into short, clearly defined periods (25min standard, adjust to 15-45min based on task)

2 **Protect the Focus Window** – During interval, write down distractions for later instead of following them (keep "distraction parking lot" doc open)

3 **Reset Through a Planned Break** – Take 5min break after each interval (walk, stretch, different room) before starting next cycle

Distraction reflects load, not willpower.

Alexandra Robuste

PROCESSING SPEED VARIABILITY

DOMAIN 2: COGNITIVE & TEMPORAL REGULATION

SIGNAL ⚠️

Processing speed varies with cognitive load and stress, so speed alone does not reliably reflect understanding or competence.

TYPICAL EXPERIENCES
"WHEN COGNITIVE LOAD INCREASES, MY CLARITY DROPS." / "I NEED TIME TO PROCESS WITHOUT OVERLOAD."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Allow response latency for complex or high-stakes topics (normalize "I need time to think" without penalty)
2. Separate information intake from response expectations (send materials, discuss 24h later)
3. Provide pre-reads so processing starts before discussion (< 48h)
4. Confirm shared understanding explicitly before finalizing decisions (ask "What did we just decide?" and document it)
5. Don't reward pace when it compromises clarity, accuracy, or decision quality (evaluate outcome, not speed)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – HOLISTIC REGULATION MODEL™

1 **Regulate the Body** – Treat changes in thinking speed as nervous system signals first. Use breath (4-7-8 pattern), posture shift, or movement to stabilize phys. activation before pushing for clarity.

2 **Stabilize Emotional Tone** – Acknowledge emotional state behind urgency or slowdown without judgment (notice: "I feel pressured to answer fast" or "I'm shutting down"). Reduce emotional stress.

3 **Re-engage Cognitively** – Once body and emotions are settled, adjust tasks and pacing intentionally (break question into smaller parts, request written format, or defer to tomorrow)

Speed is a poor proxy for insight.

Alexandra Robuste

COGNITIVE PACING PREFERENCE

DOMAIN 2: COGNITIVE & TEMPORAL REGULATION

SIGNAL ⚠️

Mismatch between thinking rhythm and imposed tempo reduces clarity, timing, and contribution quality.

> **TYPICAL EXPERIENCES**
> "ASYNCHRONOUS WORK FITS ME BETTER." / "FAST OR SLOW PACE LOWERS MY QUALITY."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Enable flexible pacing structures (offer async contribution options)
2. Separate rapid-response tasks from deep-thinking work (urgent Slack vs strategic planning–different time blocks)
3. Allow asynchronous contribution formats where reflection improves clarity (written responses for complex decisions)
4. Align task types with pacing strengths (fast processors = real-time problem-solving; slow processors = research and analysis)
5. Evaluate contribution by outcome and insight quality, not speed of response (deliverable excellence over reaction time)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – STRENGTH-BASED MAPPING™

1 **Map Strength, Energy, and Friction** – Identify cognitive strengths (where you think best), energy rhythms (when you're sharpest), and recurring friction points (what drains you).

2 **Align Roles with Task Clusters** – Tasks are matched to strengths and working styles rather than roles alone, reducing overload and improving flow. (e.g.: if you think best alone, go offline)

3 **Recalibrate Regularly** – Review small adjustments monthly so alignment evolves with changing demands and capacity (quarterly review: what's working? what's draining?)

Forcing pace loses intelligence.

Alexandra Robuste

COGNITIVE TRANSITION AGILITY

DOMAIN 2: COGNITIVE & TEMPORAL REGULATION

SIGNAL ⚠️

Switching between cognitive modes carries a high energetic cost that accumulates across fragmented schedules.

TYPICAL EXPERIENCES
"ONE MEETING IN THE MIDDLE OF DEEP WORK RUINS MY MOMENTUM." / "SWITCHING TASKS EXHAUSTS ME."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Batch tasks by cognitive mode (group tasks, reduce mode switching)
2. Reduce forced context switching by protecting uninterrupted work blocks (no meetings during 9-11am deep work window)
3. Add intentional transition buffers between cognitively different activities (15min between strategic meeting and execution task)
4. Signal mode changes clearly (calendar labels: "Deep Work," "Collaboration," "Admin"–know what's coming)
5. Treat transitions as legitimate work time, not invisible overhead (include transition time in project estimates)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – TRANSITION BUFFER METHOD

1 **Close the Previous Task** – Before switching, intentionally close prior activity with short written note capturing stopping point (prevents open cognitive loops)

2 **Insert a Transition Buffer** – Take brief reset through movement (walk around block) or breathing (2min box breathing). Nervous system disengages from prior mode.

3 **Enter the Next Task Intentionally** – Start next task with clearly defined first step (write it down before beginning), allowing focus to rebuild without mental carryover

Every switch has a cost.

TEMPORAL ORIENTATION

DOMAIN 2: COGNITIVE & TEMPORAL REGULATION

SIGNAL ⚠️

Temporal orientation reflects when something feels relevant; mismatches with planning horizons reduce alignment and contribution.

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Clarify time-horizon expectations explicitly (next-week or quarter?)
2. Align tasks with individual temporal strengths where possible (near-term thinkers = execution; long-term thinkers = strategy)
3. Translate long-term goals into near-term anchors (break 5-year vision into quarterly milestones with concrete actions)
4. Separate vision-setting from execution sessions (strategic planning meeting ≠ sprint planning meeting)
5. Don't penalize differences in temporal orientation (variation, not deficiency–both timeframes needed)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – PARETO PRINCIPLE (80/20)

1 **Identify the 20% That Drives Progress** – Review tasks to find small number of actions creating most impact (which 2-3 tasks actually move the needle?)

2 **Prioritize High-Impact Timing** – Place high-value tasks into periods of strongest focus or decision capacity (strategic thinking in peak energy hours, not end-of-day)

3 **Reduce Low-Impact Effort** – Simplify, delegate, or postpone low-return activities (say no to meetings that don't align with priority outcomes)

Brains keep time differently.

TIME ESTIMATION ACCURACY

DOMAIN 2: COGNITIVE & TEMPORAL REGULATION

SIGNAL ⚠️

Over- or underestimation of task duration destabilizes planning despite strong effort and intent.

TYPICAL EXPERIENCES "I WAS SURE THIS WOULD TAKE AN HOUR." / "MY ESTIMATES ARE ALWAYS OFF."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Use historical time data to ground estimates (track actual time spent, compare to estimates, adjust future planning)
2. Break work into clearly defined units (estimate "write 3 pages" not "finish report"–components over abstractions)
3. Include explicit buffers in planning (add 25% buffer as standard)
4. Review estimated vs actual durations regularly (monthly retro: where were we off? what patterns emerge?)
5. Treat estimation as ongoing calibration process (variance informs system improvement, not individual evaluation)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – EISENHOWER MATRIX

1 **Separate Urgent from Important** – Categorize tasks by urgency and importance before estimating time (use 2x2 grid: urgent/not urgent, important/not important)

2 **Estimate Within Priority Context** – Estimate time based on true importance, not perceived pressure (strategic tasks get realistic space, not optimistic compression)

3 **Execute According to Priority** – Work follows priority order, not urgency signals (do important-not-urgent first, reducing reactive time distortion)

Estimation errors are data, not flaws.

MENTAL FATIGUE THRESHOLD

DOMAIN 2: COGNITIVE & TEMPORAL REGULATION

SIGNAL ⚠️

Performance can collapse suddenly after sustained effort, making push-through norms counterproductive.

> **TYPICAL EXPERIENCES**
> "AFTER A CERTAIN POINT EVERYTHING TAKES TWICE AS LONG." / "I HIT A WALL SUDDENLY."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Define maximum sustainable focus durations (90min deep work blocks)
2. Schedule recovery before depletion occurs (break after 90min, not when you crash)
3. Normalize stopping work when early fatigue signals appear (treat as data: "I'm slowing down" = valid stopping point)
4. Avoid long, unbroken cognitive blocks (insert 15min breaks every 90min minimum)
5. Alternate high- and low-load tasks intentionally (deep analysis followed by admin, not back-to-back strategy sessions)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – SPOON BUDGETING THEORY

1 **Count Your Spoons** – Assess daily energy budget honestly each morning (e.g. 18 spoons). Factors reducing spoons: poor sleep, emotional strain, sensory overload, high cognitive load. Capacity?

2 **Budget Your Spoons –** Assign costs: High-spoon tasks (3-4): high-stakes meetings, deep focus, social events. Medium (2): routine meetings, admin. Low (1): simple execution, solo work.

3 **Protect & Restore –** Stop before zero (keep 1-2 reserve). Restore through rest, sensory regulation, low-demand connection, energizing movement. Track draining tasks weekly.

Brains are not endless batteries.

WORKING MEMORY STABILITY

DOMAIN 2: COGNITIVE & TEMPORAL REGULATION

SIGNAL ⚠️

Holding multiple elements in mind becomes unreliable under load, increasing errors and reducing execution stability.

TYPICAL EXPERIENCES
"I LOSE TRACK WHEN TOO MUCH IS SAID VERBALLY." / "I CAN'T HOLD ALL STEPS IN MY HEAD."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Externalize information consistently (write things down immediately–don't trust memory under load)
2. Reduce reliance on memory-dependent execution (embed visible cues: checklist on wall, template with steps)
3. Provide written summaries after discussions (send meeting notes <1 hr)
4. Avoid multi-step verbal instructions without visual support (write down steps or send follow-up message)
5. Chunk information deliberately (group related items: max 3-4 chunks at once)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – 2-MINUTE RULE

1 **Assess Immediately –** When new information arrives, decide instantly: does this take less than 2 minutes? (prevents accumulation in working memory)

2 **Do It Now or Defer It –** If under 2 minutes, complete immediately; if over 2 minutes, externalize to specific location (calendar, task list, note)

3 **Clear Mental Space** – Once actioned or deferred, consciously release it from active attention (brain knows it's captured, stops holding it)

Memory is not a filing cabinet.

THOUGHT PATTERN DENSITY

DOMAIN 2: COGNITIVE & TEMPORAL REGULATION

SIGNAL ⚠️

Multiple parallel thought streams can reduce clarity and slow decision-making under pressure.

TYPICAL EXPERIENCES
"EVERYTHING FEELS URGENT AT ONCE." / "MY HEAD FEELS CROWDED."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Limit concurrent tasks (work on 1-3 active projects max, rest "later" list)
2. Address one decision at a time (decide A, then B—not A and B simultaneously)
3. Separate ideation from decision sessions (brainstorm meeting ≠ decision meeting)
4. Externalize non-urgent threads (keep "good ideas for later" doc so you can let them go mentally)
5. Timebox cognitive thinning intentionally (Friday afternoon = close open loops, reduce mental tabs)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – MIND MAPPING

1 **Externalize the Core Topic** – Define single central idea or question first (write it in center of page or top of doc)

2 **Group Related Thoughts** – Cluster ideas around themes instead of following sequentially (use branches or bullet categories, not linear list)

3 **Identify the Primary Path** – Select one branch as next action or focus area (circle it, ignore others for now). Cognitive load decreases through clear direction.

Too many open tabs hide priorities.

INITIATION VS. TASK COMPLETION MOMENTUM

DOMAIN 2: COGNITIVE & TEMPORAL REGULATION

SIGNAL ⚠️

Starting and finishing require different effort; momentum often drops before completion, leaving work mentally open.

> **TYPICAL EXPERIENCES**
> "STARTING TAKES FOREVER." "TASKS SIT AT EIGHTY PERCENT DONE." "FINISHING IS HARDER THAN BEGINNING."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Define completion criteria clearly (write downwhat does "done" look like)
2. Use visible progress markers (cross off checklist, visual progress bar)
3. Break tasks into clearly defined entry points (first step = 5min action, not "understand entire project")
4. Close loops explicitly (mark tasks complete, send "this is done" message, archive project folder)
5. Treat finishing as distinct cognitive task (separate "wrap-up session" in calendar from "work session")

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – BODY DOUBLING

1 **External Presence** – Work alongside another person physically or virtually during final task phase (Zoom co-working session, coffee shop, colleague in room; platforms: flown, meetup, focusmate).

2 **Define the Finish Line** – Make completion point explicit and visible (write "Done = X submitted and Y archived")

3 **Close the Loop** – Intentionally finish and mark complete (check box, send completion email, celebrate closure). Reduces cognitive residue and restores mental energy.

Endings require structure, not pressure.

INFO STRUCTURING LOAD

DOMAIN 2: COGNITIVE & TEMPORAL REGULATION

SIGNAL ⚠️

Information often arrives unstructured under load, making prioritization and sequencing difficult during execution.

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Use shared templates and visual canvases to impose structure early (use template on screen: Miro board, Google doc outline)
2. Group topics visibly in real time during discussions (scribe captures ideas under clear headers as they emerge)
3. Assign clear responsibility for maintaining structure (one person = structure-keeper, everyone else contributes content)
4. Summarize decisions and next steps explicitly (end meeting with written recap: 3 decisions, 5 actions, clear owners)
5. Keep structure stable during execution (don't reorganize mid-project)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – 5W1H FRAMEWORK

1 **Answer the Core Questions** – Structure information by answering: Who, What, When, Where, Why, How (creates immediate organizing frame)

2 **Fill Gaps Visibly** – Identify which questions remain unanswered and mark them explicitly (prevents scattered details from hiding missing structure)

3 **Sequence by Priority** – Order the answers by what matters most for the decision or action (relevance over completeness)

Some minds need maps and different systems.

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RETROSPECTIVE CLARITY

DOMAIN 2: COGNITIVE & TEMPORAL REGULATION

SIGNAL ⚠️

Understanding and learning often emerge after events once cognitive load decreases and reflection becomes possible.

TYPICAL EXPERIENCES
"I ONLY UNDERSTAND WHAT HAPPENED LATER." / "CLARITY COMES AFTER THE MOMENT."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Schedule short debriefs regularly (15min Friday retro: what worked?)
2. Use simple, consistent reflection questions (same 3 questions every time: What happened? What worked? What's next?)
3. Capture learnings in writing (don't rely on memory—document insights in shared doc)
4. Separate emotional processing from analysis (debrief 24h after event when activation has settled)
5. Revisit events intentionally (quarterly review of past decisions to extract patterns)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – AFTER-ACTION REVIEW (AAR)

1 **Reconstruct the Situation** – Revisit situation after completion, separating what actually happened from immediate impressions or emotional intensity during moment (timeline or bullet points)

2 **Identify What Worked and What Didn't** – Review outcomes and decisions without blame (two columns: "worked well" and "didn't work"—no judgment, just observation)

3 **Extract Forward Learning** – Define one concrete adjustment or insight for future situations (write: "Next time, I'll..." turning hindsight into usable clarity)

Time often reveals what urgency obscures.

MOVEMENT PLANNING FLUENCY

DOMAIN 3: MOTOR & ENERGY RHYTHMS

SIGNAL ⚠️

Planning and sequencing physical actions can require disproportionate effort, especially under complexity or time pressure.

