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Hyperacusis Program

Hyperacusis is an abnormal intolerance to ordinary, everyday sounds, which is often associated with a strong reaction to the presence of tinnitus. It can develop when people fear being exposed to a certain sound, sometimes in the belief that it will damage the ear.

The aim of hyperacusis therapy is to provide information, counselling and a desensitisation program, based on Tinnitus Retraining Therapy* principles, to increase tolerance to everyday sound. This is a gradual process, where you will notice that situations previously uncomfortable will become gradually less so. If hyperacusis and tinnitus are present, the hyperacusis is usually addressed first. Frequently, as the hyperacusis becomes more under control, the tinnitus may be less of an issue.

Our approach to hyperacusis management therapy involves:

- an evaluation of the hyperacusis and its impact on you
- a thorough history of the hyperacusis and an examination of any strategies you are using to cope with it
- a personalised program for desensitisation, based on Tinnitus Retraining Therapy and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy.

A detailed explanation of the auditory system and the neurophysiological basis of hyperacusis related distress and annoyance is given. Practical self-management strategies to assist desensitisation, personalised to suit your individual coping style, will be developed with you.

Ms Myriam Westcott is an audiologist with a particular interest and extensive experience in hyperacusis therapy. She is qualified to provide Tinnitus Retraining Therapy, having trained under Dr Pawel Jastreboff.

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** Tinnitus Retraining Therapy is a tinnitus/hyperacusis management therapy program developed by Dr Jonathan Hazell (an Ear, Nose and Throat specialist) and Dr Pawel Jastreboff, based on Dr Jastreboff's neurophysiological explanation of the distress and annoyance caused by tinnitus/hyperacusis.*