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MISOPHONIA

For Family, Friends, Loved ones.

*YES, IT IS A REAL
THING!*

How you can support
people you care about
with a condition you
probably have not heard
about...yet!

WHAT IS MISOPHONIA?

It is an understudied brain disorder condition affecting between 6% to 20% of people (US sample) characterized with a decreased tolerance to specific sounds or stimuli associated with such sounds. It is **NOT** the same what sensory sensitivity.

These stimuli, known as “triggers,” are experienced as unpleasant or distressing and tend to evoke strong negative emotional, physiological, and behavioural responses that are not seen in most other people. The most common trigger sounds relate to **eating and breathing**, and the most common overwhelming feelings experienced by MISO people are **anger, anxiety, desire to escape and disgust**.

(Swedo et al., Consensus Definition of Misophonia, 2022).

TRIGGERS:

Eating/drinking noises:

- ✓ Smacking lips,
- ✓ chewing (especially with mouth open) food or gum,
- ✓ crunching sounds,
- ✓ slurping,
- ✓ loud swallowing or gulping,

Breathing noises:

- ✓ snoring,
- ✓ sniffing or nose blowing,
- ✓ heavy breathing.

SO.....HOW CAN YOU HELP?



BELIEVE!

When a person shares about his/her struggles with sounds believe it. My practise as therapist showed that MISO people are often not understood with their condition by their close ones, and often experience gaslighting, mocking or they are being ignored or laughed at for their experience.



RESEARCH!

Take time to learn about the condition so you will be better informed about how to support your loved one. The one fundamental fact to remember is that MISO people experience their symptoms involuntarily and intensely.

You are not at fault for making everyday noises the same as they haven't chosen to be sensitive to them.



TALK ABOUT IT!

Take a sit and have a chat with your person. Use compassion and kindness. Try to learn about their struggle and try to find out how you can be a support to them. Remember, you will not always be able to attend their needs perfectly but also their role will be to start using their management tools related to their condition in moments of being triggered. Yet, your understanding is of a tremendous value.



IMAGINE!

Imagine experiencing sudden cortisol rush and hyperactive heart beat triggered by a minor aspect for a regular people. The feeling of being trapped and intruded is sudden like a slap in the face and your body goes into fight/fly/freeze response within seconds. Try not to underestimate severity of those responses in the person. Remember that brain disorder is named as a DISORDER for a reason.



FLEXIBILITY!

Be open for flexibility and creative approach. Rearrange eating (or other) habits. There are few things that are helpful for people with misophonia and they can discover them through therapy. To point few of them here they include:

- ✓ background noise/music/tv that will mask eating noises,
- ✓ distant seat far from triggering person/noise,
- ✓ option for MISO person to leave when needed,
- ✓ ear phones that are available online,



DON'T STRESS OUT!

It is important that you will not be getting stressed around your everyday routine that elicit sound triggers for people you are having in your life. You can support a person, and that is very important, yet it is still them to manage what they can within themselves. The way of supporting them is just having this conversation with them about what is a middle ground so both parties show a will of care. For example, you can give a head up to a person so she/he can refocus on a background noise while the food is served or some particular crunchy thing is placed, you can leave the room when you need to use a tissue etc. However, stopping noises fully will not be possible and that is ok.



RESOURCES

Here are few resources you can find on the internet to read more about misophonia:

<https://allergictosound.com/>

<https://misophonainstitute.org/>

<https://hashtinnitusclinic.com/>

<https://www.loopearplugs.com/>

CBT Therapy for misophonia

<https://www.rebornclinic.ie/>