TYPICAL EXPERIENCES
"I KNOW WHAT TO DO, BUT MY BODY DOESN'T FOLLOW SMOOTHLY." / "STARTING COMPLEX PHYSICAL TASKS FEELS HARDER THAN THINKING THEM THROUGH."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Reduce motor complexity in tasks (simplify physical sequences, fewer simultaneous movements)
2. Allow extra time for physical setup (buffer before starts, no rushing)
3. Avoid action-heavy requests under time pressure (separate planning from execution when clock is ticking)
4. Break tasks into explicit physical steps (write down: "1. Open drawer, 2. Take out folder, 3. Place on desk")
5. Treat motor planning as design variable, not motivation issue (adjust task structure, not person's effort)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – MOVEMENT START PROTOCOL

1 **Start With One Physical Action** – Reduce task to single visible movement (open file, stand up, place materials). Beginning with action lowers gap between intention and execution.

2 **Line Up the Next Actions** – Arrange these steps in simple physical order, completing one after another to reduce coordination effort (write sequence if helpful: Step 1 → Step 2 → Step 3)

3 **Keep the Movement Going** – Maintain steady, manageable pace until task gains momentum (don't stop to think between steps–continuity supports execution)

Some people need just one clear physical step at a time.

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MOTOR FATIGUE BUILD-UP

DOMAIN 3: MOTOR & ENERGY RHYTHMS

SIGNAL ⚠️

Repetitive or sustained movements create quiet strain that accumulates over time and reduces performance.

TYPICAL EXPERIENCES
"THE TASK IS EASY, BUT IT DRAINS ME OVER TIME." / "REPETITION WEARS ME DOWN EVEN WHEN NOTHING FEELS HARD."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Rotate motor demands across tasks (alternate typing with phone calls, sitting with standing)
2. Plan physical recovery breaks proactively (10min break every 90min, not when you're already exhausted)
3. Reduce repetitive fine-motor work where possible (use voice-to-text, keyboard shortcuts, automation)
4. Alternate physical and cognitive tasks (follow admin with strategy)
5. Treat fatigue as predictable physiology, not poor resilience (expected pattern, plan around it)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – ULTRADIAN RHYTHM PATTERN

1 **Track Your 90-Minute Cycles –** Notice natural energy peaks/dips occurring in roughly 90-min. intervals throughout the day (ultradian rhythms, not just circadian). Use energy tracking: 1-10

2 **Ride the Wave –** Schedule cognitively demanding work during the rising or peak phase of your cycle; schedule admin, email, or recovery during the trough (work with biology, not against it)

3 **Honor the Trough –** Take intentional 10-20min break at cycle low points instead of pushing through (coffee break, walk, low-demand task–recovery amplifies next peak)

Repetition sends the invoice to the body quietly.

ENERGY–TASK SYNCHRONY

SIGNAL ⚠️

Output quality depends strongly on alignment between task demands and available energy across the day.

> **TYPICAL EXPERIENCES**
> "I'M CAPABLE, JUST NOT AT THIS TIME OF DAY." / "TIMING AFFECTS MY OUTPUT MORE THAN SKILL."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Align demanding tasks with energy peaks (strategic work in morning if that's peak time, admin in afternoon slump)
2. Allow flexible scheduling where possible (treat capacity variation as normal, not accommodation)
3. Avoid high-load tasks in low-energy windows (don't schedule complex decisions at 4pm if energy drops then)
4. Separate availability from peak performance (present ≠ being ready)
5. Encourage energy alignment as norm, not individual preference (team practice: protect morning focus time)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – ENERGY ROI MATRIX

1 **Map Tasks by Energy Cost vs Impact** – Plot tasks on 2x2 matrix: high/low energy cost (y-axis) vs high/low impact (x-axis). Visualize where energy is going.

2 **Prioritize High-Impact, Low-Cost First** – Start day with tasks in the "sweet spot" quadrant (big results, minimal energy drain) to build momentum

3 **Batch or Eliminate High-Cost, Low-Impact** – Group energy-draining low-value tasks into one time block in low-energy window, or eliminate them entirely (stop doing <ROI)

Capacity depends on timing as much as ability.

BOOM–BUST ENERGY PATTERN

SIGNAL ⚠️

Short bursts of high output followed by crashes reduce long-term sustainability despite impressive peaks.

TYPICAL EXPERIENCES
"I push hard, then I'm wiped out." / "After peaks I crash."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Cap intensity periods explicitly (maxi. 2hr sprints → mandatory break)
2. Schedule recovery before depletion occurs (rest is proactive, not reactive–calendar it in advance)
3. Don't reward overexertion (sustainability ≠ underperformance, celebrate consistent output over heroic bursts)
4. Track sustainability over time (monthly review: are crashes predictable? adjust patterns before they repeat)
5. Treat pacing as leadership hygiene, not personal weakness (model sustainable work rhythms)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – CO-REGULATION ANCHOR

1 **Externalize the Intensity** – Share high activation or overfocus with trusted person (say aloud: "I'm in hyperfocus mode" or "I'm pushing too hard"). Naming prevents silent escalation.

2 **Borrow Regulation** – Interact with regulated person to slow pace and restore perspective (quick check-in, shared coffee break, colleague's calm presence stabilizes activation)

3 **Exit Intensity Together** – Support transition out of high effort externally (agree on stopping point: "Let's both wrap at 4pm" or define next low-demand step together)

Sustainability beats heroics.

SOMATIC AWARENESS

SIGNAL ⚠️

Physical signals of strain or fatigue are often noticed late, increasing overload, injury, and burnout risk.

> **TYPICAL EXPERIENCES**
> "I NOTICE I'M DEPLETED ONLY WHEN IT'S TOO LATE." / "MY BODY WARNS ME AFTER I'VE ALREADY OVERDONE IT."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Encourage regular body check-ins (3x daily: morning, midday, end-of-day—2min scan)
2. Allow self-paced load adjustment (let body steer before damage accumulates: "I need lighter work this afternoon")
3. Treat late boundaries as data, not moral failure (understand why signal came late, adjust earlier next time)
4. Integrate somatic cues into planning (check body state < committing)
5. Use simple intensity regulation signals (1-10 scale for physical tension, easier to communicate than narrative)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – TRAFFIC LIGHT BODY SCAN

1 **Green Zone Check** – Scan body for areas that feel neutral, calm, or energized (ground yourself in what's working, not just what hurts). Name 1-2 green zones.

2 **Yellow Zone Alert** – Notice areas with mild tension, restlessness, or early fatigue (these are your early warning signals < red zone). Name yellow zone specifically ("tight shoulders," "shallow breath").

3 **Act on Yellow, Before Red** – Take one micro-action when yellow appears, before it becomes red/crash (5 shoulder rolls, 3 deep breaths, 2min walk—interrupt the escalation path early)

Bodies whisper long before they shout.

POSTURAL REGULATION DEMAND

DOMAIN 3: MOTOR & ENERGY RHYTHMS

SIGNAL ⚠️

Holding static postures consumes significant energy, especially in long meetings or high-visibility settings.

TYPICAL EXPERIENCES
"SITTING STILL DRAINS ME MORE THAN MOVING." / "STILLNESS COSTS ME STAMINA."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Allow posture changes during work (standing, leaning, shifting positions without explanation needed)
2. Normalize subtle movement in meetings (fidgeting, posture shifts ≠ distraction or disengagement)
3. Provide ergonomic flexibility (adjustable desk heights, multiple seating options, movement-friendly spaces)
4. Eliminate stillness-based professional norms (quietness ≠ rudeness)
5. Include brief stretch moments (5min standing break mid-meeting, designed into agenda)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – WALK & TALK REGULATION

1 **Move to Think** – Start conversation or reflection while walking or moving instead of sitting still (schedule walking 1:1s, pace while on phone call). Movement reduces internal pressure.

2 **Synchronize Rhythm –** Share walking pace to create regulated interaction rhythm (speech, breathing, attention stabilize through coordinated movement)

3 **Capture Insight After Movement** – Record key insights or decisions once clarity emerges (voice memo during walk, written notes after). It enables processing; stabilization happens then.

Stillness looks professional but costs the body.

❞

FINE MOTOR COORDINATION VARIABILITY

SIGNAL ⚠️

Precision in small movements varies with speed, pressure, fatigue, and environmental or sensory conditions.

TYPICAL EXPERIENCES
"MY ACCURACY DROPS AS SOON AS I'M RUSHED." / "SPEED RUINS MY PRECISION."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Offer alternative input methods (voice-to-text, stylus, keyboard vs mouse–precision doesn't depend on tiny movements)
2. Reduce speed pressure on precision tasks (accuracy over speed, separate timed from quality-focused work)
3. Allow assistive tools that enlarge or simplify motor demands (larger buttons, templates, guides)
4. Evaluate accuracy separately from speed (measure only result quality)
5. Design tasks so precision is condition-supported, not sustained through grit (stable surface, good lighting, no time pressure)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – PRECISION OFFLOADING

1 **Shift Precision Away from the Body** – Transfer accuracy to tools, templates, or automation where possible (use form fields instead of freehand, auto-formatting, spell-check)

2 **Separate Draft from Final Execution** – Complete initial work without precision pressure (rough draft first), then do fine adjustments in second step when coordination is stable

3 **Validate Outcome, Not Process** – Check quality based on result, not how smoothly movement felt during execution (reduces unnecessary correction loops)

Sometimes tools need to grow, not effort.

MOTOR PLANNING LAG

SIGNAL ⚠️

A delay between intention and physical action can appear, especially under observation or pressure.

> **TYPICAL EXPERIENCES**
> "THE HARDEST PART IS PHYSICALLY STARTING." / "MY BODY FREEZES AT THE START."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Allow initiation latency (starting takes time–don't force through countdown pressure)
2. Avoid public start pressure (observation or scrutiny ↑ motor freeze)
3. Separate instruction from execution (give directions, then step back– let body begin after mind has mapped action)
4. Use predictable start cues (same signal each time stabilizes initiation across contexts)
5. Allow brief mental rehearsal (visualize first step before physically beginning)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – EXTERNAL START CUE

1 **Create a Visible Start Marker** – Place physical or visual cue in front of first action (step over line, touch object, move toward defined point). Body receives clear movement signal.

2 **Let the Cue Trigger Movement** – Shift attention from thinking about task to responding to cue (movement begins as reaction, not decision)

3 **Continue the Motion Sequence** – Once first movement initiates, remaining actions follow without re-evaluating start (momentum replaces hesitation)

A delayed start is not resistance.

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BODY-BASED REGULATION

SIGNAL ⚠️

Movement is often required to regulate attention and arousal, and suppressing it increases strain.

TYPICAL EXPERIENCES
"I NEED TO MOVE TO CONCENTRATE." / "STILLNESS MAKES ME LESS FOCUSED."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Normalize movement as regulation
2. Allow pacing & fidgeting (attention maintained without masking cost)
3. Eliminate rigid stillness norms (create preventable strain and fatigue)
4. Provide regulation tools (fidgets, standing options, movement-friendly)
5. Use **Leadership Stress Impact Radar™** to track how stress affects team dynamics (monitor nine dimensions: clarity, emotional safety, trust, feedback culture, energy/morale, communication tone, delegation, boundaries, retention risk–stress patterns become visible before they compound.

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌿 – STILLNESS QUOTA

1 **Set Your Stillness Limit –** Define your maximum sustainable stillness duration before regulation breaks down (might be 20min, 45min, 90min–track it honestly). This is your quota, not a failure.

2 **Schedule Movement Before Quota Expires** – Build movement breaks BEFORE you hit your limit (if quota is 30min, move at 25min). Proactive movement prevents reactive attention collapse.

3 **Reset and Restart Quota** – After 2-5min movement break (walk, stretch, pace, fidget intentionally), your stillness quota resets. You've bought yourself another clear-attention window.

Movement prevents distraction for some brains.

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SENSORY–MOTOR CROSSING

DOMAIN 3: MOTOR & ENERGY RHYTHMS

SIGNAL ⚠️

Sensory load directly interferes with motor coordination and precision, increasing effort and reducing movement stability.

TYPICAL EXPERIENCES
"NOISE MAKES MY COORDINATION WORSE." / "BUSY ENVIRONMENTS AFFECT MY MOTOR CONTROL."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Reduce sensory load for precision work (quiet space for detail-oriented tasks, coordination not compromised by conditions)
2. Adjust light, sound, space for motor tasks (dimmer lighting for screen work, noise control for manual tasks)
3. Separate sensory-heavy from motor-precise tasks
4. Allow quiet or low-stimulation formats when accuracy required (closed office for spreadsheet work, headphones for coding)
5. Treat coordination variability as environment signal, not attitude (check room before judging performance)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – GROUNDING → ORIENTATION

1 **Orient to Your Surroundings** – Slowly look around the room and name 5 things you can see, moving your head and eyes deliberately (activates ventral vagal system, reduces threat resp.)

2 **Ground Through Touch or Weight** – Feel your feet on the floor, hands on desk, or back against chair (stabilizes nervous system). Press feet down or place hands flat on surface for 30 seconds.

3 **Resume Task With Anchored Attention** – Return to motor task with attention anchored in body and space, not scattered across sensory inputs → nervous system feels located and safe.

Question the room before the person.

ENVIRONMENTAL MISMATCH

DOMAIN 3: MOTOR & ENERGY RHYTHMS

SIGNAL ⚠️

Performance decreases when task demands and spatial environment are misaligned, increasing effort and reducing stability.

TYPICAL EXPERIENCES
"SOME SPACES DRAIN ME MORE THAN OTHERS." / "THE ROOM AFFECTS MY PERFORMANCE."

DESIGN RESPONSES

1. Offer multiple workspace types (quiet focus rooms, collaborative spaces, movement-friendly areas)
2. Allow task–environment matching (space becomes part of workflow, not fixed constraint)
3. Eliminate one-size-fits-all layouts (predictable friction from mismatch)
4. Label spaces by function (signs: "Quiet Focus," "Active Collaboration," "Phone Calls"–intentional choice)
5. Review fit regularly (needs change across workload and seasons, quarterly space audit)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – TASK PLACEMENT

1 **Define What the Task Needs to Exist** – The task is defined by what allows it to emerge, such as quiet, movement, interaction, or visual stimulation.

2 **Place the Task, Not the Person** – Instead of adapting oneself to the environment, the task is assigned to a space where it can unfold with less resistance.

3 **Leave When the Task Is Done** – Use environment as temporary container for execution, not permanent workspace (prevents unnecessary energy drain from prolonged spatial mismatch)

Inconsistent output often reflects space mismatch.

MOVEMENT INHIBITION CONTROL

DOMAIN 3: MOTOR & ENERGY RHYTHMS

SIGNAL ⚠️

Suppressing natural movement increases energy expenditure & masking effort, reducing available cognitive and regulatory capacity.

> **TYPICAL EXPERIENCES**
> "MANAGING MY BODY COSTS MORE ENERGY THAN MY JOB." / "I SPEND ENERGY HIDING REGULATION."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Reduce appearance-based judgment
2. Don't punish regulation behaviors that don't disrupt work (fidgeting, posture changes = acceptable)
3. Focus evaluation on output and follow-through, not presentation or stillness (deliverables over display)
4. Offer lower-visibility options (camera off for focus work, remote participation when helpful)
5. Name movement diversity as normal (psychological safety replaces masking: "We move differently here")

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – VISIBILITY SAFETY

1 **State the Rule Explicitly** – Name movement, posture changes, or camera-off options as acceptable (don't make people guess social expectations: "Cameras optional," "Movement welcomed")

2 **Remove Appearance as Performance Signal** – Stillness, eye contact, constant visibility not treated as indicators of engagement or competence

3 **Anchor Evaluation in Outcomes** – Assess work based on contribution and results (reduces pressure to maintain performative presence, lowers masking cost)

Masking hides cost, not effort.

