



### Special Needs

- Auditory Processing Disorder (APD)
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD / ADD)
- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), including Asperger's Syndrome
- Anxiety

### Auditory Processing Disorder

- Auditory processing involves a relatively high speed of information transfer.
- It also requires a good attention span, a well-functioning memory, and sensitivity to the many subtleties of sound
- When we process sounds, we need to
  - understand the words heard
  - associate the word with knowledge stored in the brain
  - recognise the tone of voice that the statement was said in (eg. angrily or excitedly) so that we can apply appropriate meaning.

### Auditory Processing Disorder

- When parts of our complex auditory system break down or don't operate efficiently, listening is compromised.
- Auditory Processing Disorder
  - an inability to discriminate between sources of sound
  - an inability to inhibit unimportant sound from consciousness
  - insensitivity to subtle properties of sound such as pitch, volume, rhythm and stress

### Auditory Processing Disorder

Good listeners are able to

- concentrate on a task for an extended period of time
- focus on the given message despite background noise
- process information almost as quickly as it is given
- store a significant amount of recent auditory information in their short-term memory.

This is not a function of the ear but a reflection of the ear's relationship with the brain.

### Auditory Processing Disorder

- Hearing is rarely impaired
- Students are able to hear the sounds but are unable to process the meaning of the sounds
- Can be inconsistent – some days a student may struggle more than others to decode sounds

### Auditory Processing Disorder

In our classrooms, this means students may

- Exhibit poor receptive and expressive communication
- Be distracted
- Feel confused
- Have difficulty following directions
- Appear to be a 'poor listener'
- Be frustrated at being unable to understand and being misunderstood
- Become disconnected from the environment and the people around them

### Auditory Processing Disorder

In our classrooms, students may experience 'auditory overload' and become overwhelmed if information is

- highly specific
- spoken too quickly
- lacking in contextual cues
- described in unfamiliar language
- presented in a noisy environment

### Auditory Processing Disorder: Classroom Strategies

#### Get Student's Attention

- Establish eye contact
- Speak at the student's eye level
- Get close, face the student, and gain his/her visual as well as auditory attention before speaking
- Use a cueing system to help student to refocus eg. "listen," "get ready," and "you'll want to remember this one" when you are about to present key information

### Auditory Processing Disorder: Classroom Strategies

#### Giving Instructions

- Make sure you have the student's attention before speaking
- Speak clearly and slowly
- Keep instructions to 8-word sentences or less
- Phrase instructions as simply as possible
- Use words like 'firstly, then, after, before' to give the student a sense of sequence
- Rephrase rather than repeat misunderstood instructions
- Be explicit when the topic is changed

### Auditory Processing Disorder: Classroom Strategies

#### Giving Instructions: Speaking

- Enhance spoken instructions by presenting the same information in another medium (eg. pictures, writing)
- Speak at a rate and volume level loud enough for students to follow
- Modulate the voice to emphasise the most important pieces of information eg. vary loudness to increase students' attention using intonation and stress
- Repeat important words
- Use physical gestures to demonstrate a point and enhance comprehension

### Auditory Processing Disorder: Classroom Strategies

#### Giving Instructions: Maintaining Student Attention

- Alert distracted students by calling their name or giving a cue, and repeat their name periodically to keep their attention
- Define a purpose for different activities
- Give direct, uncomplicated, and age-appropriate instructions for the task
- Avoid 'verbal overload'
- Repeat instructions step by step if necessary and allow time for students to process the information
- Provide examples by modeling or demonstrating and leave the example on display

## Auditory Processing Disorder: Classroom Strategies

### Giving Instructions: Checking Student Understanding

- Encourage students to ask questions
- Check students' comprehension by asking questions periodically
- Repeat or paraphrase instructions
- Ask students to explain the directions to you to confirm their understanding

## Auditory Processing Disorder: Classroom Strategies

### Giving Instructions

- Allow students to read quietly or repeat directions to themselves (subvocalise)
- Only ask the student to do one task at a time - if you are talking, make sure the student is only listening; if the student is writing, do not give further instructions
- Boost self-confidence by giving students positive feedback
- Watch for signs of inattention or decreased concentration

## Auditory Processing Disorder: Classroom Strategies

### Supporting During Tasks

- Assign a peer partner to assist students needing help (taking notes, writing down homework).
- Give students a copy of another student's notes
- Allow students to record lessons for future reference and study.
- New activity:
  - Give APD students more time to transition between activities.
  - Name the new activity and explain in a few steps what is going to happen.
  - Review and close the activity by summarising what the students should have learned before transitioning to the next activity.

