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Why Sound Therapy, not Listening Therapy?

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There have been many names associated with therapies that use the ear's anatomy and physiology over the last 13 years in the United States. One of them is Listening Therapy. Other names have been associated with either the name of the therapy, such as the Tomatis®™ Method, the Samonas® Method, Fast ForWord®, etc., or with the first therapy introduced into the United States with a huge push for acceptance called Auditory Integration Training. There has been much controversy over what the therapies do and whether they are effective. Unfortunately, ignorance of what each therapy addresses and how they work has created the problem.

The term, "Auditory Integration Training", wrongfully became the generic name for all therapies being introduced. The book, "Alternative Medicine: the Definitive Guide" (Celestial Arts, Berkeley, CA, p. 441-443) of 1995 also lumped all sound therapies under this title of Auditory Integration Training. Due to the improper introduction of the method, and its poorly 'trained therapists', this name became one to be avoided. The term, "Listening Therapy" became popular with the promotion of a similar program. The term, 'listening', seemed more appropriate at that time to use than Auditory Integration Training, or Auditory Training.

But what is 'listening'? Webster's Dictionary defines 'listen' as "to make a conscious effort to hear'. Listening then, means that one has to consciously tune into what they hear. Hearing is the passive reception of sound. One can hear a sound but may not consciously tune into that sound. We are able to block out sounds around us when we want to.

By understanding the definition of 'listening', we must consider what the various therapies currently designated as 'Auditory Integration Training' or as 'Listening Therapy' do. A person involved with a therapy may not always be 'tuned into' the therapy as an active listener. Is it then called a 'Listening Therapy' because it addresses the development of listening skills? If one thinks that is true, then they do not know what these therapies are doing or how they work.

There are so many therapies available today that people have simply lumped them into the category of listening or auditory sensation. Prior to my learning, studying, researching, and being certified in every major sound therapy, no one took the time to figure out what the therapies were doing, how they worked, or how they impacted the person. It is because of my background as an audiologist, that I was able to do this.

One of the therapies specifically addresses the function of hearing. Most of the current therapies impact the voice-ear-brain connection identified by Dr. Alfred Tomatis over 50 years ago. His theories became known as "The Tomatis Effect" which was validated by the French Academy of Science in 1957. My research has allowed me to publish "The Davis Addendum to the Tomatis Effect", presented at the Acoustical Society of America's conference in November 2004. This addendum adds two additional laws to Dr. Tomatis' original 3 laws. Both sets of laws add credence to the voice-ear-brain connection. Other

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therapies currently available, build on higher order skills related more specifically to learning and development skills such as auditory memory, auditory sequencing, auditory discrimination, body movement and rhythm, and listening in background noise, as well as skills necessary for reading, spelling, and handwriting. However, what all of the known therapies have in common is the use of **sound stimulation**.

To impact the body, sound needs much more than the basic ear. Sound impacts us by air conduction, by whole body bone conduction, by our sense of touch, and through our 'living matrix'—the interconnected web of cells throughout our entire body. This may be a different way for an audiologist to think of sound and its impact on the body but researchers are continuously finding out that our body not only reacts to sound but creates sound. Every molecule in our body responds to and emits a sound. The mechanical principle behind this is called Kirchhoff's principle—the frequencies absorbed by a molecule are identical to the frequencies emitted by a molecule. Yes, we give off an otoacoustic emission but we do more than that. Our entire body creates sound. We just don't hear it within the parameters of our awareness.

In regards to 'listening therapy', I have coined the term, 'sound based therapies', because each of the therapies has an impact on the body by sound stimulation. The person does not have to be motivated to tune into what is being 'heard' by the body. The body still reacts and makes change.

As I studied and researched more about each of the current sound based therapies, I discovered how they help or hinder each other if their impact is not understood. "The Tree of Sound Enhancement Therapy®" is a developmental flow chart for the administration of the sound based therapies. By understanding the tree analogy, application of the sound based therapies is easy to comprehend. The tree analogy also lead to the development of the Diagnostic Evaluation for Therapy Protocol (DETP®), a test battery that determines when and if a sound therapy can be beneficial. This test battery should be the entry point for anyone trying to determine if a sound therapy will be helpful.

All therapies incorporate the use of headphones. All involve some form of sound stimulation. All do not include 'listening' because they do not include the conscious and motivated use of hearing. All do not use the sense of 'hearing'. All do however, involve the body's reaction to the sounds that are processed. Therefore, a more appropriate term for the current 'listening therapies' is "sound based therapy" or simply 'sound therapy'. The newest edition of "Alternative Medicine: the Definitive Guide" (Celestial Arts, Berkeley, CA, 2002, p. 444) under the category of 'Sound Therapy" says: "Sound and music can have a very powerful effect on one's health. Sound therapy is used in hospitals, schools, corporate offices, and psychological treatment programs as an effective treatment to reduce stress, lower blood pressure, alleviate pain, overcome learning disabilities, improve movement and balance, and promote endurance and strength." Sound therapy impacts the entire body. Therefore, the appropriate term to apply to the therapies available today is 'sound therapy'.

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