Hearing Aid + Partial Masking
Overview

• Goals of Treatment
• The Tinnitus Instrument
• Use of the Hearing Aid
• Use of the Sound Generator
• Partial Masking
Overall Goals of Treatment

- Counseling
  - Thoughts and Emotions
  - Hearing and Communication
  - Sleep
  - Concentration

- Sound Therapy
  - Decrease the prominence of the tinnitus
  - Facilitate habituation to the tinnitus
  - Habituate to the tinnitus and the sound
Habituation to Sound

New refrigerator is loud at first

Less aware of refrigerator after a while

Not even aware it is present
How hearing aids help with tinnitus

• Makes many environmental sounds audible
• May help make tinnitus less noticeable
• Facilitates listening, and therefore reduces effort and stress
How Sound Generators Help in the Habituation of Tinnitus

• You hear background sound
• Background sound has no emotional importance
• You habituate to sound plus tinnitus
Parts of the Instrument

- Batteries
- Volume control for sound generator
- Volume control for hearing aid
- Receiver (tiny loudspeaker)
Changing battery

• Change batteries as needed, typically between 1-2 weeks
• Place sticker on your calendar for the date you changed the batteries to estimate the life of your batteries
• Change batteries for both instruments at the same time
Insertion and removal of the instrument

- **Insertion**
  - Identify which ear
    - Red writing- sound generator for right ear
    - Blue writing- sound generator for left ear

- **Removal**
  - Hold device and slowly pull or twist out

- **Take out at night**
  - Turn off – open battery door
  - Store out of reach of pets and small children

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Cleaning

• When you take sound generator out, wipe with tissue or soft dry cloth
• Daily, brush the sound generator with the port facing downwards
Safety & Protection

• Moisture
  – Don’t wear while around water

• Battery
  – Very harmful if swallowed
  – Keep out of reach of children and pets
Hearing Aid Information

• Amplifies sound
  – May hear sounds you haven’t heard in a while
• Adjust volume to comfortable level
• May change volume throughout the day if needed
Masking versus Partial Masking

Masking

Partial Masking

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Using the sound generator

• Level
  – Lowest level needed to reduce loudness or annoyance of tinnitus
  – Can hear both tinnitus & masker

• Duration
  – Best to put on in morning, take off at bedtime
  – Forget you’re using them
  – Use at least 8 hours a day
Do not change the volume of the masker while wearing

• If environmental noise drowns out the sound, do not increase the volume.
• If after wearing the device for awhile your tinnitus becomes louder/softer, do not increase the volume
  – Do the following:
    • Take the device off for about one hour and then put it back on and reset the volume to the lowest level needed to reduce loudness or annoyance.
Summary

• It is possible for you to habituate to any sensory signal, if you do not react with strong negative emotions
• Partial masking of the tinnitus can decrease the prominence of the tinnitus and help you to habituate to the tinnitus
• The use of hearing aids to amplify non-threatening background sounds and masking of tinnitus with non-threatening sounds helps to habituate to the tinnitus
Sound Therapy

• Use hearing aid and sound generator devices to assist in the habituation of the tinnitus
• Use the lowest level of sound that reduces the loudness or annoyance of tinnitus
• Even when not using wearable devices, you can use background sound to help partially mask the tinnitus