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"His teachers have expressed a big improvement in his concentration and ability to focus on things for longer.

He also seems a lot more relaxed at school."

post-treatment response of parents of 8 year old T.N.
October 2006



Accepting or Challenging

One of the hot topics in the news lately is the question of how much we accept from others, especially when these others are very different, or when to stand up for ourselves and confront an issue. We believe it is up to individuals to define where they stand on cultural or social issues, but we are often faced with the same kind of choice in our personal lives. Do we accept our children the way they are, respecting their individuality, or do we set boundaries and limit 'their freedom'. Do we accept the opinion of health or educational professionals without question, or do we research ourselves and confront authority? Within ourselves we also fight these kind of battles every day - do we value ourselves the way we are or do we challenge ourselves to achieve things we thought we couldn't?

One of the most valuable life skills is to be able to balance these issues and be able to satisfy both sides of the equation. In most cases it is quite possible to respect and set boundaries, to accept and confront, to value and challenge.

One useful method is to separate the 'being' from the 'doing'. Children are inherently good (the being), but their behaviour (the doing) may be unacceptable. Most professionals have a lot of valuable knowledge and experience (the being), but their specific actions (the doing) may not suit us. We are all wonderful people *and* at times we have to challenge ourselves in order to move forward.

It is like a dance to balance these two sides and most parents with children with 'special needs' that come to us have made this dance into a true art form. It is humbling to see the dedication and love given by these parents to their children, while at the same time they are still able to move forward and discover new ways of helping their children, challenging 'conventional wisdom' where necessary.

We are privileged to work with so many clients that are all truly wonderful, inspirational and really 'special', each in their own way. Our challenge is to bring about changes that suit the person and that improve the quality of life. We have to challenge ourselves and not accept the status quo. We have to fully accept and respect the other person in order to try to understand what may be going on for that person and then find effective and respectful ways of challenging the areas that are out of balance.

It may be difficult to make changes in world politics or within our multi-cultural society, but we can make a difference with the people closest to us. By respecting them *and* by being brave enough to take action, we can challenge ourselves and feel better for it.

The Pauline Allen column



Discovering the underlying causes of learning, sensory, developmental and emotional difficulties is a vital first step on the road to transformation.

In order to understand the person, to respect him or her for the way he or she is and to be able to offer a way forward that is 'in-tune' with the person, we need to increase our knowledge of what may be lying behind the specific difficulties. We also have to learn to observe typical behaviour that may give us clues as to what is going on. Only then can we even start to contemplate any possible support options.

We place great emphasis on providing detailed and in-depth information to our clients in order to ensure they learn to understand and observe in ways that shed new light on old difficulties. Our newly updated website now provides a host of information which will help parents and individual clients to recognise specific areas of possible imbalance or under-development. Our training courses are another rich source of knowledge which have helped many people to view difficulties from an entirely new perspective.

Our assessments are more than just a diagnostic tool and within them we provide valuable guidance and practical advice on how to make a difference in people's life's.

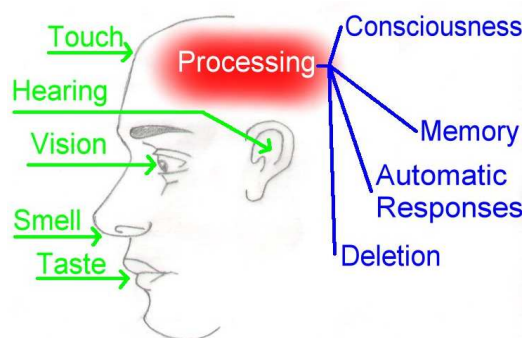
We have to discover something we do not understand before we can acquire knowledge!

Pauline Allen

In depth — Sensory Processing

For the senses to work properly a huge amount of sensory processing has to take place in a very short space of time and that timing of the information flow is of critical importance. If the brain does not discard enough information, we may get overloaded by the sheer amount of input. If the brain does not scan our memory banks fast enough, our life may be in danger. If our memory banks are inaccurate because we had distorted input in the past, we may have difficulty in recognising things or be able to make connections between perceived objects and their likely behaviour.

