

Sensory Questionnaire

Sense of Hearing

Greater Glasgow and Clyde



This series of Sensory Questionnaires are designed to enable you to support your child's progress at different stages of sensory development.

YOUR SENSE OF HEARING

Listening to the world around us helps us make sense of where we are. Some children can be very sensitive to sound and can react badly to sudden loud noises. This is very common and is part of normal development, however some children can remain sensitive to sound much longer than others.

If you suspect your child does not process auditory information as well as they should please complete the following questionnaire and then try using the downloadable strategies to help them.

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Question 1 - Auditory (12 - 18 Years)

Question 1

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Do you dislike certain unexpected loud noises e.g. fire alarms, telephones or hoovers etc. Are some noises quite unpleasant or uncomfortable for you?

Do you ever find yourself covering your ears but other people round about you don't seem to be that bothered by whatever noise you heard? If you know that noises are particularly hard for you to deal with then try the following strategies:



Strategies and Suggestions

The world can be a noisy place and won't always change to suit you. You need to find ways of dealing with the everyday noises that surround us all. Try using ear plugs or headphones to deaden the noises you find hardest to deal with.



Listening to music through ear buds or headphones can make using public transport much easier to deal with. You are less aware of the noise of the bus or train and less aware of the chatter from people around you if you are listening to your favourite songs.



Ask your parent or teacher to provide you with warnings ahead of time if you are approaching a place or situation where there will be lots of noise. Keeping a small pair of ear plugs in your pocket means you will always be prepared for noisy situations.

Sometimes the hand drier in a public toilet can cause distress to people with a sensitivity to noise. Try using paper towels instead of hand driers, or even keeping a bottle of sanitising gel in your pocket to save you washing your hands. If necessary try using the disabled toilet to ensure nobody sets the drier off whilst you are in the toilet.





Question 2 - Auditory (12 - 18 Years)

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Do you sometimes not always respond when someone calls your name but your hearing is ok?

Some teenagers seem unaware when they are being spoken to. A parent or teacher might say your name and not get a response from you even though they know you can hear perfectly well. This can happen if you are engrossed in an activity you really love, or because you know they are about to tell you to go to bed or do your homework and you don't actually want to hear that. That is perfectly normal! If however it happens regularly across lots of different settings and is not just you deliberately ignoring something you don't want to hear try the following suggestions:



Strategies and Suggestions

If you are aware that you can be easily distracted it is worth having a chat with the adults in your life, both at home and school, to come up with some shared solutions to keeping you on track. Does it help if someone taps you on the shoulder or touches the desk in front of you to remind you to pay attention to them?



As a parent or teacher working with a young person with auditory processing differences it is important that you get their full attention before telling them the instruction you want them to carry out or the action you need them to complete.

As a parent or teacher you need to be aware that your teen might not like a person touching them, however standing in their line of vision and getting eye contact with them first will help them focus.





Question 3 - Auditory (12 - 18 Years)

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Do you often hear sounds not usually noticed by other people?

Some young people can hear noises that the rest of us are unaware of. These can include the noise from strip lights, the noise of the central heating system or the high frequency sounds emitted by computers or TV digiboxes.



Strategies and Suggestions

What kind of noises do you hear that others don't? Is it the sound emitted by electronics? Does the noise of the fan in the laptop or fridge annoy you? Or the noise made by the strip lights in class. If you are aware of these sounds but not distracted by them that is fine.



If these noises stop you from focusing when you are trying to complete class work, or even do your homework, what can be done to reduce the sounds? Can overhead lights be switched off in class? When doing homework can you work in another room away from the sound of the fridge and boiler? If background noise can be reduced this will help you focus.

Try using headphones when you are meant to be concentrating. You don't even need to be listening to music; sometimes it's enough to simply reduce the amount of sound coming into your ears by wearing headphones.



If the noises prevent you from sleeping try using a Sleep Pillow type app.



Question 4 - Auditory (12 - 18 Years)

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Do you have difficulty concentrating? Are you easily distracted by background noises e.g. TV or radio?

Some young people struggle to concentrate when they are trying to focus on completing written work and there are background noises. An example would be a young people trying to do their homework and being distracted by the sound of the TV or radio. Some young people are so sensitive to noise that even doing their homework in the kitchen can be a struggle because of the noise coming from the fridge's cooling mechanism.



In class there is always background noise such as other young people chattering, the teacher talking to another pupil, the noise coming from the projector or the noise emitted by the neon strip lights overhead.

Strategies and Suggestions

Try using a CD with headphones or an iPod to listen to a favourite piece of music or radio; this may help to drown out environmental noises and help you stay focused.



Try different sounds to help you calm down and focus e.g. experiment with different sounds using various apps such as Sleep Pillow, Calm Sounds or White Noise.

As a teacher you will need to be aware that if there are any other noises around the room your teen may be distracted by them: visit exam rooms prior to the exam to identify possible distractions.