## Auditory Processing Disorder: Classroom Strategies

### Seating Arrangements

- Seat students close to teacher, sound source, or activity to maximise auditory/visual information.
- Allow students to move around for different activities and sit wherever they are able to actively participate
- Seat students away from distracting noises (fish tank, doors, bathrooms, windows...)
- Provide quiet or isolated places for study and work to minimise distractions
- Use a daily routine or schedule to keep students focused and organised
- Allow students to use earplugs or earmuffs while doing seatwork to eliminate noise or distractions

## Defining Auditory Processing Disorder and Ideas of Classroom Strategies

<http://www.auditoryprocessing.com.au>

<http://www.iag-online.org>

<http://www.asha.org>

<https://www.superduperinc.com>

## Auditory Processing Disorder

- Auditory processing problems are a feature of many other disorders, including

- autism
- dyslexia
- learning disabilities
- dyspraxia
- Asperger's syndrome
- developmental and speech delay
- attention deficit disorder with or without hyperactivity (ADD or ADHD).

It is not unusual for these disorders to be treated for their behavioural symptoms and for the auditory processing difficulties to be ignored.

## Autism Spectrum Disorder

- A lifelong condition that affects the way an individual relates to his or her environment and their interactions with other people
- Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder experience difficulties with social interaction, and impaired and unusual verbal and non-verbal communication
- Autism is 4 times more common in boys than in girls

## Autism or Asperger's?

- Asperger's Syndrome was previously considered a subtype of Autism but in 2013 was categorised as falling under the umbrella of Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)
- Many professionals continue to use the term Asperger's Syndrome
- Some people consider Asperger's to be a 'milder' form of autism or to sit on the 'lower end' of the spectrum
- Key characteristics used in the past to distinguish: Students with Asperger's do not have language developmental delays or cognitive impairment

## Autism Spectrum Disorder

- Students with ASD can struggle to
  - Respond instinctively to non-verbal forms of communication eg. facial expressions, physical gestures, eye contact
  - Interpret and understand the needs of others
  - Understand and express their own needs
  - Form friendships (may 'exist in their own world' and be isolated)
  - Understand sarcasm and play on words (take things literally)
  - 'Filter' what they say before they speak (can be brutally honest)
  - Cope with sounds, textures, tastes, smells, light, colour (hypersensitivity, may even find some sensory experiences physically painful)

## Autism Spectrum Disorder: Behaviours

Students with ASD may

- Show intense and focused interest in a particular subject matter
- Engage in body movements like handflapping and spinning
- Ask questions over and over or repeat back what you say
- Have difficulty initiating and sustaining conversations
- Use language repetitively eg. repeating phrases from TV
- Insist on sticking to routines

## Asperger's Syndrome

Students with Asperger's may

- Want to fit in but don't know how to
- Be socially awkward
- Not understand conventional social rules
- Show lack of empathy
- Have limited eye contact
- Seem unengaged in conversation
- Not understand the use of gestures
- Not understand sarcasm
- Not understand give and take nature of conversation

## Asperger's Syndrome

Students with Asperger's may

- Have good language skills but use language in different ways to their peers (not understand subtleties eg. Humour, irony)
- Tend to show typical or even exceptional language development
- Have unusual speech patterns (eg. too loud, high-pitched, rhythmic, larc inflection)
- Have motor skill delays and appear clumsy or awkward (common)
- Possess average to above average intelligence
- Often accompanied by unique gifts eg. remarkable ability for intense focus

## Asperger's Syndrome

- Symptoms of Asperger's are often confused with other behavioural issues such as Attention Deficit Disorder
- Asperger's: difficulties stem from inability to socialise
- ADHD: difficulties stem from inability to focus attention

## Autism Spectrum Disorder: Classroom Strategies

### Organisation

- Clear timetable / schedule (visual, kept with student)
  - Increases independence
  - Reduces anxiety
  - Can be used to indicate and prepare for change
- Help to use checklists and to-do lists
- Provide a clear process for checking own work
- Allow student to use a timer
- Use graphic organisers, webs, mindmaps, outlines to help students take notes and organise information

## Supporting Students: ASD

### Behaviour

- Clear expectations
- Rules for behaviour (explicit, no assumptions)
- Structured, predictable classroom environment (prepare students for change)
- Aim for consistency and clarity
- Expectations of behaviour visible in classroom: posters, reminders
- Ensure predictable access to a favourite thing / activity
  - Motivates students through things they don't like to do

