Tinnitus Activities Treatment

Summary session
Overview

1. Thoughts and Emotions
2. Hearing and Communication
3. Sleep
4. Concentration
Where do YOU want to start?
How has tinnitus influenced your life?
There Are Many Different Causes of Tinnitus

Causes

- Head Injury
- Medications
- Age
- Disease
- Noise
- Unknown

Your Cause?
Part 1. Thoughts and Emotions

1. Hearing, hearing loss, and tinnitus
2. Attention, behavior, and emotions
3. Changing your reactions to tinnitus
1. How We Hear
Nerve Activity Carries Information to the Brain

Hair Cell

Nerve Activity

Nerve Fiber

To Brain
Tinnitus is an Increase in Spontaneous Nerve Activity

Normal Hearing

Hearing Loss (No Tinnitus)

Tinnitus

Hearing Silence

Hear Silence

Hear Sound

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2. Our Thoughts and Emotions

Doorbell → Neutral

Doorbell → Fire

Doorbell → Injury

Doorbell → Angry neighbor

Doorbell → Flowers

Doorbell → Friend

Doorbell → Delivery

Fire → Anxiety

Injury → Anxiety

Angry neighbor → Anxiety

Flowers → Happiness

Friend → Happiness

Delivery → Happiness

Neutral

Anxiety

Happiness
Things That Capture Our Conscious Attention

- Unusual
- Important
- Scary
- Unexpected
We Notice Important Things And Ignore Unimportant Stimuli

Refrigerator: Ignore

Lion: Cannot ignore

Crowd: Monitor information automatically
Tinnitus and Attention

If brain determines **tinnitus is not important**, the tinnitus can be ignored.

If brain determines **tinnitus is important**, we will pay attention to it.
3. How to Change Our Reaction to Tinnitus

• Change Interpretation of Importance

• Change Emotional Reaction

• Refocus on Other Activities

• Reduce Contrast Between Background Sound and Tinnitus
Decrease Prominence of Tinnitus

Tinnitus Level decrease prominence of Tinnitus

Tinnitus Level

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Background sound masks unwanted sounds
Part 2. Hearing and Communication

1. Hearing and communication difficulties
2. How tinnitus can affect hearing
3. How to improve your hearing
1. Your Audiogram

[Diagram of an audiogram graph showing hearing levels at different frequencies.]
Factors that Affect Communication

- Hearing loss
- Background noise
- Ability to see the talker
- Familiarity with talker
- Familiarity with topic of discussion
- Stress level
How Hearing Loss Affects Communication

- Some sounds are not heard at all (high pitches)
- Some sounds may be distorted and less clear
- Low-pitched sounds are usually louder, so a high-pitched loss often is not noticeable
- May experience fatigue from struggling to communicate
2. How Tinnitus Can Affect Hearing

- Tinnitus is not damaging your hearing
- Tinnitus can make it harder to hear sounds and distract one from listening
- Tinnitus can also mask some sounds
3. Use Amplification

- Improve hearing and communication
- Reduce stress of effortful listening
- Hearing aids often help tinnitus:
  - Facilitates positive reactions to tinnitus
  - Helps to mask tinnitus sound
Part III.
Sleep

1. Normal sleep patterns
2. Tinnitus and sleep
3. Activities to facilitate sleep
4. Waking up at night
1. Normal Sleep Patterns

- The amount of sleep varies greatly from one individual to another
  - 6.5-9 hours/night
- Normal sleep includes several periods of light sleep or awakenings
  - Older adults have more awakenings
- Tinnitus doesn't usually wake people
2. Things That Affect Sleep

- Stress and emotions
- Environmental factors
  - Noise
  - Light
  - Temperature
- Irregular work schedules
- Learned sleeplessness patterns
- Jet lag/time zone changes
Things That Affect Sleep, continued

- Physical conditions (sleep apnea, restless leg)
- Medications
- Caffeine (coffee, tea, cola, chocolate)
- Nicotine (smoking)
- Alcohol (excessive)
- Tinnitus
3. Activities to Facilitate Sleep

- Avoid napping
- Get regular exercise
- Create a curfew separating day and night
- Avoid food, drink, stress or exercise right before bed
- Go to bed only when you are tired enough to sleep
Preparing for Sleep

1. Listen to low-level background sound

2. Use Relaxation techniques to ease stress and tension
4. Waking Up At Night

- Do not lie in bed if you are unable to fall or stay asleep
- Find something to do and return to bed when you feel tired
- Use background sound
Part 4. Concentration

1. Things that affect concentration
2. How tinnitus affects concentration
3. Strategies to improve concentration
1. Things That Affect Concentration

- The environment (noise, temperature)
- Your physical state (hunger, fatigue)
- Your emotional state (anxiety, fear)
2. How Tinnitus Affects Concentration

• When we focus attention to our tinnitus, it is harder to concentrate on other things
• Observe effects of tinnitus on concentration for simple and complex tasks
• Complex tasks are more demanding—tinnitus is less noticeable
3. Strategies to Improve Concentration

1. Interpret tinnitus as not important
2. Eliminate distractions
3. Stay focused
4. Adjust work habits
5. Decrease prominence of tinnitus
6. Take control of your attention
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