Deafness and Autism
Factors Affecting Daily Transitions
Children with autism often have difficulties assimilating their senses:

- Touch
- Smell
- Hearing
- Taste
- Sight

They can be extremely sensitive to every day senses which can have a profound impact on their daily transitions....
How to respond

- Occupational Therapy input
- Sensory diets
  - Trampoline
  - Brushing program
  - Deep pressure
  - Weighted jacket/blanket
  - Therapy swing

- *Ear defenders/ Head phones with music*
Obsessions

• Provides structure, order and predictability and can help people cope with the uncertainties of daily life
• Help people to feel calm and happy
• Enjoyment from gathering items of interest

“My mind was constantly whirring with thoughts, worries and concerns. The time spent with my obsessions was the only time in which I had a clear mind – it gave me that much sought after relaxation.” (Young person with Asperger syndrome)

However, obsessions can dramatically impact on every day transitions…..
How to respond

• Understand and intervene..
• Increase structure..
• Help with skills development..
• Set limits..
• Make use of obsessions.

(National Autistic Society)
Communication

• Communication allows us to interact with the world around us and learn new things. Young people with autism, whether they are hearing or none hearing have their own unique way of interacting and receiving information. Therefore individual communication strategies need to be put in place to meet the needs of each young person.
How to respond

Promote a positive communication environment

- PECS
- BSL, SSE or Makaton
- Hand under hand signing
- Communication apps
- Social stories
- Intensive interaction
- OR's
- Daily schedule
- Work lists
- Now and then
- Finished bag
- Timers
Case Study

Jack
Background History

- Jack is a 13 year old young man
- He has profound sensorineural deafness with additional multiple severe needs
- Diagnosed with autism in 2004
- In 2004 Jack was fitted with a cochlear implant which he wore for 2 years but since 2006 Jack has refused to wear it
- Jack appears to be sensory defensive
- His Makaton vocabulary is continually improving and can sometimes build a sentence with up to 3 words independently
- Jack is supported 1:1
- He has problems with his balance and bruises easily
Transition difficulties

Obsessions (with straws or anything with straight lines)

- Self injury
- Negative behaviour towards others
- Anxiety levels will impact on the activity that follows
- May not make it to the next destination
- Accidental injury (needed to use a wheelchair on his micro transitions)
Response

- Originally used straws as a working towards but this seemed to increase anxieties, therefore straws are not to be in school
- Originally the wheelchair was used for his transitions around school to keep Jack safe. However, now he understands what is expected of him the wheelchair is only used outside
- Currently devising a program which will support Jack to decrease his use of his wheelchair during his outdoor transitions
Transition difficulties

Communication / Sensory Defensive
• Refuses to wear the cochlear implant which impacts on communication
• Jack does not respond positively to PECS

Response
• Desensitisation program
• Sensory diet
• Singular signed instruction to where he is going
• Lots of dramatic facial expressions
CASE STUDY

Jill
Background History

- 19 year old young woman
- Likely to have a severe bilateral sensorineural hearing loss
- Diagnosed with autism in 2000
- ABR in 2010 – no responses seen
- Erratic hearing aid user
- Vocalises more when wearing hearing aids
- Appears to dislike loud intrusive sound
Transition difficulties

**Obsession** (with paper)

- Bolting
- High level of anxiety throughout her daily transitions

**Response**

- Introduced a recycling paper activity
- Staff changed the way they reacted to her bolting
Transition Difficulties

Communication

- Does not offer eye contact
- Does not respond to any direct gesture (sign language) from another person
- Difficulties using the PECS system due to her obsession with paper
- Can refuse to wear her hearing aids in school
Transition difficulties

Response

- Currently working on a new communication app on a mini iPad
- Uses video clips on the iPad as a ‘prep for learning’ activity to transition around school
- Every day Jill’s key worker uses role play to encourage Jill to wear her hearing aids
Transition difficulties

Significant processing difficulties

• Sensory overload
• Appears to dislike low frequency sounds

Response

• Sensory diet throughout the day
### Sensory Diet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Monday</strong></td>
<td>09:00</td>
<td>09:15</td>
<td>Greeting &amp; Prep</td>
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<td>布brush</td>
<td>Reboun therapy</td>
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<td>布brush</td>
<td>Key Skills Library / Rebound Therapy</td>
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<td>布brush</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<td>11:00</td>
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<td>PHYSICAL DEV Gym</td>
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<td>scooter board</td>
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<td>Dinner</td>
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<td>CreATIVE Arts</td>
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<td>03:00</td>
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<td>deep pressure</td>
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<td><strong>Tuesday</strong></td>
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<td>Therapy roll</td>
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<td>09:15</td>
<td>布brush</td>
<td>LIFE SKILLS shopping</td>
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<td>Bike / PHSE Sex Ed</td>
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<td>LIT PECS Choices</td>
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<td>Greeting &amp; Prep</td>
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<td>Swing</td>
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<td>KEY SKILLS Numeracy/ICT</td>
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<td>LIFE SKILLS Cooking.</td>
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<td>playground swings.</td>
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<td>prone on therapy roll</td>
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*Note: The schedule includes a variety of activities such as therapy, sensory play, and leisure activities.*
What is the difference between supporting a young person with autism, and supporting a hearing impaired young person with autism and additional needs?

Why do many young people with autism reject their hearing aids?

Is there a correct recognised system to follow which guides practitioners how to support a hearing impaired young person with autism?
Useful Links

Intensive interaction
• https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gJruQPRx3Jkn
• http://davehewett.com/about-intensive-interaction/

Personal perspectives from people with Autism
• https://www.autismspeaks.org/blog/2015/01/21/nonverbal-adult-shares-her-feelings-sensory-overload
• http://carlysvoice.com/

Sensory integration
• www.kingcraft.co.uk/
• www.autism.com/symptoms_sensory_overview
• www.nationalautismresources.com/sensory-integration.html

Please be aware the young person will need to undergo an assessment by an Occupational Therapist to ensure the correct sensory diet is put in place.

Joyce will be forwarding Seashell Trusts outreach service information to all delegates.