Prior to processing useful information our brain first has to decide what information is useful. The brain has to manage enormous flows of information coming in from the senses and has to be very efficient at distributing or discarding this information. It will only make a tiny bit of information available to our consciousness, send some to our memory banks, use other information to control automatic responses and it will delete most information.



Although the processing power of the brain is huge, the conscious mind has only a very limited capacity to deal with incoming sensory information. In other words, we can only consciously think of and manage very few things at the same time. Actually, we probably can only think of one thing at a time, but we do have the capacity to very quickly switch between a few subjects, each one in turn, one after another. When we express the capacity of our conscious mind into computer terms, it is very small indeed. Scientists believe that the capacity of our conscious mind is less than 100 bits per second. It's not really important to understand what that means, but it is very important to understand what the incoming flow of information is, expressed in the same terms:

- Eyes (vision): 10,000,000 bits per second.
- Ears (hearing): 100,000 bits per second.
- Skin (touch): 1,000,000 bits per second.
- Nose (smell): 100,000 bits per second.
- Mouth (taste): 1,000 bits per second.

Thus, in total we receive through our five senses more than 11 million bits of information each second of the day, while our conscious mind can only deal with one subject at

a time at a rate of less than 100 bits per second. That's another very good reason why we need our brain to process the information from our senses, as we would go mad (and we mean that literally) if all that information came straight to our conscious mind.

If our conscious mind can only deal with less than 0.001 % of all information coming in, just imagine how overwhelming the world must appear to people who cannot filter out sufficient information. Over-sensitivity of one or more of the senses is not only being able to hear, see, feel, smell or taste more, but often is also linked to receiving more information than we are able to deal with. Such a bombardment of information will lead rapidly to stress and discomfort, often leading to the person 'switching off' or 'tuning out' from the outside world. In short, the processing of our sensory input is vital to our survival and slight difficulties in that processing can lead to significant learning, developmental and performance difficulties.

All our sensory information requires processing and auditory and visual processing deficiencies are commonly linked to learning and functional difficulties. Since much information is presented verbally or visually, a person with an auditory or visual processing disorder will be at a great disadvantage.

Auditory processing difficulties impact on an individual's ability to analyse and make sense of information taken in through the ears. This is different from problems involving hearing, such as deafness. Difficulties with auditory processing do not affect what is heard by the ear, but do affect how this information is interpreted and processed by the brain.

An auditory processing difficulty will directly impact on speech and language and will affect other areas of learning like reading and spelling. Instructions often rely on the spoken word and a person with an auditory processing difficulty may find it very hard to understand or retain specific instructions.

Visual processing difficulties refer to a lessened ability to make sense of information taken in through the eyes. This is different from problems involving visual acuity, or how well we can see objects. Difficulties with visual processing affect how visual information is interpreted or processed by the brain.

All senses rely on a significant amount of processing in the brain to ensure the input makes sense to us. It is often the processing part that has the deficiencies in a particular sense and fortunately the processing part is the easiest to re-train. Most of our interventions are based on re-training how information from the senses is processed. Through this process we can instigate changes in ability, behaviour and performance.



“Massive changes in my life without melt-downs.

I have a much better social life and am more flexible.

My reading and articulation have much improved.

I sleep regularly and for enough time.”

post-treatment response of 20 year old T.G.
June 2006



Did you know ?

- The three smallest bones in the human body are located in the middle ear and amplify the vibrations from the eardrum. They are known as the hammer, anvil and stirrup.
- Half of all our blood passes through our eyes every forty minutes.
- A square centimetre of skin contains around 200 pain receptors, 15 receptors for pressure, 6 for cold and 1 for warmth.
- In the first month of life there is a 20-fold increase in the number of connections (synapses) in the brain, creating up to 1000 million-million connections.
- Be lazy and smile - you use on average 17 muscles to smile, but 43 to frown.

