39. Sprite Combat Reactions & Skill Casting — Concept Layer (Hard Canon)

This page defines the conceptual layer for sprite-based combat reactions and skill casting visuals. It describes the design philosophy, narrative intent, and visual logic behind how characters react to receiving and casting skills during gameplay. This page intentionally avoids implementation details; technical realization is described separately in Page 40.

Design Intent
Combat interactions in World of Tetris are designed to feel physical, reactive, and emotionally grounded. Every impactful action should visibly affect the involved characters, reinforcing the sensation that skills and spells interact with living entities rather than abstract systems.

Separation of Layers
Sprite combat reactions are a gameplay visual layer distinct from UI avatars and emotional portraits. All mechanics described on this page apply exclusively to the lower sprite models displayed within the gameplay field. Upper UI avatars respond only through emotional states and are not affected by combat reactions.

Receiving Skill Impact
When a character receives a skill or spell, their sprite visually reacts based on the intensity of the impact. Reactions are categorized by impact level rather than by individual skill identity, ensuring visual consistency and manageable production scope.

Impact Intensity Philosophy
Low-intensity impacts convey disruption without breaking momentum, medium impacts emphasize danger, and high-intensity impacts create momentary loss of control. Ultimate-level impacts are treated as visually disruptive events that temporarily override the normal rhythm of play.

Skill Casting Visualization
Characters visibly react when casting skills. Routine skills share a unified casting animation to maintain clarity and reduce visual noise, while ultimate abilities receive a dedicated, more dramatic casting animation to emphasize their importance.

Overlay Effects
All skills and spells generate overlay visual effects that communicate the nature of the ability (fire, force, corruption, etc.). Overlay effects complement, but never replace, sprite reactions.

Narrative Consistency
Combat reactions support narrative logic by reinforcing physicality, vulnerability, and power dynamics. The player intuitively understands the severity of actions through motion and posture rather than explicit numbers.

Production Efficiency
By abstracting reactions into a limited set of impact levels and casting states, the system achieves AAA-level responsiveness without requiring excessive unique animations.

Canon Status
This conceptual framework is mandatory. All future implementations of sprite combat reactions and skill casting visuals must conform to the principles described on this page.