Alexandra Robuste

MICRO-REGULATION LOAD

DOMAIN 3: MOTOR & ENERGY RHYTHMS

SIGNAL ⚠️

Energy can be depleted through ongoing micro-adjustments in posture, attention, or movement required to maintain performance.

> **TYPICAL EXPERIENCES**
> "I CONSTANTLY ADJUST TO STAY FOCUSED." / "HOLDING IT TOGETHER COSTS ENERGY."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Reduce situations requiring constant small adjustments (improve ergonomic and environmental stability)
2. Allow posture shifts, pacing, small movements
3. Limit prolonged high-visibility settings (sustained self-monitoring increases invisible effort)
4. Provide formats reducing simultaneous demands (don't require attention + posture + communication all at once)
5. Treat invisible regulation effort as capacity factor (account for it in workload planning and duration estimates)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – REGULATION RITUALS

1 **Schedule Regulation Proactively** – Build short regulation moments into workday before exhaustion appears (brief walks, quiet breaks, breathing pauses, lunch without input).

2 **Use External Regulation Supports** – Employ environmental aids to stabilize attention and reduce continuous self-adjustment (brown noise, quiet rooms, cooling stimuli, sensory tools like fidgets)

3 **Return With Reduced Effort** – Resume work once physical and cognitive tension decreases (focus continues without ongoing micro-correction or masking effort)

Some voices unlock through motion.

ACCESS ENERGY CONSTRAINTS

DOMAIN 3: MOTOR & ENERGY RHYTHMS

SIGNAL ⚠️

Access energy constraints describe how movement, transitions, and spatial effort reduce available energy before a task starts.

TYPICAL EXPERIENCES
"I NEED A MOMENT TO ARRIVE BEFORE I CAN ACTUALLY BEGIN." / "TOO MANY TRANSITIONS DRAIN MY FOCUS BEFORE WORK STARTS."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Reduce unnecessary transitions (cluster meetings by location)
2. Provide alternative access options (shorter routes, elevators, remote participation to balance physical load)
3. Cluster meetings or tasks by location (prevent cumulative fatigue from repeated movement across campus/building)
4. Allow transition time (arrival doesn't immediately require cognitive or social performance—5min buffer)
5. Treat access effort and spatial layout as performance-relevant factors (consider physical toll when planning venues or activities)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – DECISION FREEDOM GRID™

1 **Clarify the Decision Outcome** – Define what result is required so success is clear without prescribing how or when work must start.

2 **Identify Timing / Energy Constraints** – Distinguish between decisions requiring immediate action vs those allowing autonomous initiation (deadline vs process freedom)

3 **Act Within Defined Freedom** – Begin execution at self-directed time within agreed boundaries (aligns responsibility with capacity and context)

Measure distance before judging commitment.

CONTEXTUAL CODE-SWITCHING LOAD

DOMAIN 4: SOCIAL & COMMUNICATION STYLES

SIGNAL ⚠️

Adjusting communication across multiple channels and contexts requires continuous mental switching between different responses.

> **TYPICAL EXPERIENCES**
> "SWITCHING REGISTERS DRAINS MY ENERGY." / "ADAPTING TONE IS EXHAUSTING."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Reduce unnecessary tone shifts (keep communication consistent across contexts instead of shifting register constantly)
2. Make communication norms explicit (state expected tone, format, response time for each channel–don't make people guess)
3. Don't penalize style consistency (authenticity ≠ noncompliance)
4. Allow preparation for high-visibility moments (send speaking topics 48h ahead, time to assemble language)
5. Standardize formats where possible (same meeting structure, same email template–spend cognitive energy on content, not adaptation)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – CHANNEL BUNDLING

1 Limit Active Channels – Commit to small number of primary communication channels instead of responding across multiple platforms simultaneously (choose 2-3)

2 **Assign Purpose per Channel** – Each channel serves clear function ↓ interpretation effort (email = decisions and documentation, Slack = quick questions, meetings = complex discussion)

3 **Respond Within the Defined Set** – Route communication back into selected channels (prevent constant switching between competing platforms)

Adaptability should not mean exhaustion.

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Alexandra Robuste

SOCIAL ENERGY DRAIN

DOMAIN 4: SOCIAL & COMMUNICATION STYLES

SIGNAL ⚠️

Sustained interaction depletes energy even when engagement is positive, requiring longer recovery.

TYPICAL EXPERIENCES
"MEETINGS EXHAUST ME MORE THAN WORK." / "PEOPLE DRAIN MY ENERGY."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Limit duration of high-interaction events (max 2hr meetings, then mandatory break)
2. Schedule recovery time after social load (30min blocked time post-meeting before next interaction)
3. Avoid back-to-back exposure (minimum 15min buffer in between)
4. Allow opt-out from nonessential interaction (participation is strategic, not constant—mark meetings "optional" explicitly)
5. Treat recovery as capacity protection (plan it, don't improvise it after depletion)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – INTEGRATED NEEDS MODEL™

1 **Identify Social Energy Needs** – Clarify how much interaction, visibility, and recovery time an individual requires to remain effective across the workday. (use INM™ Needs Wheel)

2 **Define Practical Adjustments** – Identify concrete changes (camera-off options, hybrid work, reduced meeting density, protected low-interaction periods)

3 **Align With What Is Sustainable** – Agree on solutions balancing individual needs with team requirements (make social energy management explicit, not assumed)

Connection and recovery belong together.

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HIGH-FIDELITY LISTENING

SIGNAL ⚠️

A listening style marked by deep attention to detail, tone, and meaning, enabling precise understanding and recall.

TYPICAL EXPERIENCES
"LISTENING ITSELF DRAINS MY CAPACITY." / "TOO MANY DETAILS EXHAUST ME."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Reduce verbal density in meetings (tight agendas, stay on topic, avoid tangents)
2. Provide written summaries (send recap within 1hr)
3. Assign selective listening roles (distribute responsibility: one person tracks decisions, another tracks actions)
4. Separate listening from decision-making (comprehend first in one meeting, decide in follow-up)
5. Externalize key points in real time (scribe captures on shared screen, lowers cognitive load while discussion continues)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – DELIBERATE CUT-OFF

1 **Stop at First Understanding** – Once main point is clear, intentionally stop input consumption instead of continuing for completeness (close article after key insight and leave)

2 **Accept Partial Detail** – Leave additional nuance or supporting information unread/unheard unless directly required for action (skim rest, don't deep-read everything)

3 **Move to Action Early** – Begin execution once sufficient understanding exists (prevent continued energy expenditure on refinement)

Attention is a shared resource.

NONVERBAL INTERPRETATION VARIABILITY

SIGNAL ⚠️

Differences in how nonverbal cues (facial expressions, tone, or body language) are perceived & interpreted → misinterpretation.

TYPICAL EXPERIENCES
"MY FACE DOESN'T SHOW HOW ENGAGED I AM." / "PEOPLE MISREAD MY EXPRESSIONS."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Don't judge engagement by body language (performance ≠ intent, neutral face ≠ disengagement)
2. Encourage explicit verbal signals (say "I'm with you" or "I disagree" instead of relying on facial expressions)
3. Reduce reliance on "reading the room" (contribution not tied to nonverbal decoding skill)
4. Focus evaluation on output and follow-through (measure deliverables, not facial animation)
5. Invite clarification requests (normalize "Can you clarify your reaction?")

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – DIRECT MEANING METHOD

1 **Ask for Explicit Meaning** – When signals are unclear, clarify verbally instead of inferring from facial expression or tone ("What's your take on this?" not "You look concerned")

2 **State Intent Directly** – Express own intentions or reactions in words, not nonverbal cues ("I'm skeptical about timeline" not just furrowed brow)

3 **Anchor Communication in Words** – Confirm decisions and agreements verbally (don't assume shared understanding from nods or silence)

Attention to meaning strengthens communication.

"

AUTHENTICITY ORIENTATION

DOMAIN 4: SOCIAL & COMMUNICATION STYLES

SIGNAL ⚠️

Preference for direct, congruent communication can create friction in performative or politeness-driven systems.

> **TYPICAL EXPERIENCES**
> "MY DIRECTNESS GETS MISREAD AS COLD." / "HONESTY CAUSES FRICTION."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Allow respectful direct expression (congruence = professionalism, not coldness)
2. Reduce performative politeness norms (don't demand emotional theater for acceptance)
3. Separate professionalism from cheerfulness (competence ≠ affect, neutral tone = acceptable)
4. Value clarity over charm (optimize for accuracy and trust, not likability)
5. Provide shared language for respectful directness (model: "I'll be direct: [statement]" becomes team norm)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – EXTERNALIZE THINKING STEP

1 **Share the Reasoning, Not Only the Result** – Briefly express how conclusion was reached instead of stating only final position ("I'm thinking X won't work because of Y and Z")

2 **Let Others Enter the Process** – Allow reaction to reasoning before moving to resolution (pause after sharing logic, create space for questions)

3 **State the Conclusion Once Shared Ground Exists** – Direct conclusion follows after thinking path is visible (reduces perceived abruptness without changing authenticity)

Authenticity supports predictable interaction.

Alexandra Robuste

SCRIPTED COMMUNICATION RELIANCE

SIGNAL ⚠️

Reliance on familiar or prepared phrasing to reduce social processing load, as working memory declines under pressure.

TYPICAL EXPERIENCES
"COLD CALLING SHUTS MY BRAIN DOWN." / "I NEED PREPARATION TO SPEAK CLEARLY."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Reduce real-time processing demands (separate thinking time from speaking time–send topics ahead, discuss later)
2. Normalize preparation as efficiency (clarity valued over spont. fluency)
3. Provide predictable interaction structures (agenda order, speaking rounds, clear transitions reduce continuous monitoring)
4. Allow asynchronous contribution (written responses for complex topics prevent communication energy exhaustion in live settings)
5. Limit unnecessary social interpretation demands (use explicit expectations and direct language)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – THINK-PAIR-SHARE

1 **Think Alone First** – When topic is introduced, take 60-90 seconds of silent individual thinking before any discussion (write key thoughts, organize mentally, no pressure to speak yet)

2 **Pair to Rehearse** – Share your thinking with one person in low-stakes format (partner conversation, chat message, written note). Rehearsal reduces pressure when speaking to full group.

3 **Share to Full Group** – Contribute to larger discussion after you've organized (solo) and rehearsed (pair). Fluency improves through staged processing, not spontaneous performance.

Structure allows meaning to come through.

🙾

ONE-ON-ONE FLUENCY VS GROUP SILENCE

SIGNAL ⚠️

Rich contribution emerges in one-on-one interaction, while group dynamics reduce processing speed and visibility.

> **TYPICAL EXPERIENCES**
> "GROUPS SHRINK MY VOICE." / "I'M CLEARER ONE-ON-ONE."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Use one-on-one input channels (not limited to group —schedule 1:1)
2. Collect written input before meetings (ideas enter room without forcing airtime or speed—pre-meeting doc for contributions)
3. Rotate participation formats (distribute across modalities: written, small group, paired discussion, not just open floor)
4. Avoid dominance-based discussions (speed, volume, social confidence don't control outcomes—use facilitation techniques)
5. Name and integrate quiet contributions explicitly (facilitator: "Sarah shared in writing that..." makes value visible and credited)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – 5-SECOND PAUSE

1 **Claim Your Pause** – When called on or asked to speak, explicitly claim thinking time: "Let me think for a moment" or "Give me five seconds" (names pause, removes awkwardness, normalizes it)

2 **Organize in Silence** – Use those 5 seconds to mentally sequence your response: What's my one main point? What's the first sentence? (Pause is protected thinking space, not dead air.)

3 **Speak After Organizing** – Begin speaking only after you've mentally structured the response (fluency improves because sequence exists before speech starts). Quality follows prep.

Value is often created off stage.

🙾

PRECISION–BUFFERING TENSION

DOMAIN 4: SOCIAL & COMMUNICATION STYLES

SIGNAL ⚠️

Tension between message accuracy and social softening can reduce clarity, distort meaning, and increase communication effort overall.

TYPICAL EXPERIENCES
"TONE EXPECTATIONS SCRAMBLE MY MESSAGE." / "SOFTENING DILUTES ACCURACY."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Clarify intent explicitly (precision ≠ aggression or lack of care, state: "I'm being direct because clarity matters here")
2. Normalize respectful directness (accuracy remains socially safe and interpretable)
3. Separate message from tone preference (evaluate content, not style)
4. Model precision with care (pair directness and respect consistently: "This won't work [direct] and here's why [care]")
5. Provide sentence starters (templates for difficult truths: "I need to be clear: [statement]" or "The data shows: [fact]")

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – MASKING → COPING

1 **Pause Before Adjusting** – Notice impulse to soften, over-explain, or perform (delay adaptation briefly instead of adjusting automatically)

2 **Choose Adaptation Intentionally** – Decide whether adapting serves clear purpose (clarity, safety, efficiency)–turn masking into conscious coping strategy

3 **Exit the "Performance Mode"** – After interaction, consciously stop monitoring tone or wording (return attention to task or content

Meaning blurs when clarity and comfort compete. 🔖

RELATIONAL JUSTICE SENSITIVITY

SIGNAL ⚠️

Heightened sensitivity to fairness, reciprocity, and ethical consistency, often accompanied by emotional activation and ↑ moral vigilance.

TYPICAL EXPERIENCES
"BIAS IN THE ROOM DERAILS ME COMPLETELY." / "UNFAIRNESS OVERWHELMS ME."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Address fairness explicitly (surface concerns directly: "Let's discuss equity in this decision")
2. Provide transparent rationales (decisions are interpretable, reviewable, contestable–document reasoning)
3. Separate justice concerns from personal conflict
4. Create safe escalation channels (reporting doesn't require social or reputational risk–anonymous feedback option, ombudsperson)
5. Make equity review routine (fairness operationalized consistently: quarterly equity audit, not performative gesture)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – CONCLUDE → ADDRESSING

1 **Pause Before Responding** – Allow initial emotional activation to settle before deciding whether situation requires response or correction (take 5min, don't react immediately)

2 **Separate Observation from Interpretation** – Clarify what actually occurred before assigning intention or moral meaning ("They interrupted twice" vs "They're disrespectful")

3 **Decide Whether Addressing Is Necessary** – Assess whether raising issue improves clarity or fairness (if yes: "Our meeting norms need adjustment" not "You always interrupt")

Fairness awareness protects relational integrity.

💬

Alexandra Robuste

MORAL DISCOMFORT SENSITIVITY

SIGNAL ⚠️

Internal stress arising when personal values conflict with actions or expectations, independent of own fairness/ justice concerns.

