

Information Handout

Professional Version | US English

What Causes Tinnitus?



Description

Tinnitus is thought to be associated with changes in the way in which the brain processes information. Normally a filter operates to 'tune out' unnecessary noises – including physiological noises – allowing for habituation to particular noises. In tinnitus this mechanism appears to fail – leading to awareness of physiological noises. Negative attributions regarding the noises can lead to emotional reactions, which can then exacerbate perception of the noise in a feedback loop. *What Causes Tinnitus?* is a description of this process. This information handout forms part of a cognitive-behavioral understanding of tinnitus.

Instructions

This is a Psychology Tools information handout.

Suggested uses include:

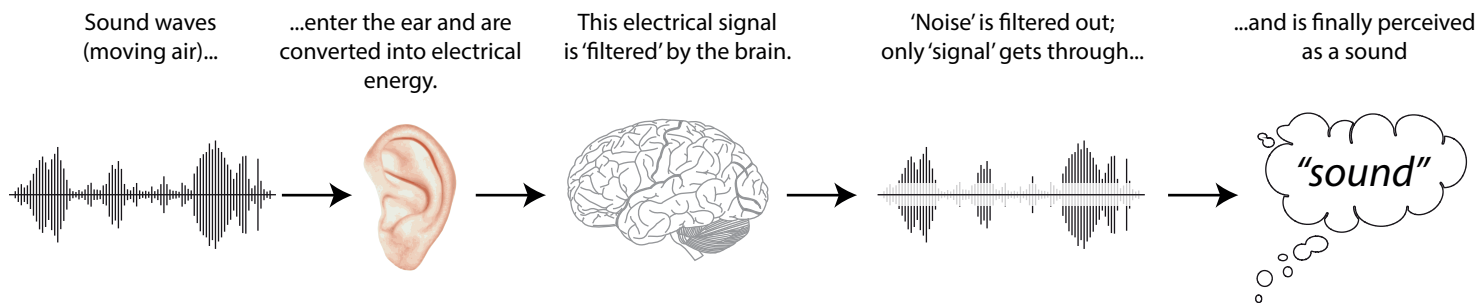
- Client handout – a psychoeducation resource.
- Discussion point – to provoke a discussion and explore your client's beliefs.
- Therapist learning tool – to improve your familiarity with a psychological construct.
- Supervision tool – to develop formulations and knowledge.
- Teaching resource – a learning tool during training.

References

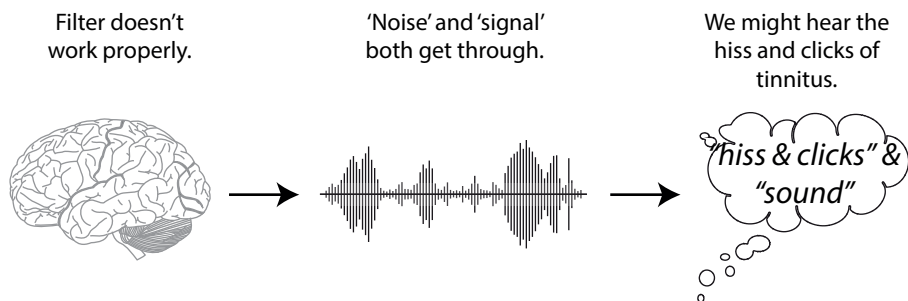
McKenna, L., Handscombe, L., Hoare, D. J., Hall, D. A. (2014). A scientific cognitive-behavioural model of tinnitus: novel conceptualizations of tinnitus distress. *Frontiers in Neurology*, 5, 1-15.

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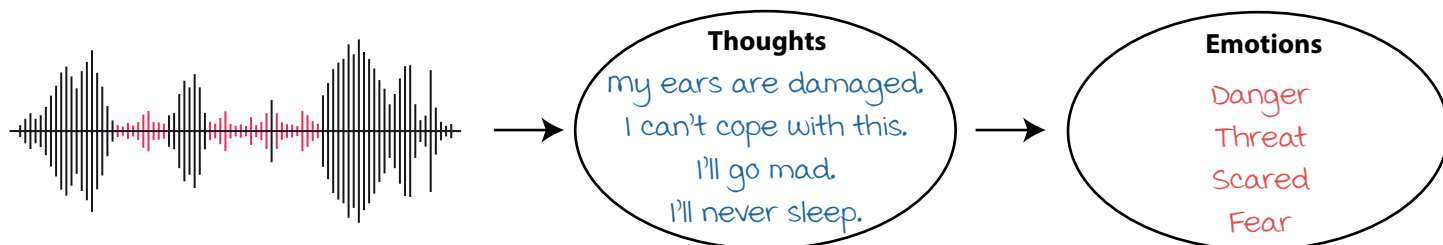
Normally



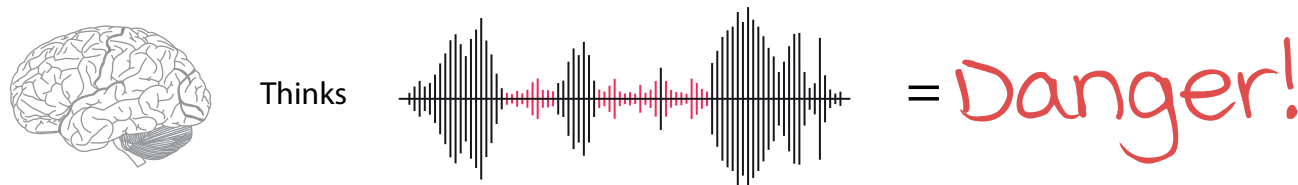
But sometimes (e.g. after a concert, an infection, a cold, hearing loss, or a trauma)



It is quite common to have worrying thoughts about the noise



The filter learns to associate noise with danger



If your filter thinks something is dangerous it will make sure to always let it through – it's trying to keep you safe by keeping you aware of danger. The problem is that tinnitus isn't dangerous or useful, so the filter is doing its job too well.

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Resource details

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