

#### **Assistive Listening Devices (ALDs) for Tinnitus**

At our meeting in August, David Spicer (from the NDA's Assistive Listening Devices clinic) ran a session looking at equipment that can help people manage tinnitus. The main device on the market is a 'masking' device - a battery-operated or plug-in 'box' that creates a variety of therapeutic noises, for example ocean waves or birdsong. You can alter the volume the masking device, and some people with tinnitus find these devices very helpful in distracting them from the unwanted noises they hear.

If you would like to find out more about ALDs, why not drop into the NDA on a Thursday between 10am and 1pm for the ALD Clinic? As well as masking devices for tinnitus, you can try out items designed to help hearing loss, including telephones, loop systems and doorbells.

#### **The Power of Thought: Part 2**

In Part 1 of 'The Power of Thought' (see July 2014 newsletter), we looked at how our automatic thoughts about a situation can determine how we feel about it - and learnt that by changing our thought patterns, we can take more control of our feelings.

These automatic thoughts can also be called 'Negative Automatic Thoughts' (NATs). The more you are aware of NATs, the better placed you are to start challenging them. NATs:

- Do not fit all the facts, but contain a grain of truth
- 'Appear' without any warning, and can be hard to stop
- Do not help the situation - they leave you feeling bad and restrict positive change

Some common NATs associated with tinnitus are:

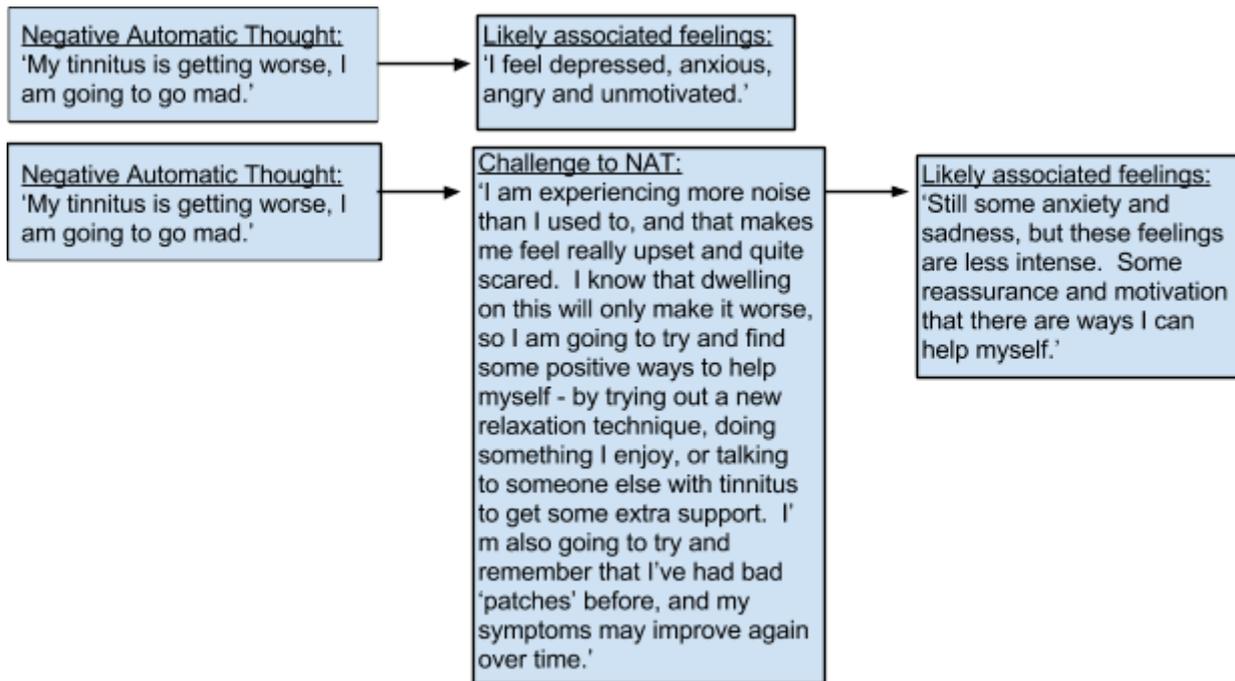
- 'It's not fair that I have tinnitus'
- 'I can't cope with the constant noise'
- 'It is just going to get worse and worse - I feel like I'm going mad'

All of these thoughts are understandable reactions to long-term experience of tinnitus, but it is important to understand that identifying and challenging these NATs is a vital step to having more control over the challenges of tinnitus. This is because the more we dwell on and believe NATs, the more the anxiety and depression that can accompany tinnitus is compounded and sustained.

It would be unrealistic to ask people with tinnitus to be relentlessly positive about their experiences - and it would also not necessarily be helpful, as research has shown that 'ignoring' something that presents a problem is rarely effective. So what is the solution? The key is to find a proactive middle ground, where you can acknowledge that tinnitus impacts your life, but work to stop the

NATs from leading you to overly dwell on the negative thoughts. Over time, and with a lot of determination, this can start to 'starve' the bad feelings of their food, leaving you with a greater range of options.

Here is an example:



**Key Point:** By identifying and challenging negative automatic thoughts (NATs), it is possible to prevent bad feelings being 'fed' and sustained.

*(adapted from 'Living with Tinnitus and Hyperacusis', by McKenna, Baguley and McFerran)*

### **Next TSG meeting**

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday 22nd October 2014, starting at 7pm. John Phillips, ENT Consultant at the NNUH will be giving a lecture on Meniere's Disease. I look forward to seeing lots of you for what I am sure will be a highly informative evening.