TYPICAL EXPERIENCES
"THIS CONFLICTS WITH MY VALUES." / "ETHICAL MISALIGNMENT SHUTS ME DOWN."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Clarify shared values operationally (express ethics in concrete language, criteria, thresholds—not abstract principles)
2. Allow ethical dissent safely (disagreement ≠ disloyalty or disruption)
3. Separate ethics discussions from performance reviews (speaking up doesn't carry punitive risk)
4. Create resolution processes (value conflicts have clear path beyond repeated debate—escalation protocol, mediation option)
5. Treat ethical signals as system feedback (not personal disruption or resistance—data about misalignment)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – CLARIFY THE DISCOMFORT

1 **Pause and Localize the Signal** – When discomfort arises, pause and identify what exactly feels misaligned before reacting or withdrawing (name it: "This conflicts with transparency value")

2 **Translate Feeling into Question** – Turn discomfort into clarifying question instead of treating as conclusion ("What value feels affected? What information is missing?")

3 **Respond Proportionally** – Choose whether to address, set boundary, seek clarification, or wait (match response to actual level of misalignment)

Inner tension can clarify what matters.

"

Alexandra Robuste

SOCIAL VISIBILITY ENGAGEMENT

DOMAIN 4: SOCIAL & COMMUNICATION STYLES

SIGNAL ⚠️

Performance and regulation shift under observation and public exposure, changing output quality independent of skill.

> **TYPICAL EXPERIENCES**
> "BEING WATCHED CHANGES HOW WELL I WORK." / "PUBLIC EXPOSURE REDUCES MY CLARITY."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Offer visibility-optional participation (contribution not tied to public performance–camera off, written input allowed)
2. Reduce forced spotlight moments (trigger regulation shifts and degrade clarity–no surprise cold-calling)
3. Provide alternative contribution modes (written input, smaller group formats, asynchronous responses)
4. Separate presence from value (visibility ≠ competence or commitment)
5. Use smaller decision spaces when stakes are high (protect clarity and regulation: 3-person conversation vs 12-person meeting)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – TASK ANCHOR

1 **Define the Execution Anchor** – Before entering visible situation, identify single task outcome that matters most (explain one idea, ask one question, present one decision)

2 **Return Attention to the Anchor** – When awareness shifts toward being observed, redirect attention to defined task instead of audience reaction (focus on content, not impression)

3 **Complete the Anchor Before Expanding** – Add additional performance elements only after core task is completed (reduces self-monitoring load)

Visibility changes regulation before skill.

INTERACTION TIMING

SIGNAL ⚠️

Response timing often includes a short processing delay that supports clarity but clashes with rapid turn-taking norms.

TYPICAL EXPERIENCES
"I NEED A MOMENT BEFORE I CAN RESPOND CLEARLY." / "SILENCE HELPS ME THINK."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Build pause tolerance into team norms (thinking time = part of communication, not absence—normalize 3-5 second pauses)
2. Use explicit turn-taking (responses not lost to speed-based competition—raised hands, speaking queue, facilitator manages flow)
3. Normalize thinking pauses verbally
4. Separate reflection time from speaking time (quality not traded for immediacy—think first, speak second)
5. Allow written or asynchronous contributions when timing pressure reduces clarity (follow-up email after fast-paced meeting)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – MICRO-RESET BEFORE SPEAKING

1 **Exhale Before Responding** – Short exhale creates natural transition from listening to speaking (shifts from input processing into expression)

2 **Release Physical Stillness** – Small movement signals body to move into output mode (adjust posture, move hand, slight nod)

3 **Speak After the Shift** – Begin speech once transition is complete (reduces delay, allows responses to emerge more fluently)

Silence is often where clarity forms.

EMPATHIC OVERIDENTIFICATION

DOMAIN 4: SOCIAL & COMMUNICATION STYLES

SIGNAL ⚠️

It occurs when others' emotional states are internally absorbed instead of observed. Over time it can increase burnout risk.

TYPICAL EXPERIENCES
"I CARRY EMOTIONS LONG AFTER MEETINGS." / "OTHER PEOPLE'S FEELINGS EXHAUST ME."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Define emotional role boundaries (responsibility not unlimited or assumed by default–clarify scope: "I can support X, but not Y")
2. Reduce default emotional labor expectations (empathy ≠ constant availability, set office hours for emotional support)
3. Normalize decompression after care work (emotional load acknowledged and discharged–15min post-session break)
4. Offer supervision or debrief formats (process emotional experiences with appropriate support–peer debrief, external supervisor)
5. Teach boundary language ("I need to step back from this exchange")

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – BOUNDARY SETTING

1 **Separate Emotion Physically** – During interaction, exhale slowly and shift posture or lean back (creates physical distinction between observing emotion vs absorbing it)

2 **Anchor in Function** – Silently return attention to practical question: What is needed from me right now? (keeps empathy oriented toward response, not absorption)

3 **Close the Interaction Deliberately** – After conversation, change activity or environment briefly (stand up, walk, drink water) to signal completion and prevent continued emotional carryover

Empathy needs boundaries to be sustainable.

🙿

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LITERAL–CONCRETE INTERPRETATION

SIGNAL ⚠️

Preference for precise, literal language reduces ambiguity but struggles with hints, subtext, or implied meaning.

TYPICAL EXPERIENCES
"I FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS EXACTLY AS STATED." / "HINTS CONFUSE ME."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Use explicit instructions & deadlines (state clearly: "Submit by Fri 5pm")
2. Avoid implicit expectations in high-stakes contexts (compliance ≠ misunderstanding, spell out requirements)
3. Clarify meaning early when consequences are high (ask "What do you need from me specifically?" before starting work)
4. Reduce figurative language in agreements (commitments remain interpretable–"soon" becomes "by end of week")
5. Confirm shared meaning explicitly (repeat back understanding: "So I'll deliver X by Y, correct?")

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – AMBIGUITY → QUESTIONS

1 **Ask for Operational Meaning** – When statements are unclear, ask what action or outcome is expected rather than interpreting intent ("What specifically should I do?")

2 **Translate Hints into Explicit Terms** – Restate assumptions or implied meaning in concrete language to confirm shared understanding ("So you're saying I should prioritize X over Y?")

3 **Proceed Once Meaning Is Explicit** – Act only after expectations are clearly defined (reduces misinterpretation and rework)

Hints test mind reading, not intelligence.

🙶

REFLECTIVE INTEGRATION

DOMAIN 5: EXECUTIVE FUNCTION & SYSTEMS THINKING

SIGNAL ⚠️

Insights remain individual unless translated into systems, causing repeated inefficiencies and recurring friction.

TYPICAL EXPERIENCES
"WE LEARN BUT NOTHING CHANGES." / "INSIGHTS DON'T STICK."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Schedule structured debriefs (15min Friday retro while memory is fresh and context available)
2. Translate insights into small, concrete process changes (reflection produces operational improvement, not just awareness)
3. Store learnings centrally (shared doc, retrievable and reusable)
4. Review lessons intentionally before repeating work (check "lessons learned" doc before starting similar project)
5. Assign integration ownership (someone accountable for follow-through, not diffused responsibility)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – EXTERNALIZE TO INTEGRATE

1 **Offload Without Structuring** – After completion, write or sketch freely for 2-3min without organizing or evaluating (goal is unloading, not insight)

2 **Change Processing Channel** – Switch modality to allow nonverbal processing and pattern consolidation (walk, shower, tidy, draw, low-focus movement)

3 **Capture the One Emergent Shift** – Later, note only what feels clearer or different (don't force conclusions or improvement plans)

Learning changes systems, not memories.

ACCOUNTABILITY ANCHORING

SIGNAL ⚠️

Tasks drift when ownership is shared vaguely instead of being clearly assigned and tracked to closure.

TYPICAL EXPERIENCES
"WE THOUGHT SOMEONE ELSE HAD IT." / "NO ONE OWNED IT."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Assign one clear owner per task (responsibility unambiguous from creation to completion—use Ownership Ladder to clarify roles)
2. Track actions visibly (ownership and deadlines not lost in conversation or memory—shared tracker, weekly review)
3. Close loops explicitly (completion confirmed, send ≠ "done")
4. Follow up at next touchpoint
5. Separate owners from helpers (support available without blurring accountability or decision authority—aligned with Decision Freedom Grid™

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – WIZARD OF OZ PRINCIPLE

1 **See & Name It** – Notice open task and state next concrete action clearly so it becomes defined, not implied ("Send proposal to client")

2 **Own It** – Explicitly decide who is responsible: you or someone else? (remove ambiguity and shared assumption: "Alex owns this")

3 **Do or Move It** – Either take next action immediately or move to defined next step or owner (task doesn't remain in cognitive or social limbo)

Shared ownership needs clear anchors.

CAPACITY-MANAGEMENT REGULATION

DOMAIN 5: EXECUTIVE FUNCTION & SYSTEMS THINKING

SIGNAL ⚠️

Ability to adjust structure, workload, and expectations so cognitive and operational demands remain aligned with one's capacity.

TYPICAL EXPERIENCES
"WHAT WORKED BEFORE SUDDENLY DOESN'T." / "GROWTH CHANGES THE SYSTEM, NOT ONLY THE WORKLOAD."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Review system fit at growth or complexity changes (emerging cognitive strain becomes visible–quarterly system audit)
2. Simplify before adding layers (resolve increasing complexity)
3. Add support with clear ownership and decision paths (increased capacity doesn't introduce ambiguity or coordination load)
4. Retire obsolete practices deliberately (outdated systems don't compete for attention or reduce clarity–archive old processes)
5. Treat redesign as normal part of scaling (systems require adjustment, not just harder work)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – BOTTLENECK ANALYSIS

1 **Map the Workflow** – Visualize your current work system as a flow (inputs → your processing → outputs). Identify where work piles up, waits, or slows down. That pile = bottleneck.

2 **Widen the Bottleneck First** – Before adding more work upstream, expand capacity at the bottleneck: regulate, automate, delegate, simplify, or remove the constraint entirely.

3 **Protect the Bottleneck** – Once widened, protect it from new constraints: don't add complexity that recreates bottleneck elsewhere, monitor flow regularly.

Systems scale by redesign, not endurance.

ERROR ANTICIPATION

DOMAIN 5: EXECUTIVE FUNCTION & SYSTEMS THINKING

SIGNAL ⚠️

Risk awareness can sustain fight–flight activation, causing repetitive checking and difficulty transitioning from review → execution

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Separate dedicated risk review phases from execution phases
2. Define clear time boundaries for risk analysis (evaluation reaches closure before work proceeds–30min risk review, then execute)
3. Formally include early risk signals in decision processes (concerns don't need repeated justification to be heard–agenda item: "risks")
4. Provide shared risk tracking systems (concerns documented and visible, not carried individually–risk register)
5. Establish explicit decision thresholds (teams know when sufficient analysis reached & execution should continue–"good enough" criteria)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – EXIT FIGHT–FLIGHT

1 **Recognize Activation, Not Risk** – Notice when repeated checking or risk review driven by tension or urgency rather than new information (signals fight–flight activation)

2 **Downshift the Nervous System** – Pause briefly and reduce activation through slow exhale, posture change, or stepping away from task to signal safety

3 **Resume With a Defined Next Action** – Return to one concrete action (execution replaces ongoing threat monitoring)

Foresight needs boundaries and regulation.

DELEGATION CLARITY

SIGNAL ⚠️

Delegation breaks down through overfunctioning, underfunctioning, or unclear boundaries, creating bottlenecks and mistrust.

TYPICAL EXPERIENCES
"IT'S FASTER IF I DO IT MYSELF." / "DELEGATION CREATES MORE WORK."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Delegate outcomes rather than methods (autonomy is real, micromanagement decreases–"Achieve X however you think best")
2. Match tasks to capacity (delegation supports sustainability, not overload transfer–check: can they actually do this?)
3. Clarify decision room (delegate knows what can be decided)
4. Use light check-ins (accountability exists without control–weekly 15min sync, not daily oversight)
5. Adjust systems rather than blaming individuals when delegation repeatedly fails (structural problem, not person problem)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – DECISION FREEDOM GRID™

1 **Locate the Decision** – Identify which decision domain situation belongs to and whether it falls within your defined authority or requires input/approval

2 **Check Boundaries and Thresholds** – Confirm conditions that apply (risk level, scope, budget, impact) so decision evaluated against agreed limits, not personal uncertainty

3 **Act or Escalate Clearly** – Either decide within authority or escalate through defined pathway (prevents hesitation, overchecking, or informal approval seeking)

Delegation fails from unclear outcomes.

"

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PLANNING HORIZON

SIGNAL ⚠️

Preference for short- or long-term planning can clash with role expectations when time-horizon assumptions are implicit.

> **TYPICAL EXPERIENCES**
> "LONG-TERM PLANNING BLOCKS ME." / "I STRUGGLE WITH DISTANT GOALS."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Match planning to horizon strengths (work aligns with natural temporal orientation)
2. Translate long-term goals into near-term anchors (progress remains visible and cognitively accessible–5-year vision → quarterly milestones)
3. Separate strategic planning from operational work (future-oriented thinking doesn't compete with execution time–different meetings)
4. Use visual roadmaps (keep future direction visible)
5. Pair complementary strengths across team members (horizons covered without overloading one– balance planners and executors)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – PARK THE FUTURE

1 **Name the Time Horizon** – Explicitly identify whether thought belongs to now, next, or later when future concerns enter current work

2 **Externalize the Future –** Write the future task, risk, or idea down → no need to be held in active attention– "let's put a pin in it" or move it into park mode.

3 **Return to the Current Horizon** – Refocus on single action belonging to present task (allow execution without future pressure)

Different minds live in different timeframes.

GOAL HIERARCHY MANAGEMENT

SIGNAL ⚠️

Losing sight of primary objectives during execution causes misallocated effort and strategic drift.

TYPICAL EXPERIENCES
"I optimize the wrong thing." / "I get lost in details and forget the point."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Keep primary goal visible during execution (write main objective at top of every task list, meeting agenda, project doc)
2. Separate strategic from tactical work sessions (different meetings: "Why are we doing this?" vs "How do we execute this?")
3. Use goal ladders to show hierarchy (visual map: Company Goal → Team Goal → Project Goal → Today's Task)
4. Build "why check" into milestones (at 25%, 50%, 75% completion: pause and ask "Does this still serve the main goal?")
5. Limit sub-goal proliferation (max 3 sub-goals per primary goal)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – GROW MODEL

1 **Goal** – State the primary objective clearly before starting any sub-task (write it down: "The main point is X"). This anchors attention on what actually matters.

2 **Reality + Options** – Check current work against primary goal: "Does this task directly serve the main objective?" Identify when you're optimizing secondary goals at expense of primary.

3 **Will** – Choose one action that serves the primary goal, even if it means abandoning polished sub-tasks and commit.

Knowing what matters most protects effort from drift.

COMPLEXITY MAPPING

DOMAIN 5: EXECUTIVE FUNCTION & SYSTEMS THINKING

SIGNAL ⚠️

Strong pattern recognition and awareness of interdependencies increases cognitive load and can slow action without containment of scope.

