



I. Introduction

Auditory Processing Disorder (APD), also known as Central Auditory Processing Disorder (CAPD) is a developmental delay of the brain to understand the meaning of sounds.

People with APD find it difficult to process (i.e. perceive, analyse, understand etc.) what he/she hears. It is not linked to impaired hearing, hearing loss, or with poor intelligence at all. It is a dysfunction that impedes an individual to correctly perceive, analyse, and respond to his/her acoustic environment.

Dr. Alfred Tomatis, a French ENT specialist, discovered that changes in the listening pattern paved the way to significant improvements in learning and communication abilities and even with emotions and behaviour. He established an ear-brain training program to accommodate the learning needs of people in all ages in school, at home, or in a work environment.

II. Case presentation

Sue was a beautiful, out-going, and active 6-year-old girl when her mother brought her to the Tomatis® Centre in Sydney. Her speech was unclear--not saying the words entirely and difficult to understand. She was usually hesitant because she made use of "ah ah euh euh" rather than words to express herself. She had been assessed as suffering from Auditory Processing Disorder (APD).

Sue was born via C-section at 27 weeks and stayed in the hospital for seven (7) weeks. As a prematured baby, she was delayed in developing her milestones as well as speech.

She started preschool at 3 and a half (3 1/2) and could only say 3 (three) words in a stream of speech.

At 3 years old, Sue had a general check-up and found that she had glue ear (middle ear is filled with fluid) resulting in a flat tympanogram assessment. Having a flat tympanogram means there is fluid or infection behind the eardrum.



So, speech therapy was suggested. Between the age of 3 and 4 1/2, Sue started to show signs of frustration and a lot of anger. She also exhibited bossiness to survive. People who are extravert tend to be bossy with their peers or family members as it is easier for them to dictate their wants and needs than to understand and follow others' rules.

Sue's gross motor skills were mixed and she had some issues with coordination which are the signs that the two vestibular systems were not working in sync.

On the auditory processing level, she needed things to be repeated to her endlessly. Her mother described her with "selective deafness". She showed amazing concentration skills when she was playing, yet she could not sit still on her chair in school. Her mother brought her to the Tomatis® Method expecting that Sue's speech would improve and that her words would begin to flow.

III. Management and Outcome

Sue took the first 30 hours program of the Tomatis® Clinical Program: 2 hours per day, 5 days a week over a period of 3 weeks. Then, another 30 hours program after a 4-week break. Finally, her third program ran 20 hours after an 8-week break.

Sue's stages of progress were noted both at home and at school. For example, her speech therapist commented that Sue started to distinguish between sounds much better and was able to reproduce those sounds better than before.

In general, her speech improved in clarity, with fewer hesitations and even her concentration improved. Consequently, she was definitively less cranky and frustrated in class and at home as she was able to keep up with what everyone else was doing.

Additionally, her writing improved and she began to finish tasks that she started, which was a totally new behaviour for her. Also, in class, she was putting her hand up to answer questions, which was very much unlike Sue. Her teacher was pleased and her mother relieved and full of hope for what Sue might be able to achieve.



Sue was much more cooperative and compliant. From a wild and untamed child, she became a sweet little girl. Four years after completing the Tomatis® Program, Sue's mother reported that Sue was evolving positively, having lots of friends, and performing well at school. All the issues that she had presented earlier, had vanished in terms of behaviour, immaturity, learning, and communication difficulties.

The Science Behind It!

The Tomatis® Method is an educational program utilising a neurosensory-integrative approach to Auditory Processing Disorder (APD). It is established on the fundamental idea that the brain is plastic or it has the ability to change over consistent stimulation or exercise, that is, neuroplasticity.

The Tomatis Method actively works by changing the contrasts of sounds using the TalksUp® device (Tomatis® player). It is installed with its Gating® that randomly produces high- and low-frequency filters on the classical music (usually Mozart and Gregorian Chant).

It also makes use of advanced headphones specifically designed to transmit this filtered music via air and bone conduction. Bone conduction is the process where sound travels through the skull which is ten times faster.

The filtering successions from one frequency to another and the mode of transmission of the music work together to make the ear-brain-body connections operational and efficient. Eventually, it helps to develop the necessary mechanisms such as sensory processing, attention, concentration, and memory, of which are all needed for learning and communication.

Children and adults with Auditory Processing difficulties have a hard time to fit in the society as their brain does not understand what their ears are hearing. When that finally happens, thanks to the use of the Tomatis® Listening Program, it totally changes their lives in terms of behaviour, emotional regulation, communication, and performance.

Like Sue, more and more children and even adults are benefiting from the progressive impacts of the Tomatis® Method. It is offered as a clinical and home-based program to support children and adults and improve quality of life! For more information, visit www.tomatis.com.au!



From Wild to Wise APD and the Tomatis® Method: A Case Study

Françoise Nicoloff is a registered psychologist and an International Tomatis® Consultant and Trainer. Françoise has worked for nearly four decades around the world with children and adults suffering from anxiety, depression, learning and communication difficulties. Françoise is often invited to speak at conferences. She is passionate about helping those people especially when their difficulties are linked to auditory processing which means that their brains do not hear what their ears are hearing. She has chosen to be based in Sydney and she travels within Australia and around the world. Recently, she has been asked to support families and professionals in China too. She can be contacted on 1800 677 010 or by email at info@tomatis.com.au.

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