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Typical conditions we see at the Centre:

- Dyslexia
- Dyspraxia
- ADD and ADHD
- Asperger's Syndrome
- Autistic Spectrum Disorders
- Sensitive hearing
- Speech and language difficulties
- Cocktail Party Syndrome
- Central Auditory Processing Disorder
- Slow processing
- Light sensitivity
- Sensory Integration difficulties
- Developmental delay
- Depression and emotional issues
- Eating and sleeping dysfunctions
- Poor social skills



"It was simply remarkable to see her progress in such a short time."

post-treatment response of parents of 3 year old A.A. July 2006



"Everyone has commented on how much happier he seems and I totally agree."

post-treatment response of mother of 4 year old B.K. October 2006



Helen: A clear message without a voice

Helen is ten years old and hardly speaks, but expresses her thoughts with exceptional clarity through the use of a light-writer, a sort of portable typewriter. Here are some excerpts from the notes she made this summer while doing sound and light treatments at the Centre:

"I am feeling much better already. Painful sensations really aren't playing havoc with me now. Perhaps the ticcing will cease too. I am ball mad at the moment because I am autistically trying to control my autism with bouncing. Perhaps I will be able to stop soon because I am exhausted just attempting to stay calm at the moment. I am sure I shall feel a bit better every day." ... "I am a sort of shivery jelly at the moment and I am so worried about speaking. I do worry that I wait so long that I am speaking so little. I think I'm scared to speak and I am so angry with everyone for so many years for stopping me speaking. I am angry with everyone because I am angry with myself and I am unable to stay angry with myself for very long. I think the ticcing is a sort of twitch of anger. Perfectly lovely AIT always makes me so relaxed and cheerful." ... "Pleased about sitting in front of the light yesterday. It made me so pained before but now it's nice and relaxing. I am pleased about the listening too. I am definitely jerking about less. The anxiety is leaving me now. Painful feelings are definitely declining every day. Letting myself say more words and all the time getting more confident about speaking." ... "I feel great today. I want the AIT to go on forever. I feel much more confident about speaking now. Deeply relaxing colours today really helped the ticcing. Only a short time left now to get myself sorted completely. Perhaps I need a sort of light at home?"

Reproduced by permission. Helen undertook AIT and LWS from 29 August until 9 September 2006.

More about Self-Voice

Self-Voice is a learning method which uses the client's own voice, to help with speaking, listening, memory, reading, writing, spelling, numeracy and sequencing difficulties. It also builds study and exam skills and is effective as a rehabilitation aid after strokes.

Self-Voice is a focused attack on literacy problems in which the individual listens to his/her own voice whilst meeting precision spelling and self-voice dictation of factually related topics. In addition they may be required to listen to and read material (usually of a factual nature) in book form.

It was originally designed to help hearing-impaired children to improve their speech and listening skills. After some time it became clear that memory, literacy and language skills were also improving. It has also helped clients with poor reading skills, visual impairment, language disorders and mild to severe learning difficulties.

Self-Voice can help a wide variety of children and adults of all ages and abilities who are experiencing difficulties with literacy or numeracy brought on by dyslexia, hearing impairment, visual impairment, listening, speech and communication difficulties, or for students for whom English is a second language.

Significant results, also with individuals with average or above average ability, confirms that Self-Voice has applications across the entire learning population. Currently the average improvement is eight months for reading and seven months for spelling following a single five-week Self-Voice programme.

The Self-Voice programme can be provided from the Centre on a weekly basis or as a distance learning course and is a stand-alone intervention for which the Standard Assessment is not a pre-requisite.

Training courses

We offer two one-day courses for parents, carers, health and educational professionals that provide in-depth knowledge and practical suggestions to help children develop to their full potential. Both courses are regularly run in London and on request can be provided in other locations or in-house for organisations.

SenseAbility

The SenseAbility course has been specially designed to provide parents and carers with the latest findings on how children learn and how to overcome common developmental and learning difficulties of children aged three to early teens.

A comprehensive course guide with background information and a separate evaluation and activity manual are provided. This course is also of interest to health and educational professionals.

EASIE

This course provides a programme of early intervention at school for children aged three to seven. It helps to develop balance and co-ordination, memory, concentration and organisation and prepares children for learning.

The programme comprises simple exercises, pre-recorded rhymes and suggested music. A comprehensive manual, a CD and complete lesson plans conforming to National Curriculum requirements are included.

Talks & Presentations

We provide talks and presentations to groups of interested parents and educational professionals. Often these are followed by lively discussions and question and answer sessions and are highly valued by the participants. If you would like us to give a talk to a special interest group you are in contact with, please let us know.

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Client research

We have embarked on a number of major research projects, analysing the clinical test results of clients. We publish some headline results here for Auditory Integration Training and Lightwave Stimulation. More detailed results will be published on our website.