TYPICAL EXPERIENCES
"I SEE ALL THE RIPPLES SO I HESITATE." / "EVERYTHING FEELS INTERCONNECTED."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Externalize system maps (complexity held in shared visual, not individual cognition–whiteboard diagram, Miro board)
2. Separate analysis from execution (thinking doesn't delay action indefinitely–analysis meeting, then execution meeting)
3. Validate systems-thinking strengths (caution recognized as insight, not resistance–"Good catch on interdependencies")
4. Limit scope per decision (only relevant interdependencies considered)
5. Define clear decision framing (action occurs within bounded and agreed slice of complexity–"We're deciding X, not solving Y")

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – GOOD ENOUGH, MOVE ON

1 **Define "Good Enough"** – Decide what level of clarity or completeness is sufficient for next step rather than waiting for full coherence

2 **Define "Move On"** – Move forward once threshold reached, even if additional connections or improvements visible

3 **Mark the Boundary** – Explicitly mark point as closed (work continues without reopening analysis)

Clarity grows through movement.

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DECISION PARALYSIS & FATIGUE

DOMAIN 5: EXECUTIVE FUNCTION & SYSTEMS THINKING

SIGNAL ⚠️

Unclear boundaries and excessive choice create hesitation, overanalysis, and delayed decision execution.

TYPICAL EXPERIENCES
"I NEED MORE INFORMATION BEFORE I CAN DECIDE." / "WHAT IF I CHOOSE WRONG?"

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Clarify decision rights explicitly using visible RACI structures (Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, Informed) for decision clarity.
2. Define autonomous, consultative, and escalated decisions within documented matrices.
3. Document ownership clearly to prevent accountability drift across roles.
4. Make decision flow visible across authority levels and escalation paths.
5. Establish decision deadlines to prevent indefinite analysis and stalled execution and review regularly.

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 DONE BEATS PERFECT™

1 **Check Your State —** Regulate first and identify whether complexity or paralysis is operating before deciding.

2 **Set Deadline & Choose —** Time-box the decision, commit to a viable option, schedule review.

3 **Let Reality Teach —** Act, gather real feedback, revise based on evidence, not perfection.

One decision creates progress; no decision preserves uncertainty.

NONLINEAR EXECUTION

DOMAIN 5: EXECUTIVE FUNCTION & SYSTEMS THINKING

SIGNAL ⚠️

Work can progress in jumps and parallel paths, which may look disordered despite producing strong outcomes.

TYPICAL EXPERIENCES
"MY PROCESS LOOKS MESSY BUT IT WORKS." / "I DON'T WORK STEP BY STEP."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Define outcomes rather than prescribing steps (how work gets done is flexible)
2. Allow flexible execution paths
3. Track milestones instead of linear order (progress recognized accurately—celebrate completion, not process adherence)
4. Communicate nonlinear execution logic early (stakeholders understand how progress will appear—"I'll work on parts 1, 3, 5 first")
5. Create visible checkpoints (pathways may vary while accountability stays clear—milestone tracker, not step-by-step plan)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 STRESS SIGNATURE SPECTRUM™

1 **Learn Your Stress Signature** – Begin to recognize how you tend to change under stress. Notice the patterns in thinking, behavior, or energy that appear when pressure increases.

2 **Detect Early and Regulate** – Notice early signs of activation and regulate before pattern fully takes over (tightness in chest, rushed thinking, perfectionism rising)

3 **Reset and Re-Enter** – Return to situation from regulated state and decide next step consciously (after regulation, choose action intentionally)

Linear paths are not the only efficient ones.

COGNITIVE TRANSITIONS

SIGNAL ⚠️

Switching between tasks or mental modes carries high cognitive cost that drains energy across fragmented days.

> **TYPICAL EXPERIENCES**
> "I NEED A MOMENT TO SWITCH." / "I LOSE MY TRAIN OF THOUGHT WHEN INTERRUPTED."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Batch tasks by cognitive mode (group similar thinking demands rather than scattering them—all writing together, all meetings together)
2. Reduce mid-task interruptions (continuity not constantly broken by external input—focus blocks protected)
3. Schedule transition buffers (switching treated as real work time, not invisible overhead—15min between different task types)
4. Signal work modes explicitly (periods of deep or focused work visible and protected—calendar label: "Deep Work—No Interruptions")
5. Park interrupted tasks visibly

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – TRANSITION BUFFERING

1 **Close the Previous Context** – Briefly note where you stopped or what comes next (previous task can mentally close)

2 **Create a Short Buffer** – Allow short pause between tasks to reset attention and reduce cognitive carryover (5min walk, stretch, different room)

3 **Enter the Next Context Intentionally** – Clarify purpose or mode of next task before starting (remind yourself: "Now I'm switching to email mode")

Constant pivots drain capacity faster than work.

STRUCTURAL THINKING

DOMAIN 5: EXECUTIVE FUNCTION & SYSTEMS THINKING

SIGNAL ⚠️

Clear systems are often required before smooth execution is possible, while implicit or shifting processes block action.

TYPICAL EXPERIENCES
"I NEED TO UNDERSTAND HOW THIS FITS TOGETHER FIRST." / "UNCLEAR STEPS STOP ME."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Provide visible workflows (steps observable, predictable, stable during execution–process diagram on shared screen)
2. Document processes explicitly (execution doesn't depend on guessing hidden or shifting rules–written SOPs)
3. Allow time for system design
4. Avoid mid-process changes (cognitive maps remain reliable, progress not disrupted–commit to process, adjust later)
5. Name the process in simple, shared terms (orientation stays intact across participants–"Here's how this works: 1, 2, 3")

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – MECE STRUCTURING

1 **Separate Without Overlap** – Divide topic into parts that don't overlap (each element belongs clearly to one category–use MECE framework: Mutually Exclusive, Collectively Exhaustive)

2 **Check for Completeness** – Ensure parts together cover whole topic (nothing important remains undefined)

3 **Work One Part at a Time** – Focus on one category instead of entire system (reduces overwhelm, allows progress)

Maps unlock momentum.

EXECUTION CONTINUITY

DOMAIN 5: EXECUTIVE FUNCTION & SYSTEMS THINKING

SIGNAL ⚠️

Progress slows when work cannot be resumed from previous stopping point, requiring reconstruction of context before execution.

TYPICAL EXPERIENCES
"I WAS IN IT YESTERDAY, NOW I HAVE TO FIGURE IT OUT AGAIN." / "IT TAKES TIME TO GET BACK INTO WHERE I LEFT OFF."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Preserve visible stopping points ("next step" note at end of session)
2. Reduce unnecessary interruptions (cognitive progress not repeatedly reset–protect focus blocks)
3. Document intermediate decisions and reasoning (continuity survives pauses or handoffs–decision log with rationale)
4. Structure work into resumable segments (progress remains accessible after breaks or context shifts–modular tasks)
5. Protect longer continuity windows for complex work (re-entry costs are high–4hr uninterrupted block for strategic work)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – LEAVE A RE-ENTRY MARKER

1 **Mark the Next Step Before Stopping** – Note exact next action or open question before pausing work ("Next: call client about timeline")

2 **Externalize the State** – Capture what was decided, what remains open, where attention should restart (brief doc: "Decided X, still need Y, start with Z")

3 **Re-Enter Through the Marker** – Begin at recorded entry point instead of reviewing everything again (read marker, start immediately)

Continuity turns effort into progress.

Alexandra Robuste

PRIORITIZATION CLARITY

SIGNAL ⚠️

Multiple demands can feel equally urgent, blocking sequencing and creating paralysis without a clear selection rule.

> **TYPICAL EXPERIENCES**
> "EVERYTHING FEELS URGENT AT ONCE." / "I CAN'T DECIDE WHAT COMES FIRST."

DESIGN RESPONSES 🧩

1. Externalize all tasks explicitly (urgency doesn't compete inside working memory—write complete task list)
2. Rank priorities using shared rule (selection doesn't depend on stress—Eisenhower Matrix, ROI ranking, impact vs effort)
3. Limit active tasks in progress (attention not split across too many open loops—WIP 'work in progress' limit: 3 active tasks max)
4. Separate urgency from importance
5. Review priorities at set intervals (re-sorting becomes routine, not constant negotiation—Monday morning priority review)

3-STEP PRACTICE 🌱 – MOSCOW PRIORITIZATION

1 **Sort Into Four Categories** – Label each task: **Must** Have (critical, non-negotiable), **Should** Have (important but not critical), **Could** Have (nice to have if time), **Won't** Have (explicitly deferred or).

2 **Sequence Must Haves Only** – Create action plan exclusively from Must Have tasks (ignore Should/Could/Won't for now). If Must Have list is still too long (> 3), you haven't been honest—re-sort.

3 **Revisit Should/Could After Must** – Only after Must Haves are in motion, review Should/Could list for next cycle. Won't Have stays permanently parked unless conditions change dramatically.

Clarity comes from choosing what not to do.
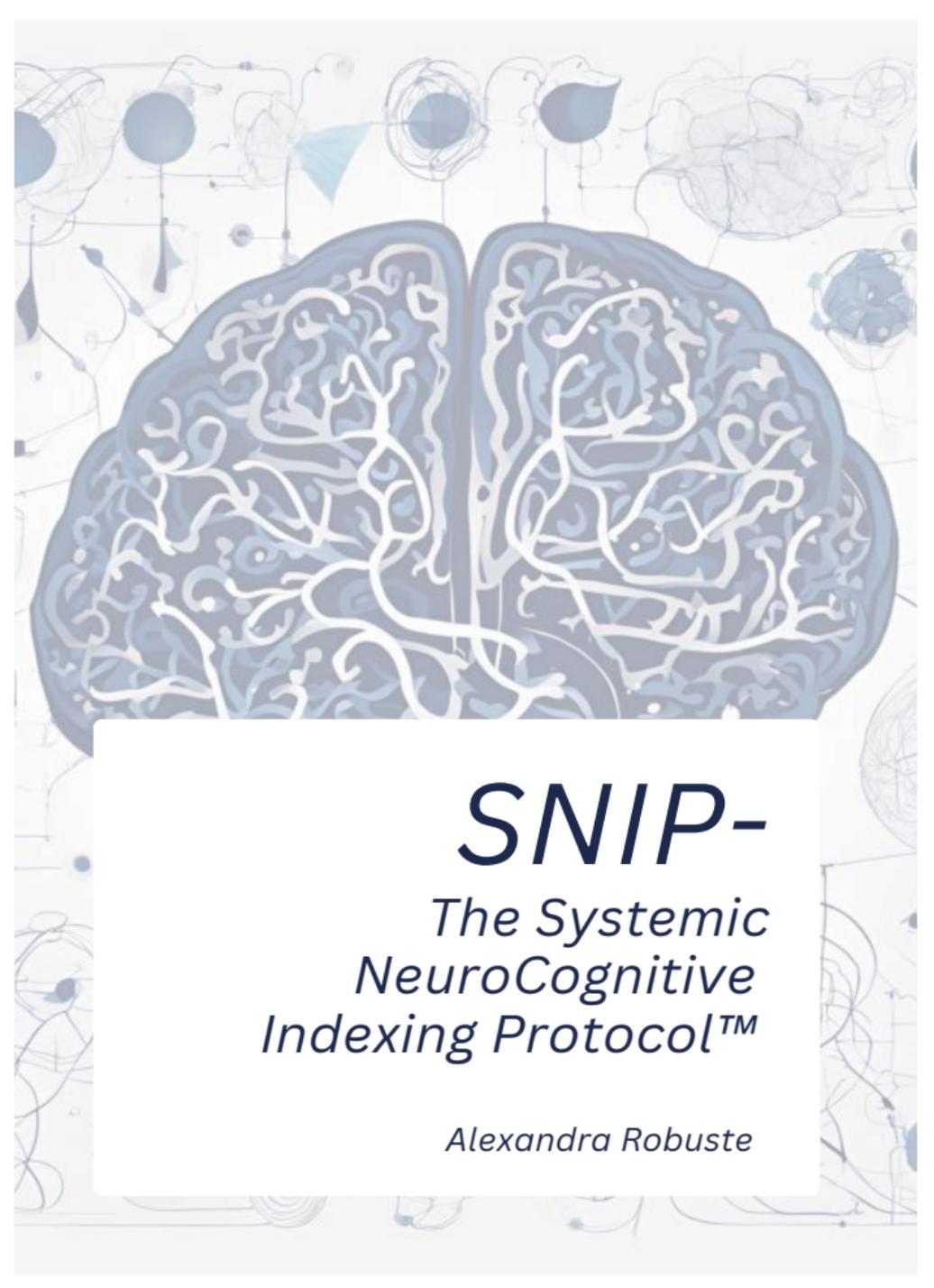
SNIP-

The Systemic NeuroCognitive Indexing Protocol™

Alexandra Robuste

First edition, released alongside
Gentle Leading & Neurodivergence (Routledge, 2025).

C O N T E N T S

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Abstract

The Systemic NeuroCognitive Indexing Protocol™ (SNIP)
SNIP™ is a neutral framework for understanding how people
process information, regulate energy, communicate, and
work.
It maps cognitive variation across five functional domains—
not through labels or diagnoses, but through how individuals
interact with their environment.

Core Principle
Cognition is dynamic and context-dependent. SNIP™
identifies patterns like attention shifts, sensory sensitivity,
emotional processing, energy rhythms, and task initiation—
revealing how these factors influence performance,
collaboration, and sustainability.

Application
Designed for leadership, coaching, and organizational design,
SNIP™ identifies where friction arises and how systems can be
adjusted to support different cognitive styles.
Behaviors are signals of fit or strain—not deficits.
The framework enables inclusive design, recovery-aware
practices, and sustainable capacity across neurodivergent
and neurotypical profiles.

Why SNIP™ Goes Beyond Personality Typologies

Personality models (MBTI, DISC, Structogram) describe preferences, behavior patterns, and motivation. They're useful for self-awareness and team alignment—but they show only part of how people function at work.

The Limits of Trait-Based Models

Most personality models assume people behave consistently across situations.

In reality, behavior changes with context, load, and pressure.

People with similar personality profiles may act very differently depending on:

- Stress level
- Environment and role demands
- Health, background, or life phase

Personality explains tendencies—not real-time functioning.

Three Dimensions Needed for Real-World Leadership

To understand how people actually work, collaborate, and sustain performance, three perspectives must be combined:

1. Stress Signatures – How People Shift Under Pressure

Under stress, cognitive and emotional patterns change:

- Attention narrows or scatters
- Regulation becomes harder
- Communication and decision-making shift

These changes are not personality flaws—they are stress regulation patterns.

The Stress Signature Spectrum™ identifies:

- Early signs of overload
- Typical stress responses
- Regulation and recovery needs

This awareness supports self-regulation and psychological safety in teams.

2. Neurocognitive Indexing – How People Function

Personality describes preferences. It does not explain how people process, regulate, and work in real time.

The Systemic NeuroCognitive Indexing Protocol™ (SNIP)
maps functional variation across five domains:

- Sensory & Emotional Processing
- Cognitive & Temporal Regulation
- Motor & Energy Rhythms
- Social & Communication Styles
- Executive Function & Systems Thinking

SNIP™ works without diagnoses or labels. It maps patterns like attention modulation, sensory reactivity, processing tempo, and working memory structure.
This enables inclusive design, better role fit, and strength-based leadership in cognitively diverse teams.

