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# Neuroinclusion at Susquehanna University

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# Susquehanna University

- Small, rural liberal arts college in central Pennsylvania
- ~2,200 undergrads, very small grad population
- Very economically diverse student body
- 1/3 first-gen
- Business, creative writing, music, education & bio most popular majors
- Mostly residential except for about 100 commuters

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# Who

- 15% of SU students have documented disabilities with Disability Services
  - Most are neurodivergent (ASD, ADHD, Dyslexia, etc.)
  - Not all neurodiverse students may be registered with Disability Services
    - True number is unknown
- 17% of SU students have utilized CAPS
  - Doesn't account for students using non-SU therapists
- Numbers increase each year
- These students have unique study needs

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# Why

- Counseling & Psychological Services Autism Spectrum Disorder & Neuro-Diversity Student Group
  - Troubled by bright lights, loud noises, windows, furniture, number of people
  - Student Testimony:
    - “Because of the occupancy counter, I came to the library for the first time this semester.”
    - “I struggle to use the study rooms because the glass makes me feel like people are watching me.”

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# Why

- Autism Student Union
  - “College life, no matter who or where you are, can be overwhelming. However, when our institution takes actionable steps to show that students deserve spaces to be able to destress, mentally recharge, and stim-freely, it goes a long way to help us as neurodivergent students that we are seen, heard, and understood. SU is already such an inclusive and welcoming space as a community, it would be wonderful if there was more tangible representation of that love, beyond just the Take5 spaces.”

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# Why

- CAPS
  - “I fully support your efforts and hope that the sensory rooms get a nice refresh,” Christy Rupert, Associate Director, CAPS
- CAS/Disability Services
  - “Sensory-friendly study rooms spaces are incredibly valuable for students who experience sensory sensitivities, as they provide a quieter and more controlled environment that supports focus, comfort, and academic success. Continued access to these study areas can make a meaningful difference in ensuring an inclusive and supportive learning environment on the campus of SU,” Barb Hayes, Associate Director, Disability Services

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# Why

- Response to current rooms: '24-'25 data
  - “I just want to mention the vibes are really nice in the room.” (anonymous survey response)
  - 1221 unique users
    - 57% of student body
  - 2791 bookings
    - 400% increase from '21-'22 to '22-'23 when first rooms were created
    - 1,073% increase since '21-'22 to '24-'25
      - Note: Does not include any walk-ins or use of extra items around building

# What & How

- 6 sensory-friendly study rooms
- Occupancy counter on library website
- Library tour with CAPS group
- FAQ Visibility
- Art donation
- Outreach to Autism Student Union
- Extra fidget kits and weighted blankets



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# Where (we're going next!)

- Sensory Audit
- LibGuide
- Circulating kits
- Refreshing study rooms
- Instruction
- Makerspace fidgets

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# Research

- Boyer, A. M., & El-Chidiac, A. (Eds.). (2025). *Supporting Neurodiverse Students in Academic Libraries*. Association of College & Research Libraries.
- Boyer, A. M., & El-Chidiac, A. (2023). Come Chill Out at the Library: Creating Soothing Spaces for Neurodiverse Students. *Journal of New Librarianship*, 8(1), 41–47. <https://doi.org/10.33011/newlibs/13/5>
- <https://www.susqu.edu/1570-blough-weis-library-creates-spaces-for/>
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