

Misophonia Guide for Teachers



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The
International Misophonia Foundation

What is misophonia?

Misophonia is most likely a neurophysiological condition where otherwise normal auditory stimuli cause an aversive response. For persons with misophonia, sounds like chewing, whistling, coughing, sneezing (and more) cause a fight-flight-freeze reaction which manifests as an extreme emotional response. Persons with misophonia experience numerous symptoms such as: discomfort, irritability, anger, sadness, depression, physical sensations of pain, heart palpitations and racing, and other physiological symptoms. The emotional response for misophonia comes after the physiological response and is not a cognitive/psychological reaction. This means that persons with misophonia are not afraid of sounds or having a phobic response, but rather their physical sensory systems/brain are not responding appropriately to the sensory input.

Is misophonia a behavioural issue?

While some clinicians have tried to classify misophonia as a behavioural issue, research (Kumar 2018) points to a brain basis for misophonia. Persons with misophonia are experiencing a physical difference in how they process sensory stimuli. This means that persons with misophonia (whether they are a child, teen, or adult) are not choosing to be triggered and are instead having a physiological response which then leads to an emotional response. Persons with misophonia may display adaptive behaviours such as avoiding triggers, lying to get the sound to stop (ie. saying that they dislike a certain song, etc), among other protective behaviours, but these are responses to the physiological impact, and not the root cause. Negotiations and communication as well as accommodation for misophonia can help alleviate the impact of misophonia.

Find the study:

Kumar S, Tansley-Hancock O, Sedley W, Winston JS, Callaghan MF, Allen M, Cope TE, Gander PE, Bamiou DE, Griffiths TD. The Brain Basis for Misophonia. *Curr Biol*. 2017 Feb 20;27(4):527-533. doi: 10.1016/j.cub.2016.12.048. Epub 2017 Feb 2. PMID: 28162895; PMCID: PMC5321671.



How can I help students in my classroom with misophonia?

Children and adolescents with misophonia often need more breaks than those without. For persons with misophonia, classrooms can be challenging for many reasons. There are numerous sounds and stimuli (such as visual triggers) that can cause a reaction in the classroom, and this is different for each person with misophonia. Some examples of triggers are chewing, coughing, sneezing, pen-clicking, leg shaking, finger tapping, and paper rustling. In classrooms where some students must eat or use fidget spinners, there can be additional triggers that are much harder to avoid. Many children/adolescents with misophonia will have a 504 plan (or accommodations), while others may not have received a formal plan from a clinician. Students with misophonia may benefit from the following accommodations:

- More time to take tests
- The ability to leave the room frequently
- The choice of a desk in an area they are comfortable such as the back, front, or corner
- The ability to use earplugs, earphones, or other sound masking tools
- The ability to take tests alone
- The ability to do schooling from home when the classroom becomes too difficult

What is the Misophonia Matters approach?

Misophonia Matters is an advocacy-based coping skills approach including a class, book, and workbook for adults, teens, and clinicians by long-time advocate Shaylynn Hayes-Raymond. Shaylynn has been advocating for misophonia since 2015 and moved to a career in counselling based on her experiences as a misophonia advocate and sufferer of the disorder. The Misophonia Matters approach includes advocacy, psychoeducation, sensory-based skills, and cognitive and psychological skills. Worksheets are presented throughout the program. Central to Misophonia Matters is the idea that while we cannot treat and prevent misophonia, we can learn to navigate and adapt to our world through accommodation, coping skills, and an empathetic advocacy-based approach.

On demand class for parents and teens:

<https://misophoniafoundation.com/shop/misophonia-matters-class-on-demand/>

Misophonia Matters book:

<https://books2read.com/MisophoniaMatters>

Misophonia Matters workbook: <https://a.co/d/blcBvXH>

Misophonia Matters clinician class:

<https://misophoniafoundation.com/courses/an-introduction-to-misophonia-for-clinicians/>

Misophonia Matters teen group classes:

<https://misophoniafoundation.com/teen-class/>

Misophonia Matters 1 on 1 sessions:

<https://shaylynnraymond.com/coaching>



What is The International Misophonia Foundation?

The International Misophonia Foundation is a 501 (c) (3) non profit dedicated to serving the needs of individuals and families impacted by Misophonia through increasing ethical, accurate, and educational resources for researchers, institutions, policy makers, and individuals and families impacted by Misophonia. The International Misophonia Foundation seeks to increase the development of research that respects the needs and dignity of those suffering with Misophonia by facilitating and publishing original research as well as offering institutions and individuals researchers consultation services, publication assistance, funding opportunities, and ethical oversight. The International Misophonia Foundation also seeks to increase awareness and understanding of Misophonia through providing resources to educate sufferers, researchers, clinicians, and the public about how this disorder effects individuals and families as well as best practices for increasing inclusion of individuals and families living with Misophonia.

Learn more: <https://misophoniafoundation.com/>