3. Triangulated Insight – A Systemic View

When these three perspectives combine:

- **Personality orientation** (who someone tends to be)
- **Stress expression** (how they shift under load)
- **Neurocognitive functioning** (how they operate across domains)

...a more accurate and humane understanding of performance emerges.

This model supports:

- Role alignment and team synergy
- Early detection of strain
- Sustainable performance design
- Reduced attribution bias in feedback and conflict

Leadership shifts from labeling people to designing systems that fit.

The Systemic NeuroCognitive Indexing Protocol™ (SNIP)

SNIP™ is a diagnostic-neutral framework for mapping neurocognitive variation across five functional domains.
It treats cognition as dynamic and context-dependent, not fixed.

SNIP™ helps identify:

- Friction points
- Alignment opportunities
- Latent strengths in individuals and teams

Detailed explanations, domain spectrums, and implementation tools are available in the full SNIP™ workbook. (Download)

The Five Domains of Cognitive Expression

SNIP™ describes cognitive functioning across five domains. Each highlights how people process, regulate, and interact with their environment.

1. Sensory & Emotional Processing
How sensory input and emotions are perceived, filtered, and regulated.

2. Cognitive & Temporal Regulation
How attention, memory, thinking pace, and time orientation are managed.

3. Motor & Energy Rhythms
How the body coordinates movement, posture, and energy over time.

4. Social & Communication Styles
How people signal, interpret, and manage interaction and social energy.

5. Executive Function & Systems Thinking
How tasks are planned, prioritized, decided, and integrated into systems.

These domains are descriptive lenses, not diagnostic categories.
All people—neurotypical and neurodivergent—show variation across each domain.

The 1–10 Spectrum: How to Read the Cards

Each friction area is expressed on a 1–10 spectrum.

This scale is **not evaluative and not norm-based:**

- Lower ranges (1–2): Low sensitivity, low activation, or muted expression
- Mid ranges (4–7): Often align with conventional work expectations
- Higher ranges (9–10): Heightened sensitivity, intensity, or capacity

No range is "good" or "bad." Meaning depends on context, role demands, environment, and interaction norms.

The cards support situational judgment, not categorization.

Applying SNIP™ in Leadership and Team Contexts

SNIP™ moves from awareness to structural design.

Identify Friction

Notice where work feels harder than expected.

Recognize Patterns

Look for recurring strain across domains or mismatches between role and rhythm.

Name Without Blame

Use shared language to describe friction as a system issue, not a personal flaw.

Align Roles and Rhythms
Adjust tasks, timing, and expectations to fit cognitive profiles.
Design Structural Supports
Apply concrete changes:

- Clearer priorities
- Flexible timing
- Adjusted communication formats
- Sensory or recovery buffers

Revisit Regularly
Cognitive expression shifts over time. Recalibration is part of the process.

Visualizing Cognitive Patterns
SNIP™ profiles can be shown as a **web chart** across the five domains.
This makes patterns, imbalances, and alignment gaps visible at a glance—supporting reflection, dialogue, and design decisions.

Conclusion
The **Systemic NeuroCognitive Indexing Protocol™ (SNIP)** offers a practical way to understand how people function in real work contexts.
By focusing on regulation, interaction, and system fit, SNIP™ helps leaders design environments where **cognitive variation becomes a resource rather than a problem.**

Using the SNIP Web Chart

A Visual Tool for Cognitive Patterns

The SNIP Web Chart (also called a radar or spider chart) shows how cognitive expression is distributed across the five SNIP domains.

It makes patterns visible that are hard to see in text or lists.

What the Web Chart Is Used For

The chart helps to:

- spot patterns across domains,
- notice imbalances or overload risk,
- see how well a role or environment fits a person or team,
- compare profiles over time or across roles.

How to Create the Chart

1. Score the Domains

Based on SNIP (self-reflection or observation), assign a score from 1–10 for each domain

(or use an average if multiple traits are involved).

2. Set Up the Chart

Create a chart with five axes, one per domain.

Each axis runs from 1 (low expression) to 10 (high expression).

3. Plot the Scores
Mark the score for each domain on its axis.

4. Connect the Points
Link the five points to form a shape.
This shape represents the cognitive pattern of a person or team.

How to Read the Chart
- Larger areas often indicate high energy, sensitivity, or capacity.
- Smaller areas may show low demand, lower activation, or underuse.
- Strong asymmetries can signal friction, imbalance, or stress risk.
- The overall shape gives insight into rhythm, fit, and sustainability.

There is no "ideal" shape.
Meaning always depends on role demands, environment, and expectations.

Practical Tip
You can overlay role or team demands as a second shape on the same chart.
Where the shapes clash, friction is likely.
Where they align, performance is usually more sustainable.

Domain 1: Sensory & Emotional Processing

How individuals perceive, filter, and regulate emotional and sensory input in dynamic environments.

1. Sensory Reactivity Spectrum

Attunement to light, sound, texture, or temperature; supports environmental awareness and sensory-aligned work design

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

Low registration (high sensory tolerance, calm in busy settings) ↔ High reactivity (fine sensory discrimination, strong aesthetic or sensory design awareness)

2. Emotional Processing Tempo

Internal pacing of emotional insight; shapes reflective capacity and emotional precision

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

Fast integration (real-time emotional clarity, decisive affective response) ↔ Gradual integration (thoughtful reflection, layered emotional insight)

3. Emotional Absorption

Depth of empathic resonance with others' emotions; enhances intuitive leadership and team alignment

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

Selective resonance (maintains clarity, grounded presence) ↔ Deep resonance (strong emotional intuition, interpersonal cohesion)

4. Regulation Recovery Time

Duration of recalibration after emotional or sensory activation; key to pacing and long-term sustainability

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

Quick reset (fast emotional recalibration, task re-engagement) ↔ Deep reset (thorough integration, restorative recovery)

Domain 1: Sensory & Emotional Processing

How individuals perceive, filter, and regulate emotional and sensory input in dynamic environments.

5. Affective Fluidity

Flexibility in emotional shifts across contexts; supports dynamic attunement and relational responsiveness

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Steady affect (consistent tone, dependable presence) ↔ Flexible affect (adaptable tone, emotionally versatile)

6. Interoceptive Clarity

Accuracy in reading internal physical signals; strengthens self-awareness and embodied decision-making

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Subtle awareness (focused externally, calm under pressure) ↔ High clarity (sharp bodily insight, regulation through physical cues)

7. Feedback Response Activation

Emotional engagement with feedback or critique; fosters motivation and adaptive growth

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Grounded reception (centered reflection, thoughtful consideration) ↔ Motivated responsiveness (energized by input, refinement-oriented)

8. Expressive Neutrality

Degree of visible emotional expression; shapes perceived calm, discretion, or emotional presence

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Composed presence (measured expression, stable demeanor) ↔ Expressive presence (clear affective signaling, relational openness)

Domain 1: Sensory & Emotional Processing
How individuals perceive, filter, and regulate emotional and sensory input in dynamic environments.

9. Sensory–Emotion Coupling
Interplay between sensory experience and emotional state; enables intentional mood shaping

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

Autonomous regulation (emotionally independent of sensory input) ↔ Co-regulated awareness (emotion guided through sensory tuning)

11. Environmental Control Urge
Need to shape, control, or modify the environment to maintain regulation; may support optimal function or reflect difficulty adapting to unpredictability

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

Low environmental influence (adapts flexibly to surroundings) ↔ High control orientation (optimizes settings for function and clarity)

12. Relational Rejection Sensitivity
Emotional intensity and cognitive preoccupation in response to perceived interpersonal rejection or criticism
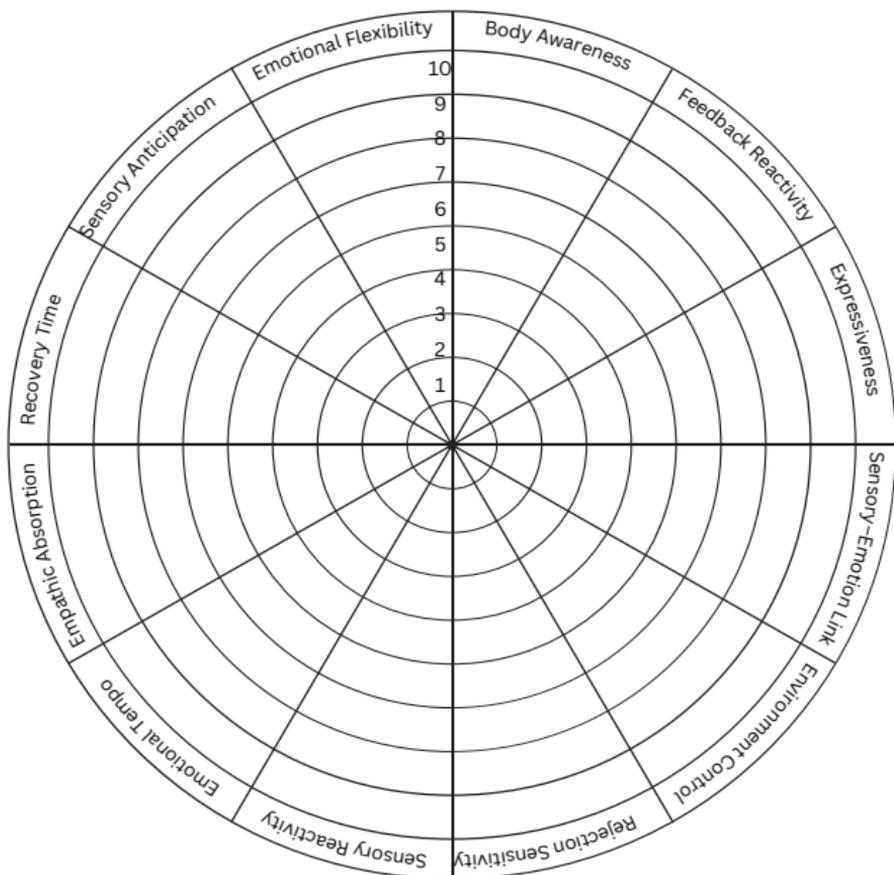
1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

Contextual buffer (interprets feedback through relational context, maintains internal grounding) ↔ Rejection-reactive (strong affective activation, high relational attunement)

The Systemic NeuroCognitive Indexing Protocol™ (SNIP)
Visualizing Cognitive Expression Across Domains

Domain 1 – Sensory & Emotional Processing

Domain 2: Cognitive & Temporal Regulation

How individuals focus attention, manage time, process information, and sustain cognitive engagement across diverse contexts.

1. Attention Engagement Pattern

Style of attention deployment across tasks; informs creative flow, focus strategy, and task matching

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

Agile switching (multi-stream attention, flexible engagement) ↔ Deep immersion (sustained focus, task absorption)

2. Time Perception Accuracy

Internal tracking of time intervals; supports flow state orientation or temporal planning strategies

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

Flexible timing (present-focused, creativity-supportive) ↔ Structured timing (precise estimation, reliable scheduling)

3. Cognitive Processing Tempo

Speed of integrating, connecting, or generating ideas; affects responsiveness and thought depth

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

Deliberate pace (thorough synthesis, reflective ideation) ↔ Rapid pace (quick insight generation, high ideational fluency)

4. Working Memory Capacity

Ability to hold, manipulate, and sequence mental content; critical for reasoning and adaptive learning

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

Focused retention (strong sequential memory, low distraction) ↔ Expansive tracking (multi-element processing, parallel threads)

Domain 2: Cognitive & Temporal Regulation
How individuals focus attention, manage time, process information, and sustain cognitive engagement across diverse contexts.

5. Task Initiation Momentum
Ease of entering tasks or transitions; contributes to project flow and executive efficiency
1　2　3　4　5　6　7　8　9　10
Strategic starter (prepares before acting, thoughtful pacing) ↔ Spontaneous starter (fast activation, low friction entry)

6. Cognitive Rhythm Regularity
Consistency of cognitive output across time; impacts predictability and work structuring
1　2　3　4　5　6　7　8　9　10
Burst-driven (high energy peaks, sprint-based cycles) ↔ Steady-state (reliable pacing, sustainable performance)

7. Verbal Retrieval Tempo
Speed and ease of accessing verbal content; shapes fluency under pressure and communication flow
1　2　3　4　5　6　7　8　9　10
Reflective access (intentional expression, precision prioritizing) ↔ Spontaneous access (fast articulation, fluid recall)

8. Thought Pattern Structure
Preferred format of reasoning and idea organization; supports different forms of problem-solving and innovation
1　2　3　4　5　6　7　8　9　10
Linear logic (stepwise, rule-based thinking) ↔ Associative logic (pattern-based, metaphor-rich ideation)

Domain 2: Cognitive & Temporal Regulation

How individuals focus attention, manage time, process information, and sustain cognitive engagement across diverse contexts.

9. Completion Consistency

Tendency to carry tasks to closure with or without structure; reflects drive or adaptive timing

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

Nonlinear finisher (flexible progress, context-responsive) ↔ Sequential finisher (order-focused, closure-oriented)

10. Prioritization Fluidity

Capacity to assign and adjust task importance; vital in dynamic, ambiguous, or values-based contexts

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

Contextual prioritizer (responsive to shifting needs) ↔ Structured prioritizer (clear task hierarchy, consistent focus)

11. Symbolic Processing Ease

Ability to interpret and work with abstract symbols such as numbers, graphs, or formulas

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

Intuitive interpreter (fast decoding, numeracy confidence) ↔ Pattern-sensitive adapter (relational thinking, avoids conventional metrics)

12. Sustained Attentional Immersion

Depth and duration of voluntary or involuntary concentration on a single task or topic

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

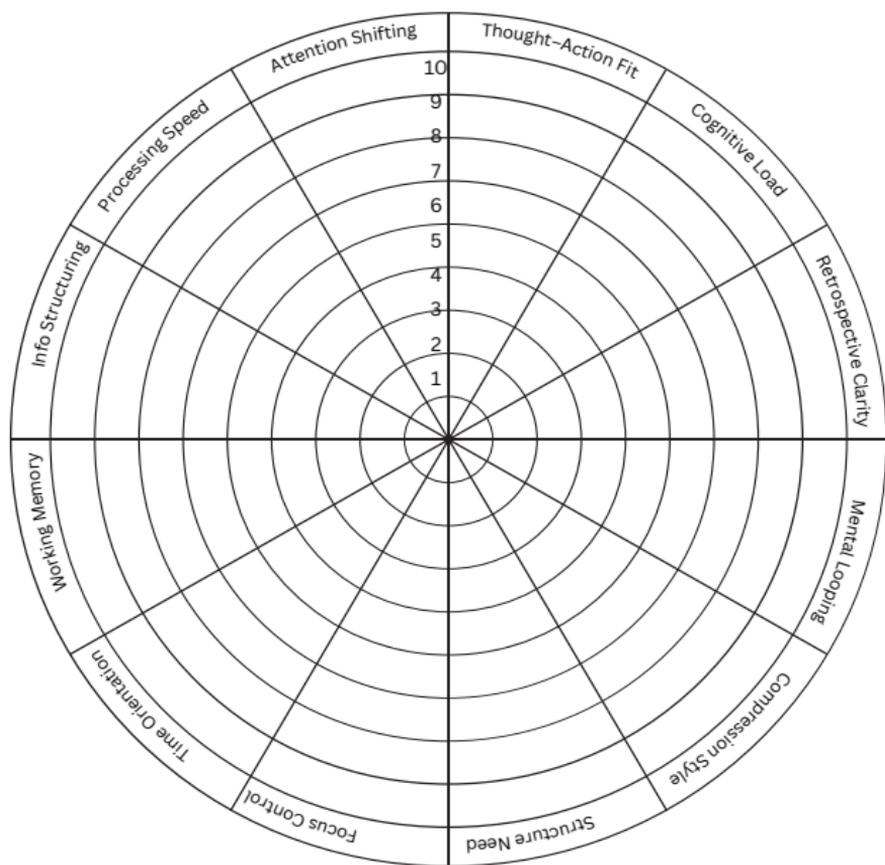Task fluidity (easy engagement and disengagement, balanced pacing) ↔ Hyper-immersive focus (deep, enduring task absorption, reduced distractibility)

The Systemic NeuroCognitive Indexing Protocol™ (SNIP)

Visualizing Cognitive Expression Across Domains

Domain 2 – Cognitive & Temporal Regulation

Domain 3: Motor & Energy Rhythms

How individuals regulate physical movement, motor planning, and cognitive or energetic flow across different demands and environments.