Question 5 - Auditory (12 - 18 Years)

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Do you hum or sing if you are trying to concentrate in noisy places?

People who are sensitive to noise often make noise in order to 'drown out' or 'cover over' the noises they can't control. If you find you hum when trying to concentrate is this because you are trying to control the other sounds you are hearing? If so try the following strategies:



Strategies and Suggestions

Try using ear plugs or head phones to help decrease the distracting noises you don't like.

Some people can focus better by listening to motivating music through an iPod as a background to help concentration. Many people do this when in the gym or out running but it can also be helpful for some people when studying. Others prefer complete silence when trying to study, in which case ear plugs or ear defenders are a better option.





Question 6 - Auditory (12 - 18 Years)

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Do you find it difficult to pay attention when someone is talking, and do you also struggle to remember what has been said?

There are many reasons why children struggle to pay attention and processing sound is only one of them. If you are sure that your sense of hearing is a major factor as to why you are not able to pay attention then try the following suggestions:



Strategies and Suggestions

You may benefit from white noise (such as a fan) or playing a 'nature sounds' CD with running water to help block out the sound of people talking.



As you get older you need to be able to focus for longer periods whilst preparing for exams and presentations. There are other places to study rather than just at home. Libraries are usually quiet and some have soundproof rooms for studying.





Question 7 - Auditory (12 - 18 Years)

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Do you have difficulty in working out where a sound or voice is coming from?

Most people can work out the direction that sound is coming from. That is the reason we have an ear on either side of our head; so our brain can identify the location of the source of noise, whether it is more to the left or the right, up or down etc. We use our sense of hearing to work out the direction and source of the sound, and also to work out whether we need to pay attention to it or not e.g. it's a car coming from the left and getting closer so I need to step out of the way.



Strategies and Suggestions

There are several reasons that people can struggle to identify the direction of a sound; perhaps because their ears are not working together as they should, or one ear may be blocked, or even because of specific types of hearing loss. It is important to rule out any underlying hearing difficulties so speak to your GP about seeing an Audiologist.



With family support challenge yourself to develop this skill; try activities that allow you to develop a better sense of sound direction e.g. when sitting together and you hear (but cannot see) a dog bark or a bus drive past tell your parent where you think the noise is coming from and ask them to tell you if you are correct. Or get your siblings to call to you from different rooms in the house and then you guess where they are.



Question 8 - Auditory (12 - 18 Years)

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Are you a light sleeper and are frequently woken up by noises around you?

Sleep issues are common amongst teenagers; changing hormones affect sleep as well as growth, and any worries or anxieties will cause sleep disturbances too. Teenagers require more sleep than adults but if their sleep is disturbed or disrupted for whatever reason it can have a negative impact on their performance at school.



Strategies and Suggestions

Sometimes it can be hard to sleep at night for a variety of reasons. As a teenager you probably have a million thoughts running through your head and trying to get your brain to 'switch off' and let you sleep can seem impossible. There are a few things you can do to try and make sure you are in the right frame of mind to sleep all night:

- Minimise clutter and distraction in the bedroom; having a calm environment at bed time can have a positive effect on your ability to sleep.
- Make sure there are no unpleasant smells in the room. Keep your trainers elsewhere and make sure all smelly socks are in a laundry basket. Try putting a few drops of lavender oil on a tissue beside your pillow.
- Sometimes the noises from other parts of the house or even from outside can be very off putting. The sound of the central heating system or the fridge and freezer can be enough of a distraction to keep you awake. Try using a white noise app; white noise is supposed to 'drown out' all the other sounds you can hear and allow you to relax.
- Some people find that using heavy blankets or tucking the duvet firmly under the mattress can help them sleep better. The additional pressure and weight provides deep pressure to the muscles and joints and assists with better sleep in much the same way as swaddling a baby enables them to feel secure and sleep better.





Question 9 - Auditory (12 - 18 Years)

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Do you like going to places with lots of loud noises?

Some people crave loud noises and enjoy the physical sensation of a strong beat or rhythm reverberating through their bodies. Your ears are sensitive organs however, and sustained exposure to loud noises can have a detrimental impact on them in the long term.



Strategies and Suggestions

Some people crave loud noises and enjoy the physical sensation of a strong beat or rhythm reverberating through their bodies. Your ears are sensitive organs however, and sustained exposure to loud noises can have a detrimental impact on them in the long term.

Loud noise and upbeat music can be calming for some people, and can actually help you concentrate. Remember that not everybody finds music relaxing though so listen to your music through headphones.

Make sure you rest your ears after attending a music concert e.g. no listening to loud music for the next few hours. If you can hear ringing in your ears after the concert is over then the music was too loud and your ears need a period of recovery. It is possible to wear ear plugs at a concert and still experience the music and the beat so maybe consider that for next time.

