



Supporting Trainee Teachers with Misophonia

Understanding Misophonia

Misophonia is a neurological condition where specific sounds trigger strong emotional or physical reactions, such as anxiety, anger, or distress. These responses are involuntary and can significantly affect concentration, wellbeing, and classroom engagement. It is not a behavioural issue or a reflection of a trainee's professionalism or capability.

Common Challenges for Trainee Teachers with Misophonia

Trainees with misophonia may experience difficulties in the following areas:

- **Sound Sensitivity:** Reactions to common classroom noises (e.g. chewing, tapping, whispering).
- **Concentration & Focus:** Difficulty maintaining attention when exposed to trigger sounds.
- **Emotional Regulation:** Managing stress or frustration in noisy environments.
- **Social Interaction:** Anxiety around group work or shared spaces.

Practical Support Strategies

Communication & Planning	• Encourage early disclosure and open dialogue. • Develop a Personal Support Plan (PSP). • Plan for seating arrangements and quiet working spaces
Environmental adjustments	• Allow use of earplugs • Minimise unnecessary background noise • Provide access to quieter workspace
Lesson planning and teaching	• Use structured routines to reduce unpredictability • Offer flexibility in group work or collaborative tasks
Assessment and written work	• Allow remote or quiet settings for assessments. • Provide materials in advance to reduce stress. • Focus feedback on clarity and progress.

Tips for Mentors

- **Be Understanding and Non-Judgmental:** Recognise that reactions are involuntary and not a sign of poor behaviour.
- **Check for Understanding:** Use open questions and encourage reflection on coping strategies.
- **Support Emotional Wellbeing:** Monitor stress levels and offer reassurance. Encourage self-care and reflection.
- **Use Multi-Modal Communication:** Provide written summaries and allow time for processing.
- **Be Flexible:** Adjust expectations during high-stress periods and offer alternatives where possible.

Guidance for Training Sessions and Lectures

Before the Session	• Share materials in advance. • Offer seating choices • Provide materials in multiple formats.
During the Session	• Allow breaks and movement. • Speak clearly and at a steady pace • Minimise triggering sounds e.g. unnecessary audio clips
After the Session	• Provide summaries and recordings. • Be available for follow-up questions
Emotional & Professional Support	• Monitor wellbeing and offer regular check ins

Useful resources

- **Misophonia Institute** – <https://www.misophonainstitute.org>
- **National Autistic Society** – <https://www.autism.org.uk> (some overlap with sensory sensitivities)
- **Mind UK** – <https://www.mind.org.uk>