

Delays & Disorders Explained – Auditory Processing Disorder (APD) –



A GUIDE FOR CAREGIVERS

WHAT IS AUDITORY PROCESSING DISORDER (APD)?

Auditory Processing Disorder (APD) is a condition that affects how the brain processes and interprets sounds. It is NOT a hearing loss.

- APD is what the brain *does* with what the ears hear.
- This can make everyday listening and communication challenging, both for children and adults.
- The brain struggles to make sense of sound and/or comprehend information; particularly when there are competing noises or information and distractions which can be difficult to filter out for those with APD.

WHAT ARE THE COMMON SIGNS?

APD can manifest differently in each individual.

Common signs include:

- Difficulty understanding speech in noisy environments.
- Struggling to follow verbal instructions.
- Having trouble distinguishing between similar sounds or words.
- Easily distracted or overwhelmed by sounds in surroundings.
- Difficulty localizing sound and where it comes from.
- Losing focus and attention easily.
- Feeling that one ear “hears” better than the other.
- Difficulty retaining information and/or sequencing information.
- Difficulty with memory/forgetful.

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO ADDRESS APD?

Therapists and educators often play a significant role in helping clients with APD.

- Use of technology: low gain hearing aids (LGHA), FM and soundfield.
- Auditory skills training/therapy—train the brain by creating improved neural pathways for better listening.
- Build memory skills.
- Compensatory strategies—seating away from noise, ask for repetition.
- Practice listening to and processing various sounds to improve auditory discrimination skills.

STRATEGIES AT SCHOOL

In the classroom, teachers may provide accommodations such as:

- Preferential seating
- Using visual aids
- Providing written instructions to improve understanding and participation in lessons.

STRATEGIES AT HOME

Family can also provide support by:

- Creating a quiet and organized environment at home.
- Using clear and concise communication.
- Using patience and understanding, as it can be frustrating to listen and communicate.

*It is important for family to work closely with **audiologists** to create a tailored plan for the specific needs of an individual with APD. Early intervention is often key to helping clients with APD overcome their challenges and develop strong communication skills, which can lead to improved academic and social success, as well as success in the workplace and career setting.*

Remember that every client is unique, and with the right support, they can thrive despite their auditory processing difficulties.