

**Hello everyone,**

As some of you may be aware there have been some changes within the tinnitus support group since August's meeting. Jess Freeman has completed her degree and gone back to her hometown. So, Pam Spicer, who is the service coordinator for NDA will now also be the TSG Coordinator. Assisting Pam with the running of the group will be myself, Zoe Warnes, the administrator/receptionist for NDA. If you have any queries at all please don't hesitate to contact us here. We look forward to meeting you all.

Over the past year or so we have had a number of talks about management of tinnitus. Claire Gatenby spoke about sleep management in June and at our september meeting **Dr Laurence McKenna, Consultant Clinical Psychologist at the Royal National Throat, Nose and Ear Hospital** came to give a talk on **A cognitive (psychological) approach to tinnitus**. This is a summary of his talk.

Cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) may not work for everyone, in the same way as pills may not work for everyone but it's important to understand how changing the way we *think* about something can in turn change the way we *feel*.



**We have two cognitive systems -**

**System one**

*Usually Automatic*

*Rapid*

*Default Process*

*Non-Logical*

*Answers simple questions '2+2=...'*

**System two**

*Controlled*

*Slow*

*Deliberate and Effortful*

*Logical*

*Answers hard questions '17x24=..'*

**System one** is gullible and likely to believe anything, prompting Negative Automatic Thoughts (NATs) which lead to arousal and distress. Negative thoughts common amongst tinnitus patients are:

<i>Despair</i>	<i>Loss of enjoyment</i>
<i>Persecution</i>	<i>Resentment</i>
<i>Hopelessness</i>	<i>A desire for peace and quiet</i>

If you have any comments or questions regarding the Tinnitus Support Group, please contact:  
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**System one** is 'Lazy Cognition', jumps to conclusions and believes it knows the answer. People are then very likely to believe arguments to support it even when it is wrong:

- All Roses are Flowers
- Some flowers fade quickly
- Therefore roses fade quickly

Misunderstandings about tinnitus, assuming negative conclusions, can lead to catastrophizing (catastrophic thinking):

- I have tinnitus
- I will never hear silence again
- My life will always be bad

This catastrophic thinking will only intensify the negative emotions, which then has a snowball effect, causing stress, raising cortisol levels, increasing heart rate and high levels of muscle tension.



If we allow **System two** to work, slowing things down, we can identify and adapt how we think (cognitively) and what we do (behaviour) in order to influence our emotional wellbeing and physical symptoms.

Using **System two** we can think effectively, look at things with a calm, logical perspective. We can separate fact from fiction, allowing less negative thoughts in and therefore more positive ones in. Distress will be reduced, we start to tolerate the noises and then they can eventually become less noticeable. We can pay attention to the present, not worrying about the future and the 'worst case scenario'.

*We cannot decide whether or not we have tinnitus but we can change the effect it has on us, during our days and how we live our lives.*

### **Next TSG meeting**

Our next TSG meeting will be on Wednesday 7th October 2015, starting at 2:30pm. David Spicer **BSc (Hons) MBACP UKCP Reg** will be leading a session about 'Mindfulness'. David is a UKCP registered integrative psychotherapeutic and CBT counsellor, experienced in counselling those living with tinnitus.

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