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MISOPHONIA

For PARENTS (KIDS<15)

*YES, IT IS A REAL
THING!*

How you can support
children with the 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**.

REMEMBER: Misophonia is **NOT** a sensory sensitivity disorder.

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

THE MAIN 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 child 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, being ignored or laughed at for their experience.



Look for signs!

Complaining about specific, everyday life noises other people make, usually oral noises. Visible anger/frustration towards family members in response to noises. Fleeing outside suddenly from the room. Blocking ears even when the sound is not loud.



TALK ABOUT IT TO A KID, TEACHER AND FAMILY!

Take a seat and have a chat with a kid. Use compassion and kindness. Try to learn about their struggle, what particular sound is a problem for him/her so you will know what to be aware of. Remember, you will not always be able to attend their needs perfectly and some challenge will have to be put at place. Yet your help is of a tremendous value. Find therapist specialised in misophonia treatment, read about it, explain family and teachers what misophonia is and ask for help. The kid must learn to help yourself first but he/she can not do it on his own.



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. Remember that brain disorder is named as a DISORDER for a reason.

FLEXIBILITY!



Be open for flexibility and creative approach. 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,

Your help as a parent can include:

asking a child is it a sound or loudness causes a trouble, finding a therapist for a child so he/she can learn coping skills, allowing earphones or background noise (radio) use at the table, place a child a bit at the distance at the table away from the source of noise, talk to your family, in particular siblings about the condition, give them a leaflet, encourage understanding and empathy toward MISO kid in the family, allowing a kid to leave a table, if necessary, allowing to skip certain tasks that would be a high exposure for a kid in terms of noise, sit with a kid after noise experience and ask about feelings/thoughts around the noise, learn to recognise details so you can guide a child through an experience, tell a kid to distract yourself when he/she hears noise, teach a kid 5 mins breathing technique to use in moments of stress (check the course), allow the kid to have some distraction in his/her hands such as stress ball etc, ask about thoughts/feelings and give new understanding, recognise the source of noise, usually with oral sounds the strongest trigger comes from one person in the family, sit a kid away from a person, encourage child to talk about it to you when needed, make sure to accommodate a child in particular situations such as an exam, simple pen noises can be a trigger, talk to the teachers, give them leaflet, give the child a warning before starting an activity that includes triggering sound, for ex. eating, try not to eat crunchy food close to a kid (popcorn, crisps), those are easily avoidable.



DON'T STRESS OUT!

You are trying your best. MISO kids need complex help and it is important to find professional support to guide you and a child. Keep communicating with teachers/family so they can give you more ideas about specifics in regard to the child. Give them leaflets regarding misophonia. Every MISO person has some individual ways of acting/reacting/coping and it is important to learn about those specifics. However, the most important is that the child will feel you all believe him/her.



RESOURCES

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

<https://allergictosound.com/>

<https://misophonainstitute.org/>

<https://hashirtinnitusclinic.com/>

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

**CBT Therapy and Education for
Misophonia**

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