



# Understanding our senses

## Auditory

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"Noise is my big difficulty. Everything is so loud and distracting and overwhelming!

There's background noise and noise from machines and people and animals."

Phoebe

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## Familiarity with sounds and objects/people.

As we are exposed to the same sounds over and over again we will begin to create relationships to these sounds.

For example when you answer the phone, if it is someone you are close to you are likely to recognise their voice before they say their name. Our brains are really clever at connecting this information together.

It's the same for sounds in our environment too, think about when you hear a sound that is scary. We may jump in response to it because we don't expect it but also because we are not familiar with hearing that sound in that context.

Adding meaning to sounds is really important in reducing anxiety, especially if someone is hyper sensitive to sound.

You may find yourself relying in this sensory system more than others. It's an external sensory system, sounds enter our ear from outside of our body.

Our auditory processing helps us to understand where we are relationship to a sound.

Sound enters our ear, our eardrum vibrates and 3 tiny bones in our ear amplify these vibrations which tells the cochlea what type of sound it is. We hear through vibrations and electrical impulses are travelled to our brain where we interpret this noise.

Many deaf people can still enjoy music as they can feel the vibration and their brain translates this into a meaningful sound.

Therefore anything in our environment which creates a vibration - makes a sound. This means we don't always consider that as we are tuning into such a small amount of these sounds.

## Tuning into other sounds

We commonly hear from people with SPD about the sounds which distract them in their environment. This can be difficult for many of us to understand as we are not tuning into these sounds.

Part of this is relating to the frequencies that my brain tunes into but otherwise it's the response from my brain alerting me to the sounds which it is tuning into. Over time our brains learn to 'ignore' sounds that are subtle or not important in the situation we are in. However for some people with auditory sensitivities they will be hearing these sound frequencies each time as their brain is finding it really difficult to tune out.

Many people I work with have described it as though 'all of the sounds in my environment are at full volume'.

Imagine being in the room you're in and everything that creates a vibration is making a sound as loud as when you speak. It would very quickly become really overwhelming and confusing for you and you'd probably just want to shut off as many of the annoying sounds as quickly as possible.

This information is based on our online training 'Understanding our senses' you can find these online via our website shop.

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