1. Boom–Bust Energy Rhythm

Pattern of fluctuating output and recovery; enables sprint-style productivity or rhythmic intensity

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Even pacing (sustained effort, reliable energy) ↔ Peak cycling (high-intensity bursts, creative momentum surges)

2. Movement–Focus Coupling

Use of physical motion to support attention or emotional regulation; relevant for kinesthetic learners and embodied thinkers

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Stillness-supported (focused while stationary, calm under pressure) ↔ Motion-supported (focus enhanced by movement, sensory-motor regulation)

3. Structured Recovery Implementation

Intentional use of pauses or pacing cycles to sustain energy and prevent burnout

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Flow-based pacing (natural rhythm, intuitive breaks) ↔ Deliberate pacing (planned recovery, proactive energy alignment)

4. Energy–Environment Synchrony

Degree of energetic alignment with external pace, tone, and sensory setting

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Internally paced (self-guided energy rhythm) ↔ Externally responsive (energized by environmental dynamics)

Domain 3: Motor & Energy Rhythms

How individuals regulate physical movement, motor planning, and cognitive or energetic flow across different demands and environments.

5. Motor Coordination Fluency

Ease of physical movement and sequencing in fine or gross motor tasks

⬜ 1 ⬜ 2 ⬜ 3 ⬜ 4 ⬜ 5 ⬜ 6 ⬜ 7 ⬜ 8 ⬜ 9 ⬜ 10

Compact motion (deliberate and economical) ↔ Fluid motion (graceful coordination, high kinetic ease)

6. Energy Anticipation Accuracy

Ability to predict one's energy use and recovery time for future tasks or events

⬜ 1 ⬜ 2 ⬜ 3 ⬜ 4 ⬜ 5 ⬜ 6 ⬜ 7 ⬜ 8 ⬜ 9 ⬜ 10

Spontaneous responder (intuitive energy access) ↔ Strategic planner (realistic pacing, anticipatory calibration)

7. Task–Motion Coupling

Need for physical engagement to sustain mental presence; relevant in tactile or field-based roles

⬜ 1 ⬜ 2 ⬜ 3 ⬜ 4 ⬜ 5 ⬜ 6 ⬜ 7 ⬜ 8 ⬜ 9 ⬜ 10

Cognitively anchored (mind-based engagement, low physical need) ↔ Kinesthetically anchored (task clarity through movement, tactile grounding)

8. Postural Regulation under Stress

Shifts in body tension or form under pressure; functions as a signal for self-regulation or external stress readability

⬜ 1 ⬜ 2 ⬜ 3 ⬜ 4 ⬜ 5 ⬜ 6 ⬜ 7 ⬜ 8 ⬜ 9 ⬜ 10

Stable alignment (postural composure, steady presence) ↔ Adaptive signaling (responsive shifts, embodied emotional cues)

Domain 3: Motor & Energy Rhythms

How individuals regulate physical movement, motor planning, and cognitive or energetic flow across different demands and environments.

9. Activity–Rest Transition Ease

Smoothness in shifting between doing and resting states; central to sustainable engagement

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

Structured boundaries (clear work–rest segmentation) ↔ Fluid transitions (organic flow between exertion and restoration)

10. Gesture–Speech Integration

Use of gestures to scaffold or reinforce verbal communication

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

Language-led (verbal precision, minimal gesture reliance) ↔ Gesture-enhanced (embodied emphasis, expressive communication)

11. Input Saturation Threshold

Level of cognitive, sensory, or emotional input that can be comfortably held before needing reset

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

High bandwidth (integrates high-volume input fluidly) ↔ Sensitive threshold (early awareness of overload, needs pacing)

12. Hidden Motor Effort

Level of internal effort required to plan, execute, or inhibit physical movement or motor expression

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

Low effort (movement feels natural, minimal planning load) ↔ High effort (movement requires conscious regulation, energy-intensive coordination)

The Systemic NeuroCognitive Indexing Protocol™ (SNIP)

Visualizing Cognitive Expression Across Domains

Domain 3 – Motor & Energy Rhythms
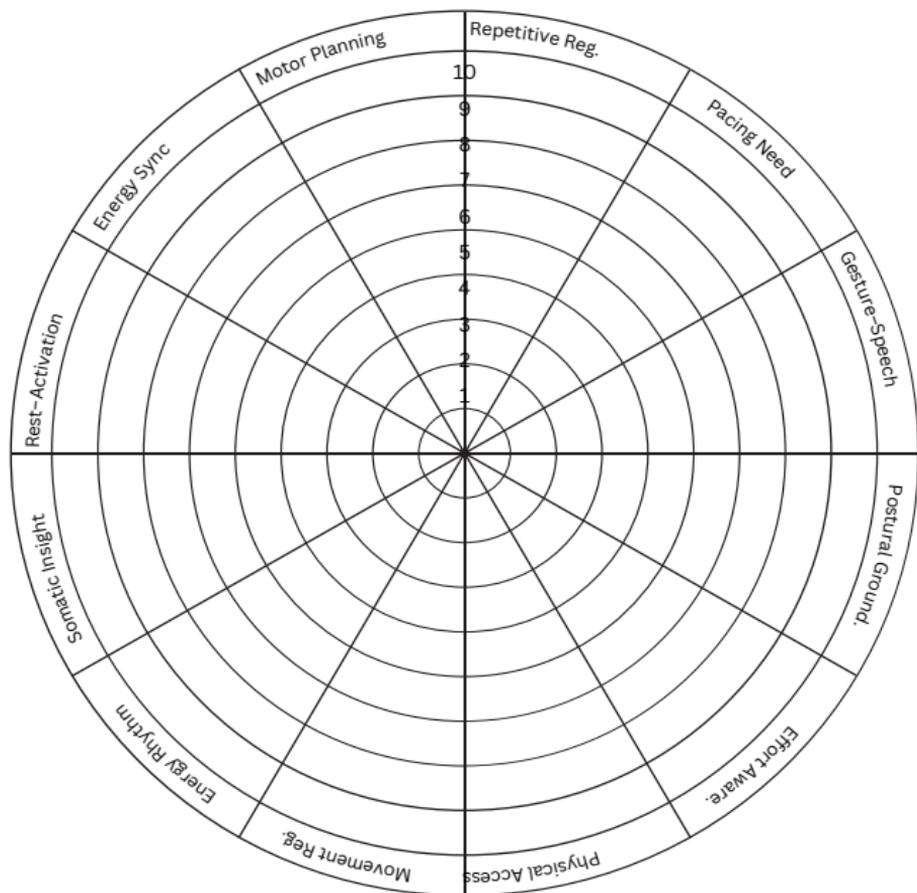
Domain 4: Social & Communication Styles

How individuals initiate, interpret, and navigate relational interactions and expressive modalities in workplace and leadership environments.

1. Moral Discomfort Sensitivity

Attunement to ethical incongruence in communication or relationships; influences voice and resistance

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

Harmony-oriented (values relational peace, pragmatic alignment) ↔ Ethics-oriented (calls attention to value misalignment)

2. Literal Interpretation Tendency

Degree of focus on surface meaning vs. implied message; impacts precision and inferential decoding

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

Concrete decoder (clear communication preference, strong clarity orientation) ↔ Contextual decoder (nuanced reading, high subtext sensitivity)

3. Code-Switching Agility

Ease of shifting between communication registers based on context or role

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

Style-consistent (authenticity anchored, coherent tone) ↔ Register-adaptive (situationally flexible, audience-aware)

4. Social Energy Rhythm

Energy dynamics in social engagement; informs interaction pacing and role fit

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

Focused engagement (high-quality, short-span social input) ↔ Sustained engagement (long-form social stamina, relational anchoring)

Domain 4: Social & Communication Styles
How individuals initiate, interpret, and navigate relational interactions
and expressive modalities in workplace and leadership environments.

5. Listening Fidelity
Depth and detail of auditory and emotional listening; affects retention,
attunement, and feedback quality
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10
Big-picture listener (intuitive gist, pattern recognition) ↔ Precision
listener (fine-grained tracking, high-resolution memory)

6. Nonverbal Signal Interpretation
Capacity to interpret gesture, tone, and body language; shapes
implicit communication fluency
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10
Verbal-first (prefers explicit content) ↔ Nonverbal intuitive (subtle cue
recognition, empathic alignment)

7. Authenticity Orientation
Tendency to favor direct, unfiltered expression over social
performance or impression management
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10
Diplomatic presence (tone-conscious, socially attuned) ↔ Transparent
presence (honest signaling, high congruence)

8. Communication Pre-Scripting
Use of internal rehearsal or structured preparation in social
interactions; aids clarity or stability
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10
Spontaneous speaker (responsive, adaptive verbal flow) ↔ Pre-
planned speaker (precise articulation, structured clarity)

Domain 4: Social & Communication Styles

How individuals initiate, interpret, and navigate relational interactions and expressive modalities in workplace and leadership environments.

9. Expression Format Preference

Comfort with different relational modes such as 1:1, small group, or large audience; informs visibility and influence

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

Group communicator (energized by collective spaces) ↔ One-on-one communicator (depth-focused, personalized interaction)

10. Message Precision vs. Social Buffering

Balance between verbal clarity and emotional cushioning; reflects communication strategy

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

Tone-buffered (relationally softened delivery) ↔ Clarity-prioritized (direct messaging, reduced ambiguity)

11. Language Decoding Fluency

Ease of processing written and spoken language, including speed and mental effort involved

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

Contextual processor (meaning-based, gist-focused) ↔ Fluent decoder (rapid parsing, verbal structure clarity)

12. Social Visibility Engagement

Level of comfort, regulation effort, and intentionality involved in being socially visible, including eye contact, facial expression, and public presence
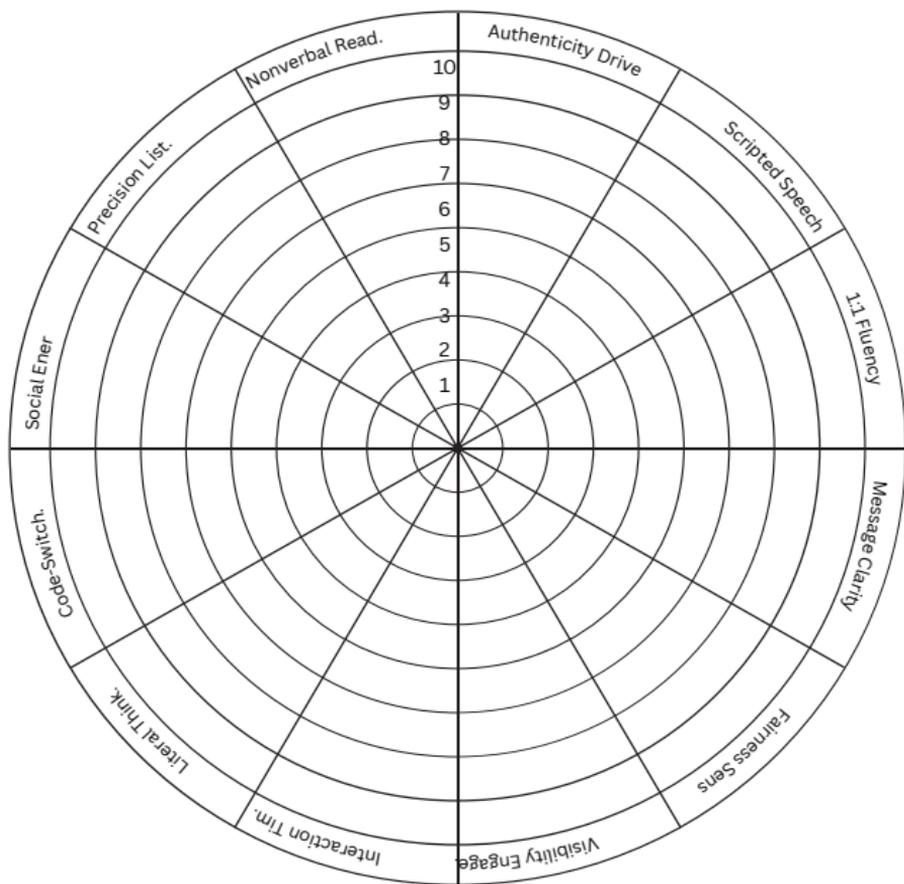
1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

Subtle presence (prefers low visibility, communicates through content or quiet contribution) ↔ Expressive presence (comfortable with eye contact and visibility, actively engaged in relational space)

The Systemic NeuroCognitive Indexing Protocol™ (SNIP)
Visualizing Cognitive Expression Across Domains

Domain 4 – Social & Communication Styles

Domain 5: Executive Function & Systems Thinking
How individuals plan, prioritize, sustain execution, and conceptualize structure in dynamic, goal-oriented environments.

1. Task Initiation Activation
Ease of starting tasks or transitions into action; reflects motivational access and entry momentum

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Strategic starter (prefers clarity before action) ↔ Rapid starter (low friction entry, responsive to prompt)

2. Cognitive Overclocking Drive
Internal drive toward mental complexity, abstraction, and speed of synthesis

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Stable processor (balanced load management, sustained clarity) ↔ Overclocked synthesizer (high-speed pattern generation, abstract integration)

3. Prioritization Mapping
Skill in sequencing tasks and allocating effort based on urgency, value, or strategic relevance

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Value-centered prioritizer (guided by long-term meaning) ↔ Structure-centered prioritizer (organized by timelines and deliverables)

4. Systems Thinking Orientation
Orientation toward identifying patterns, feedback loops, and structural interdependencies

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Tactical executor (efficient in specific tasks) ↔ Systemic integrator (frames problems through interconnected systems.

Domain 5: Executive Function & Systems Thinking
How individuals plan, prioritize, sustain execution, and conceptualize structure in dynamic, goal-oriented environments.