## Supporting Students: ASD

### Supporting Appropriate Classroom Behaviour

- Instructions
  - clear, spoken AND written (AND visual)
  - appropriate level
  - avoid verbal 'overload'
- Promote independence
  - teach students how to make choices and provide experiences
  - encourage self-management
  - teach monitoring of own behaviour
  - teach flexibility and cooperation
- Provide personal behaviour reminders (cards on desk / necklace / visuals in pencil case)

## Supporting Students: ASD

### Visual aids for

- complex concepts
- new topics
- appropriate behaviour
- daily schedules and changes
- choice boards
- task cards (written and visual instructions)
- labels
- posters of rules and routines

## Supporting Students: ASD

### Know and be aware of student needs

- Know individual –
  - maintain list of strengths and interests
  - provide opportunities to follow interests
  - develop talent areas
- Capitalise on strengths eg. memory
- Extra time for tests and note-taking
- Provide examples of what is required as well as direct modeling
- Use concrete explanations
- Try a computer to replace writing

## Supporting Students: ASD

### Tasks / Activities

- Auditory: be aware of impact of auditory stimulation or overload eg. offer music while writing, ear plugs, quiet time
- Have a variety and alternate (active/calm, challenging / simpler)
- Tap into student interest areas
- Provide task cards with sequence of instructions

autismspeaks.org

<http://www.autism-society.org>

<https://www.autismspectrum.org.au>

<https://www.tes.com>

## Attention Deficit (Hyperactivity) Disorder

- A disorder characterised by a persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity/impulsivity that occurs in academic, occupational, or social settings.
- 3 types:
  - Inattentive
  - Hyperactive / Impulsive
  - Combined
- Some individuals show only one set of symptoms, but most show combination of both

## Attention Deficit (Hyperactivity) Disorder

- not just typical childhood behaviours that occur occasionally
- occur from an age younger than 7 years
- problems with attention and/or hyperactivity/impulsivity that are substantially more persistent, severe, and intense
- significant impairment in daily functioning
- symptoms can vary considerably at different times and in different settings
- particularly evident in settings where activity must be restricted and attention sustained to tasks that don't interest the student

## Attention Deficit (Hyperactivity) Disorder

### Inattention

Can include:

- making careless mistakes
- failing to complete tasks
- problems staying organised and keeping track of things, loses work / items
- becoming easily distracted
- not seeming to listen when spoken to
- not following through on instructions
- reluctance to engage in tasks that require sustained mental effort

## Attention Deficit (Hyperactivity) Disorder

### Hyperactivity

Can include

- excessive fidgetiness and squirminess
- running or climbing when it is not appropriate
- excessive talking
- being constantly on the go (in adolescence, feelings of restlessness)

### Impulsivity

Can show up as

- impatience
- difficulty awaiting one's turn, blurting out answers, frequent interrupting

## Attention Deficit (Hyperactivity) Disorder

- 1 in 20 children in Australia are diagnosed with ADHD
- Many (but not all) children with ADHD have a combination of both hyperactivity/impulsivity and inattention
- Children diagnosed with ADHD whose symptoms aren't managed effectively are at a higher risk of having learning difficulties, depression and anxiety, relationship problems, risky behaviour and injuries

## Attention Deficit (Hyperactivity) Disorder

### Helping maintain focus

- Seat student close to teacher, away from windows and doors (or other distractions)
- If possible, work on difficult material early on in day / lesson
- give frequent feedback about performance eg. if behavior being targeted is "following directions", provide student with feedback about how well they are following directions frequently and consistently, eg. each hour rather than, for example, once at the end of the day

## Attention Deficit (Hyperactivity) Disorder

### Teaching Strategies

- Define short term goals rather than long term goals
- Provide a variety of learning experiences to help maintain interest and enthusiasm
- Provide graphic organisers / outlines to help with note-taking
- Use visuals: charts, diagrams, colour-coding, pictures
- Give instructions clearly (see notes on ASD)
- Frequent short quizzes rather than long tests
- Divide long-term projects into segments and assign a completion goal for each segment

## Attention Deficit (Hyperactivity) Disorder

### Behaviour Management Strategies

- the student understands what is being expected of him or her
- the expectation is reasonable and something the student is capable of doing
- the student receives frequent reminders
- the student understands what rewards can be earned by meeting the expectation
- the student understands what the negative consequences will be for not meeting the expectation
- follow through with rewards / consequences

<http://www.adhd.com.au>  
<http://www.helpforadd.com/what-is-adhd/>  
[raisingchildren.net.au](http://raisingchildren.net.au)

## Anxiety

- 8-22% of children experience anxiety more intensely and more often than other children
- Social anxiety: fear and worry in situations where children have to interact with other people, or be the focus of attention
- Separation anxiety: fear and worry children experience when they can't be with their parents or guardians
- Generalised anxiety: tendency to worry about many areas of life – anything from friends to world events



