Summary

Session 10
Review

• Thoughts and Emotions
• Hearing and Communication
• Sleep
• Concentration
Thoughts and Emotions

• Tinnitus is likely the result of increased spontaneous nerve activity
• Many people have tinnitus – you are not alone
• Tinnitus is not threatening your health or hearing
• Tinnitus and your reaction to tinnitus are two different things
• You can change your reaction to tinnitus
Decreasing Attention

- 2 kinds of attention:
  - Conscious and Subconscious
- Background sounds are monitored all the time
  - this is normal
- We attend to important, strange, or fearful sounds
- Sounds that we believe are important will be monitored more closely
- If you believe tinnitus is not that important, it is less likely you will attend to it
You Can Change Your Emotional Reactions

Tinnitus → Negative Thoughts → Negative Reaction

Tinnitus → Constructive thoughts → Anxiety, Irritation

Tinnitus → Constructive thoughts → Less Irritation

Tinnitus → Tinnitus not as prominent → No Reaction
Hearing and Communication

- Use devices to help with hearing loss
- Reduce or move away from background noise
- Make sure you can see the talker
How Tinnitus Can Affect Hearing

• Tinnitus is not damaging your hearing
• When you are focused on your tinnitus, it is harder to pay attention to your communication partner
• Tinnitus might make some sounds difficult to hear
Repair Strategies

- Ask communication partner to:
  - Repeat
    - “Could you please repeat that?”
    - “I’m sorry, I missed what you said because of the noise over there.”
  - Rephrase
    - “Could you rephrase that? I heard you say something about a baseball game.”
Repair Strategies continued

– Reduce - length of phrase
  • “Could you summarize the most important points for me?”

– Elaborate – provide more information
  • “I’m having a little difficulty following, could you give me a little more information?”
Things That Affect Sleep

- Stress
- Environmental factors (noise, lights, temperature)
- Irregular work schedules
- Learned sleeplessness patterns
Things That Affect Sleep

- Medications
- Caffeine (coffee, tea, cola, chocolate)
- Smoking
- Alcohol
- Tinnitus
Good Sleep Habits

• Separate ‘day’ and ‘night’ activities
  – (e.g. 8 pm)

• Before 8 pm
  – Physical exercise, stressful activities, food

• After 8 pm
  – Reduce food, drink, activities
Preparing for Sleep Using Sound

• Choose soft pleasant sounds you enjoy
  – Music (calm, soothing, steady, classical, piano)
  – Sounds of nature (waves, waterfalls, raindrops)
  – Broadband noise (‘ssshhh’)
Preparing for Sleep with Relaxation

Techniques:

• Progressive muscle relaxation
• Imagery
Take Control of Your Attention

• The focus of our attention is largely under voluntary control
• You can learn to control the focus of your attention under various conditions
• By bringing the focus of attention under control, tinnitus-related distress will be reduced at certain times
Concentration

• Try easy and difficult tasks
• Attempt to focus on a task for a brief period
  – Vary the amount of time spent on each task
  – Build up the time spent on each task
• Do not restrict only to simple tasks
  – Easier for tinnitus to intrude when task is less interesting
• Try more challenging tasks
  – Tinnitus may less intrusive when more effort is put into the task or when task is more enjoyable
Attention Control Exercises

• Learn to switch attention from one stimulus (e.g. object, sensation, thought, activity) to another at will

• Refocus your attention from your tinnitus onto other stimuli, external or internal
Questions…

• Are there any questions you have about your tinnitus?
• How has your outlook on tinnitus changed?
• Is there anything else I can help you with in this process?
• What resources do you have available if you need further assistance?
Plan for the future

- Annual hearing checks
  - sooner if you notice a significant change
- Use ear protection
- Please contact us again if you want to discuss your hearing or tinnitus