

SOUND BASED THERAPIES: AN INTRODUCTION

By Dorinne Davis, MA, CCC-A, FAAA, RCTC, BARA
The Davis Center, Succasunna, NJ

Does a classical concert create a feeling of relaxation for you? Does jazz music provide an energy boost? Rock and roll music may either irritate or invigorate you. Perhaps fingernails scraping on a blackboard send shivers up and down your spine. Working in an industrial facility with noisy equipment may make you very tense and irritable. Do you know someone whose voice is melodious to listen to?

Sound affects us in various ways. It can be pleasurable, soothing, irritable, painful, or mediocre in its effect. Sound can make us happy or make us feel sad.

Man has been aware of the impact of sound since the time of the cavemen. Sound was used as a warning system to let others know of imminent danger. Samurai warriors used sound to disarm their opponents. The mathematician and philosopher Pythagorus was the first to instruct his medical students to use sound to heal their patients. It has been said that “music soothes the soul”.

Because of our personal, specific and individual characteristics, sound affects all of us in different ways. However, there are some commonalities among many sound reactions, such as liking concordant sounds and disliking discordant sounds.

SOUND BASED THERAPY HISTORY

Tomatis®

Dr. Alfred Tomatis, a French Ear, Nose, and Throat physician, is the founder of Sound Based Therapy. Approximately 50 years ago he discovered that the voice produces what the ear hears. This became known as the ‘Tomatis Effect’. He also developed a device called an Electronic Ear, which through special filtering systems, was able to modify how the ear processed sound. He used specially patented headphones that incorporate the transmission of sound using both air and bone conduction. The method stresses the relationship between the ear, the voice, and psychology. He discovered that his method helped people who had voice problems such as opera singers, and actors. It also dramatically helped people with speech and language, psychological, learning, and communication problems.

Berard

A student of Dr. Tomatis, Dr. Guy Berard, also a French Ear, Nose, and Throat physician, developed a different sound based therapy that focuses mainly on hypersensitivity to sound. His method is called Auditory Integration Training. This method retrains the acoustic reflex muscle in the middle ear, thereby allowing a person to process sound more efficiently and without pain. He discovered that he helped people with overly sensitive hearing, learning problems, autism, attention problems, and more.

Fast ForWord®

Many years later, brain researchers discovered a way to increase how the brain processes the sequencing of individual speech sounds to improve speech comprehension. This process is called auditory temporal sequencing and is a critical skill in central auditory processing. The original researchers created a company called Scientific Learning Corporation to promote their program called Fast ForWord. It has helped children with learning, reading, and attention problems.

BioAcoustics™

In the early 1970's, it was discovered that the ear also produces a sound called an otoacoustic emission. Making the connection that the voice produces what the ear hears, a woman by the name of Sharry Edwards, created the field of BioAcoustics. BioAcoustics means 'life sounds'. Using the process of voice spectral analysis, it is now possible to identify well-being issues for every individual. A sound based protocol of individualized frequencies is created for each person. The person then listens to this protocol of sounds at home to improve well-being issues. This method has significantly helped people with muscle injuries, fibromyalgia, stroke, autism, osteoporosis, and much more. Frequency specific sound based upon the voice analysis is used to help one's body improve its well-being.

SUMMARY

This brief article is the first in a series that will help introduce the reader to sound, its impact on every day life, and how specific variations or modifications of sound can benefit learning and well-being.

Dorinne Davis M.A., CCC-A, FAAA, RCTC, BARA, is the President and Founder of THE DAVIS CENTER, Succasunna, NJ. She is a licensed rehabilitation and educational audiologist specializing in therapies addressing auditory processing issues. Her center is the only center in the US that offers the unique combination of therapies for the improvement of sound processing skills.

Copyright©davis2003

Printed in To Your Health, March/April 2000, p. 28