autism
wellbeing

Our Senses: Auditory

Our ears hear auditory information that is then passed to our brains for processing.
Each of us has a different level of auditory information that we need to function at our best, connect with others and learn.

Some of us enjoy noisy environments and find them energising, whereas others need absolute peace in order to focus. Of course, this varies from hour to hour and day to day, and things like stress, lots going on in our lives, and illness can affect our processing too.

Our autistic children experience this in a similar way but may become overwhelmed by sensory information much more quickly than other people do and may even find it painful (hypersensitive or over-responsive). Alternatively, they may require much more sensory stimulation for the sensation to register with them (hyposensitive or under-responsive).

Did you know?

Some children who find noisy environments distressing, make a lot of noise themselves.

This is so they can be in control of the noise levels in their environment.

- Lots of different sounds, noises and voices can be difficult to distinguish so keeping background noise low may help your child focus on conversations.
- Try using your child's name to get their attention so that they are more easily able to distinguish that you wish to talk to them.
- Some children and young people find certain familiar, repetitive sounds very regulating. They may make these sounds themselves repetitively or they may choose to listen to a repeated noise, song, or piece of music. Some people may need to make lots of noise to drown out other noises. This can increase at times of stress. This can feel quite difficult for other family members.
- Sometimes regulating a different sense e.g. try some physical activity that involves using muscle strength or using a comforting fragrance, can help regulate the person and their need for constant noise is reduced.
- Try using noise cancelling headphones to help give your child some peace. Maybe use them yourself too. With or without music.
- Get used to visiting shops and towns gradually, by choosing times that are less busy at first so that the noise is less overwhelming.
- Loud or sudden noises can feel very distressing for some people. They may need comforting, reassuring and time and space to calm down.