

# Johansen IAS

## What is Johansen Individualised Auditory Stimulation therapy?

I have all of the brain wiring required for normal hearing, it's just that it takes the scenic route. The long, zig-zaggy kind of path that makes some people carsick. Johansen Individualised Auditory Stimulation Therapy uses special CD tracks of "music", which you listen to for 10 minutes every day. The Johansen music re-trains the way your brain processes sound, strengthening connections and giving the wiring a faster, more direct route.

Camilla Leslie, the Johansen therapist who helped me, showed me a graph charting the sensitivities for decibel pitches at the Optimum Curve which works best for hearing human speech. These are the levels which Johansen CDs trained my hearing towards.

Speech is the most important thing to be able to hear clearly, since it allows you to communicate with other people. With Johansen therapy, I didn't only become able to hear speech clearly, I also heard music clearly and began to learn social skills.

Being diagnosed with serious Auditory Processing Disorder was a huge relief. I always had a feeling that there was something "wrong" with me and I finally knew what it was! I never considered that I had difficulty with hearing because I wasn't deaf. I often couldn't understand what people said and found it hard to fit in at school. I thought that everyone heard the same way I did, but they were smarter than me.

At my first session with Camilla, I couldn't keep my attention on what she was saying. The room we were in was full of colourful and interesting objects. I wanted to look at them all at the same time. Needless to say, before Johansen IAS therapy, I had some issues with concentration. I could either block out everything apart from whatever I was concentrating on, living in my own world, or have no focus at all.

I really liked Camilla. The way she spoke was slow and even, the easiest voice to listen to that I had ever heard. However, during the session, my mum still did most of the listening and remembering for both of us. We did some tests, which included listening to two short words simultaneously from either side of a pair of headphones.

We also did an Audiogram Test, where the acuteness of hearing in both of my ears to certain pitches was mapped on a graph.

Camilla said that I had serious Auditory Processing disorder. Instead of being worried by this, I felt relieved. I wasn't stupid after all. I just didn't hear clearly. It was amazing how the diagnosis of a learning difference boosted my confidence.

After listening to my first Johansen CD, I was selling crafts at a Christmas Fair when I realized that Christmas music had words. Until then, I'd just assumed that singers made mouth noises to go with the backing and just threw in the odd word. This time I heard whole strings of words. "Fee der war", became Feed the World and music with lyrics felt less pointless. As someone who had always loved music, this was a revelation. It opened up a whole new world of music to listen to and enjoy.

In the middle of Johansen treatment I felt stressed-out, angry, insecure, emotional and fearful. Everything was disorienting and I could hardly manage going to school, let alone sit my Highers that year. My brain was closed for extensive renovations, making learning even more of a struggle than before. This kind of problem is almost unheard of for Johansen therapy. Almost everybody improves without their hearing getting worse before it gets better. Camilla, my Johansen therapist said that I was her most complex case so far- and that this brick wall I hit in the middle of the treatment was something which she'd never seen before. But we kept going with the Johansen CDs, keeping in contact to carefully monitor my progress, and now I'm one of her successes.

It turned out that the hiccup with retraining my hearing was because Retained Reflexes (I cover Retained Reflexes in other files) were conflicting with the Johansen therapy. After going to The Movement and Learning Centre Scotland for a year, to resolve these Retained Reflexes, I was ready to continue with Johansen therapy.

Finished at MLC and back on the Johansen CDs, my hearing started to improve again and I heard every word in a proper song for the first time. After that I listened to music all the time, making up for a lifetime's worth over about two years, and discovering radio. Three years on from when I heard lyrics clearly for the first time, my hearing was so good that I could even hear Metal lyrics, which can be difficult! I was listening to many different varieties of music, but mainly rock music. Music with words is amazing. I still find it incredible that lyrics make each song a story.

Without Retained Reflexes, Johansen therapy was making huge differences. My hypersensitive hearing started toning down. Deafening traffic became loud and the squeaking security screens in shops stopped hurting my ears

and driving me crazy. There was a huge reduction in background noise and I started hearing my own voice clearly for the first time. I wasn't impressed. I slurred, stuttered and missed percussive sounds like Ss and Ts because previously they had seemed too loud. I also spoke too quietly because at a normal volume I felt like I was shouting at people. Everyone seemed to be used to the way I spoke apart from me. It was embarrassing.

Being able to hear myself, I put effort into speaking more clearly and now I sound absolutely normal.

One day I realised that I could hear the distance and direction of cars on the road. This got rid of the anxiety I had around traffic, as well as lowering my chances of becoming roadkill.

Loud noises no longer scaring the living daylights out of me, I took up drumming. My family weren't as enthusiastic about this as I was.

Nowadays I still miss the odd word when I'm tired or distracted, and prefer watching telly with subtitles, but compared to my bad old APD days I'm like a new person. For a start, I'm no longer a hermit. Talking to people is easy and I discovered that I quite enjoy it. I've made lots of friends since my hearing got better, and got to know some old friends for the first time.

Every social skill I have now, has been learned over the past three years. I've had a lot to catch up with. Sarcasm, figures of speech, the different tones of voice for different moods, nuances and social signals.

Life is easier. I have more energy, catch less colds and can learn and do well in classes with lots of spoken information, which I used to find impossible. I enjoy chatting and having a laugh with my friends, and generally acting my age.

Johansen IAS didn't just given me my hearing. It gave me the tools to be a normal person.