## Anxiety

### Anxious students may

- Be shy / withdrawn
- Not want to speak in front of classmates
- Struggle to make friends (or only have a few)
- Think others will laugh at them
- Feel the need to get everything perfect
- Seek constant reassurance
- Feel sick in mornings when separating
- Worry about safety, school, sport, schoolwork, friends
- Not show or share their anxiety

## Anxiety

### Anxious students commonly fear

- Getting in trouble (even though highly unlikely)
- Speaking in front of class (assessment)
- Getting instructions wrong (due to distraction or misunderstanding)
- Being rejected in the playground
- Getting the answer wrong
- Saying something embarrassing
- Having other kids look at them (due to something they have said or done)
- Not being able to catch up on work missed

## Anxiety

### Anxious students may also be worrying about

- Other children misbehaving and the teacher getting angry
- Not finding someone to play with at lunchtime
- Not being included in a group game
- An approaching excursion
- School camp next term
- That their Mum or Dad will be late picking them up
- A replacement teacher
- A war / refugees / global warming...

## Anxiety

### Anxious students commonly struggle with

- Change
- Unpredictable situations
- Replacement teachers
- Excursions
- Lack of boundaries (behaviour management)

Anxious children try very hard to please and predict what is required in a situation – for this reason, changes of any sort may be experienced as very stressful

## Anxiety

### Classroom Strategies: being aware of anxiety triggers

- Allow a student to sit where he/she feels comfortable
- Seat away from noisy / boisterous classmates
  - less distracting
  - may help them focus on their work
  - helps reduce feeling responsible for the class
  - Less anxiety about getting into trouble
- Card to place on teacher's desk to signal they need to leave classroom for a break / time out / 'chill out' (and somewhere safe, nearby to go)
- Consider best seating in large crowds (assemblies / events)

## Anxiety

### Strategies: reduce pressure

- Set realistic expectations for academic work
- Help to take tasks less overwhelming, modify to provide manageable steps
- Reduce the homework load into specific time frame
- Provide time estimates for each assignment
- Provide alternative formats to demonstrate knowledge eg. oral presentation to teacher alone, small group or audiotape or videotape at home
- Extend time on tests (knowledge that they have it may obviate the need for it)



## Anxiety

### Strategies: build confidence

- Provide opportunities for the child to share knowledge on topics in which he or she is most confident
  - Reassure that other students finishing work/tests quickly does not indicate that the anxious student doesn't know the material well or is incorrect
  - Give special responsibilities that help anxious students to see themselves as capable
  - Encourage 'having a go'
  - Give positive feedback for trying
- Support 'getting started' and 'finishing off' tasks

## Anxiety

### Strategies: start of year / term / lesson

- Have a special job for student to do
- Ask for help with something (that keeps student close to you)
- Encourage seating with a friend
- Get student hooked / engaged with a question or short chat
- Student begins lesson with a specific activity he/she enjoys

KidsMatter (Australian Primary School Health Initiative)

[raisingchildren.net.au](http://raisingchildren.net.au)

[youthbeyondblue.com](http://youthbeyondblue.com)

[worrywisekids.org](http://worrywisekids.org)

## Takeaway Ideas...

Key, common strategies that are effective when working with students with APD, ASD, AD(H)D and anxiety:

- Provide clear schedule for lessons / daily timetable
- Prepare students for change of schedule, transition between activities
- Get down to their level and make eye contact before giving instructions
- Spoken, written and visual instructions – not too many words
- Phrase instructions clearly, simply, use sequencing words

## Takeaway Ideas...

Key, common strategies that are effective when working with students with APD, ASD, AD(H)D and anxiety:

- Seat student near you, away from noise /distractions / boisterous students
- Question regularly to check comprehension and help maintain focus
- Behavioural and academic expectations explicit (nothing assumed)
- Provide checklists, graphic organisers, outlines
- Offer support, modification, alternative formats of tasks to support student academic and emotional needs

## Takeaway Ideas...

Key, common strategies that are effective when working with students with APD, ASD, AD(H)D and anxiety:

- Be aware of response to auditory stimulation: background noise, distracting noise, overload, even silence
- Know the individual: strengths, weaknesses, interests, responses to different situations, signs of anxiety or frustration
- Frequent and genuine positive feedback for appropriate behaviour, focus on task, 'doing the right thing'

## Supporting Students With Special Needs

MLTAV Conference

May 6, 2016

Sarah Pavy

Email: [sarahpavy@yahoo.com](mailto:sarahpavy@yahoo.com)

Phone: 0451 779 464