5. Abstraction Zoom Control
Ability to shift between detail-level execution and broad strategic framing

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

Detail stabilizer (precision-focused, close-range thinker) ↔ Scope shifter (navigates seamlessly between macro and micro levels)

6. Internal Structuring of Working Memory
Use of internal schemas to organize cognitive material; enables complex planning and adaptive recall

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

Externalizer (prefers lists and tools) ↔ Internal mapper (retains cognitive frameworks mentally)

7. Completion Consistency
Follow-through across stages of task execution; shapes output reliability and goal pacing

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

Adaptive finisher (flexible timing, creative endpoint pathways) ↔ Sequential finisher (steady pacing, structured closure)

8. Delegation Fluency
Ease in transferring responsibility, tasks, or roles to others while maintaining process integrity

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

Ownership-oriented (prefers direct execution, detail control) ↔ Transfer-oriented (trusts others with tasks, distributes workload effectively)

Domain 5: Executive Function & Systems Thinking
How individuals plan, prioritize, sustain execution, and conceptualize
structure in dynamic, goal-oriented environments.

9. Innovation Under Constraint
 Ability to generate novel strategies when resources, time, or structure
are limited
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10
 Planner–builder (thrives with preparation) ↔ Constraint innovator
(creative under pressure, adaptive reframing)

10. Decision Fatigue Susceptibility
 Resilience in navigating multiple decisions in succession; reflects
cognitive endurance and prioritization pacing
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10
 Quick fatigability (relies on defaults, avoids overload) ↔ Sustained
pacing (maintains clarity across extended decision flows)

11. Clarity in Ambiguous Decisions
Ability to make confident, informed choices under uncertainty; draws
on pattern recognition and contextual trust
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10
 Deliberative caution (waits for full clarity, minimizes risk) ↔ Intuitive
synthesis (navigates ambiguity with insight and speed)

12. Structural Adaptation Agility
 Ease in adjusting workflows, schedules, or tools when conditions shift;
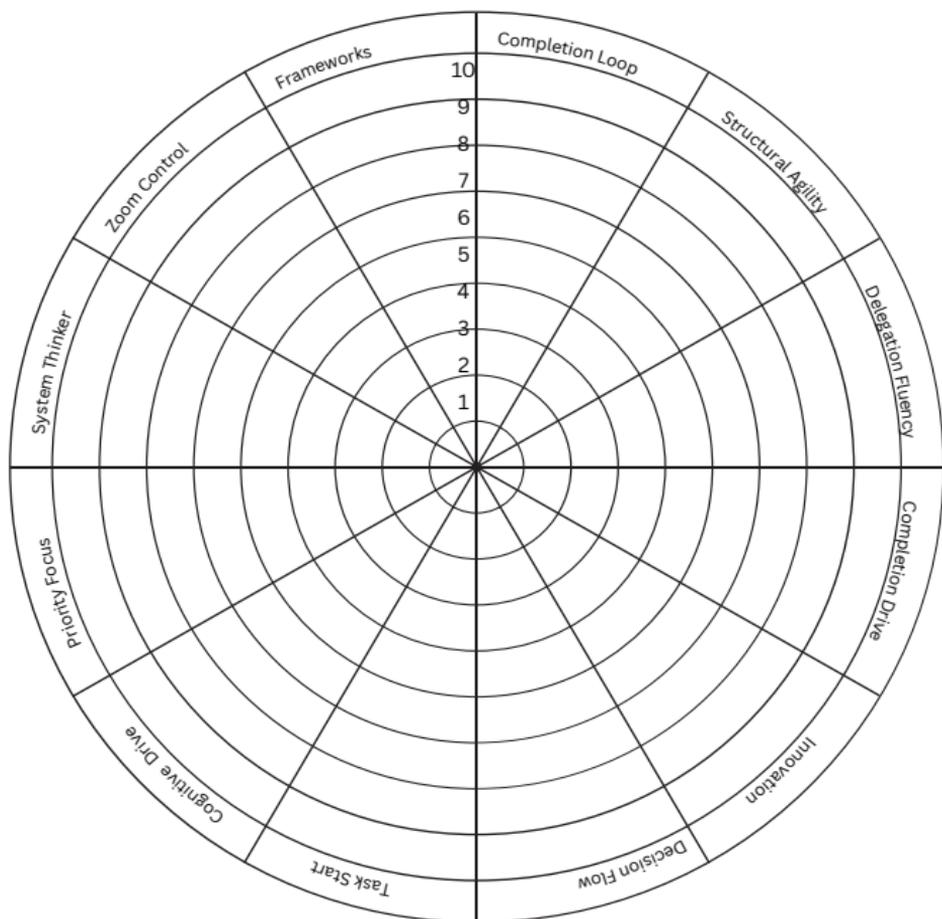enhances sustainability, though may destabilize routines
☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10
 Structure rigidity ↔ Flexible system adjustment

The Systemic NeuroCognitive Indexing Protocol™ (SNIP)
Visualizing Cognitive Expression Across Domains

Domain 5 – Executive Function & Systems Thinking

Download all sheets, questionnaires, and additional neurofriendly frameworks here.

Download the digital cards here — free, one-time access.

How to Use the Cards at Work

This deck translates neurocognitive friction into actionable design—at both organizational and personal levels.

Step 1 – Identify Friction (Use SNIP™)

Scan situations where work feels harder than expected. Locate friction across sensory, cognitive, motor, social, or executive domains—without diagnosis or blame.
SNIP™ asks: Where is strain occurring in the system?

Step 2 – Select the Relevant Card(s)

Each card represents a specific friction area. Choose card(s) that describe what's happening. Cards provide shared, neutral language to name friction clearly.

Step 3 – Apply Design Responses (Organizational Level)

Every card includes Design Responses—structural adjustments that reduce friction through system design, not individual effort.

Design responses adjust:
- Meeting formats and communication timing
- Task structure and decision clarity
- Sensory conditions and workspace design
- Recovery windows and pacing norms

Focus: Change the structure, not the person.

Step 4 – Use 3-Step Protocols (Personal Level)

The **3-Step Protocols** offer simple, repeatable actions for real-time regulation when friction appears.

Protocols support:
- Regulation under load
- Clarity in the moment
- Continuity without escalation

Easy to remember • Low threshold • Adaptable across roles

Important Framing

These cards describe patterns of interaction between people and systems—not individual deficits. Use them to design better work conditions, not to evaluate people.

Domain 1 – Sensory & Emotional Processing
How input is felt, filtered, and regulated

1. **Sensory Reactivity** – Heightened responsiveness to noise, light, movement, or visual density.
2. **Emotional Processing Lag** – Emotional clarity emerges after the moment rather than in real time.
3. **Emotional Absorption** – Tendency to take on others' emotional states unintentionally.
4. **Regulation Recovery Time** – Extended time needed to return to baseline after activation.
5. **Sensory Predictability Need** – Strong reliance on knowing sensory conditions in advance.
6. **Affective Fluidity** – Emotional tone shifts with context while commitment remains stable.
7. **Interoceptive Awareness Lag** – Delayed awareness of internal body signals and limits.
8. **Feedback Reactivity** – Emotional activation that blocks feedback comprehension temporarily.
9. **Expressive Neutrality Misread** – Inner engagement not visible through facial or vocal cues.
10. **Sensory–Emotion Coupling** – Emotional state tightly linked to sensory conditions.
11. **Environmental Density Load** – Cognitive strain caused by crowded or stimulus-heavy settings.

12. **Emotional Masking Cost** – Energy drain from suppressing visible emotional responses.
13. **Relational Rejection Sensitivity** – Strong reaction to ambiguous or delayed social signals.
14. **Environmental Control Urge** – Need for stable surroundings to preserve regulation capacity.

Domain 2 – Cognitive & Temporal Regulation
How thinking, attention, and time unfold

1. **Attention Modulation –** Focus varies strongly by task type and context.
2. **Hyperfocus Containment** – Deep focus that overrides time, body, and task switching.
3. **Distractibility Susceptibility** – High sensitivity to competing inputs and interruptions.
4. **Processing Speed Variability** – Thinking speed fluctuates with load and stress.
5. **Cognitive Transition Cost** – High energy loss when switching mental modes.
6. **Temporal Orientation Mismatch** – Misalignment between natural and expected time horizons.
7. **Time Estimation Inaccuracy** – Systematic over- or underestimation of task duration.
8. **Mental Fatigue Threshold** – Sudden performance drop after sustained cognitive effort.

9. **Working Memory Load –** Difficulty holding multiple elements in mind under pressure.
10. **Thought Density Overload** – Too many parallel thoughts competing for priority.
11. **Cognitive Pacing Mismatch** – Tension between natural thinking pace and imposed tempo.
12. **Task Completion Drop-Off** – Energy decline near the final phase of tasks.
13. **Information Structuring Load** – Difficulty organizing unstructured input in real time.
14. **Retrospective Clarity Delay** – Insight and learning emerge only after the fact.

Domain 3 – Motor & Energy Rhythms
How the body enables or constrains work
1. **Movement Planning Effort** – Disproportionate effort required to sequence physical actions.
2. **Motor Fatigue Accumulation** – Gradual physical strain from repetitive or sustained movement.
3. **Energy–Task Misalignment** – Task demands clash with available energy levels.
4. **Boom–Bust Energy Cycles** – Intense output bursts followed by depletion.
5. **Somatic Signal Delay** – Late detection of physical strain or fatigue.

6. **Postural Load Cost** – Energy drain from maintaining static positions.
7. **Fine Motor Variability** – Precision fluctuates with pressure, fatigue, or speed.
8. **Motor Initiation Lag** – Delay between intention and physical start.
9. **Movement Suppression Cost** – Energy loss from inhibiting natural movement.
10. **Sensory–Motor Interference** – Sensory overload disrupting coordination and accuracy.
11. **Environment–Body Mismatch** – Space and layout increasing physical effort.
12. **Gesture–Speech Dependency** – Verbal clarity relying on freedom of movement.
13. **Physical Access Overhead** – Hidden energy cost from distance, layout, or transitions.
14. **Visibility-Driven Motor Inhibition** – Movement restriction under observation or scrutiny.

Domain 4 – Social & Communication Styles
How interaction and meaning are navigated
1. **Response Timing Lag** – Pause needed before clear verbal response.

2. **Literal Interpretation Bias** – Preference for explicit, precise language over implication.
3. **Contextual Code-Switching Load** – Cognitive cost of adjusting style across settings.
4. **Social Energy Depletion** – Interaction draining energy even when positive.
5. **High-Fidelity Listening Load** – Deep listening consuming significant cognitive capacity.
6. **Nonverbal Signal Ambiguity** – Difficulty reading or expressing body-based cues.
7. **Authenticity–Politeness Tension** – Friction between directness and social smoothing norms.
8. **Script Reliance Under Pressure** – Prepared language needed for clarity.
9. **Group Visibility Suppression** – Reduced expression in group contexts.
10. **Precision vs Social Buffering** – Accuracy compromised by tone expectations.
11. **Relational Justice Sensitivity** – Strong reaction to perceived unfairness.
12. **Moral Misalignment Stress** – Activation when actions conflict with values.
13. **Empathic Overidentification** – Carrying others' emotions beyond interaction.
14. **Public Visibility Regulation Shift** – Performance changes under observation.

Domain 5 – Executive Function & Systems Thinking
How action, decisions, and systems are organized

1. **Task Initiation Friction** – Difficulty starting despite clear intent.
2. **Cognitive Transition Drain** – Energy loss from frequent task switching.
3. **Priority Ambiguity** – Inability to sequence equally urgent demands.
4. **Structural Opacity** – Action blocked by unclear or implicit processes.
5. **Nonlinear Execution Misfit** – Effective work paths misread as disorderly.
6. **Decision Boundary Uncertainty** – Unclear authority to decide or escalate.
7. **Complexity Saturation** – Overload from tracking interdependencies.
8. **Working Memory Dependence** – Reliance on mental holding instead of external systems.
9. **Planning Horizon Mismatch** – Conflict between short- and long-term focus.
10. **Delegation Breakdown** – Over- or under-functioning due to unclear outcomes.

Domain 5 – Executive Function & Systems Thinking
How action, decisions, and systems are organized

11. **Error Anticipation Overdrive** – Excessive checking driven by risk vigilance.
12. **Scaling Friction** – Systems failing as scope or size increases.
13. **Accountability Diffusion** – Tasks drifting due to unclear ownership.
14. **Insight-to-System Gap** – Learning not translated into structural change.

Conclusion: From Insight to Sustainable Change

Insight creates orientation. Change requires pacing. When mapping friction across domains, it is common to recognize many pressure points at once. This awareness reflects clarity rather than excess. At the same time, meaningful change emerges through sequence, not simultaneity. Progress strengthens when attention is focused and capacity is respected. If more than three to five friction areas surfaced during this process, consider this a signal to slow the starting point. Begin by reviewing the areas identified and placing them in an order that feels intuitively right. Priority does not need justification at this stage. Trust the internal sense of what currently carries the most weight.

From there, gently narrow the field. Cross out the areas that feel less immediate or less impactful right now. Continue this process until one clear and realistic starting point remains. This approach protects energy, supports follow-through, and allows change to become visible early rather than postponed by overload.

Working with one focus area at a time creates momentum. Small adjustments build confidence. Early shifts often generate relief, which reinforces engagement and supports regulation. Each completed step provides feedback to the nervous system that progress is underway.

Consistency matters more than speed. A slower, steady rhythm allows integration. Space between actions supports recovery. Attention remains available rather than fragmented.
As changes begin to take effect, pause to acknowledge them. Success benefits from recognition. Even subtle improvements deserve to be noticed and honored. This practice strengthens motivation and builds trust in the process.

This work is not about correcting a system. It is about aligning with it. Sustainable change grows through clarity, pacing, and respect for capacity. Begin where it feels possible. Continue with intention. Let progress accumulate.

Cognitive friction is not a personal failure.
It is information about fit, load, and design.
When systems adapt, people do not need to compensate.
When language becomes precise, dignity is restored.
Use these cards to design work that allows people to
function, not perform.
Explore more frameworks for neuroinclusive leadership and
stay up to date with our Blog:

www.alexandrarobuste.com

Conclusion: From Insight to Integration

The SNIP Web Chart transforms abstract cognitive patterns into tangible, visual structures—bridging the gap between individual neurocognitive insight and systemic leadership application. Rather than labeling behavior or standardizing performance, this model invites leaders and teams to explore variation as an adaptive resource. When interpreted contextually, the visual map reveals where alignment supports performance—and where misfit generates friction, disengagement, or invisible labor.

By embedding these insights into leadership routines, the SNIP framework strengthens psychological safety, promotes role clarity, and supports the design of sustainable, rhythm-aligned work environments.

Team Implementation: Practical Tips

- **Introduce SNIP as neutral:** Frame it as a cognitive mapping tool—not a diagnosis—focused on function and alignment.
- **Encourage voluntary use:** Let team members self-map or reflect collaboratively; disclosure remains optional.
- **Discuss patterns safely:** Use group visuals or anonymized trends to explore alignment, tension, and support needs.
- **Align roles with expression:** Compare web charts with actual task demands to identify fit, friction, or overload zones.
- **Calibrate workflows:** Adjust pacing, communication, and recovery based on domain-level insights.
- **Integrate into team rhythms:** Use SNIP in retrospectives, onboarding, or planning to inform sustainable collaboration.
- **Revisit periodically:** Remap as conditions, roles, or team dynamics evolve.

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