Auditory Integration Training (AIT)

We analysed the improvement in hearing levels of a representative sample of 87 clients as measured during the Audiometric test. Overall the levels moved by 46.8 % towards the 'ideal' zero level after AIT.

Younger clients showed the best results, with 6-10 year olds achieving 60.8 %, 11-17 year olds 44.6 % and adults still achieving a very impressive 24.0 % improvement.

Of the 46 clients within the sample who had hypersensitive hearing in one or both ears, all hypersensitivity was eliminated for 13 clients, while the hypersensitivity was reduced by 58.6 % overall for this group.

Distortion (or differences between adjacent frequencies on the audiogram) reduced by 30.0 % overall, with 6-10 year olds achieving a 38.5 % improvement, 11-17 year olds 28.7 % and adults 12.9 %.

Imbalances between the two ears was reduced by 44.6 % overall, with 6-10 year olds showing a 50.3 % improvement, 11-17 year olds 52.7 % and adults 26.5 %.

The improved hearing levels, reduced hypersensitivity, less distortion and a better auditory balance were achieved after just ten days of Auditory Integration Training.

Lightwave Stimulation (LWS)

We analysed the increase in Visual Fields of Awareness (VFA) of a representative sample of 80 clients. Overall the 'solid angle' or area within which colours can be identified increased by 368 % after just one series of LWS treatment.

Younger clients showed the best results, with 4-10 year olds achieving 546 %, 11-17 year olds 399 % and adults 208 % after just one series of Lightwave Stimulation.

For clients that took only LWS the overall increase was 340 %, while those that also had AIT treatment, the results were 370 %.

Some clients took more than one series of LWS and the results after their last series of LWS showed an average increase of 651 %.

Narrow VFA indicate poor visual functioning, poor health, stress or depression. Wide VFA indicate healthy physical and mental functioning.

We adhere to strict confidentiality rules and fully respect the privacy of our clients and will only publish aggregate statistical data that cannot be linked to individual clients.

Forthcoming events

Open House events are an ideal way for individuals, parents and health and educational professionals to visit the Centre, meet our staff and obtain relevant information on what underlies our work. The events normally start with a half-hour talk by Pauline Allen followed by a video presentation and an informal question and answer session and there is also time for informal one-to-one discussions. The event takes about an hour-and-a-half and there is absolutely no commitment to pursue



any of the options offered and no charge is made. Please let us know if you're coming, so we can cater for the right number of visitors. All Open House events are held at the Centre itself at 12 The Rise, London, N13 5LE.

Open House event dates:

Thursday 2 November 2006 - 7.30pm
Tuesday 5 December 2006 - 7.30pm
Thursday 11 January 2007 - 7.30pm
Thursday 22 February 2007 - 7.30pm

SenseAbility course date:

Tuesday 30 January 2007 - 9.30am 4.30pm

EASIE course date:

Wednesday 14 March 2007 - 9.30am 4.30pm

Media coverage

Our work receives frequent coverage in the media and a compilation DVD with video clips of past BBC, ITV, Sky News and Discovery Channel programmes is available on request.

New website

We have recently launched a major update of our website which now provides even more useful information and guidance on many learning and sensory difficulties. Please visit us at www.thesoundlearningcentre.co.uk.

More information

Many clients come to us through recommendation and we are most grateful for the continued support offered to us by past clients.

If you know somebody who could possibly benefit from the services we provide, we will be only too happy to send further copies of this or past Newsletters and any other literature or information we have - we're only a telephone call away on 020 - 8882 1060.



"I learnt more in 2 hours than in the last 18 months seeing various professionals.

They look at the symptoms, you look at the causes.

The report was brilliant. I bored everyone to death with it !"

Mother of 4 year old KP after Standard Assessment July 2006



Treatments offered:

- Auditory Integration Training (AIT)
- Lightwave Stimulation (LWS)
- Neuro-developmental Programme (NDD)
- Self-Voice Programme (SV)
- Multi-Sensory Teaching

Training courses:

- SenseAbility sensory development course for parents
- EASIE developmental exercise programme for schools

Information:

- Information on our renewed website
- Free regular Open House events
- Talks and Conference presentations

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