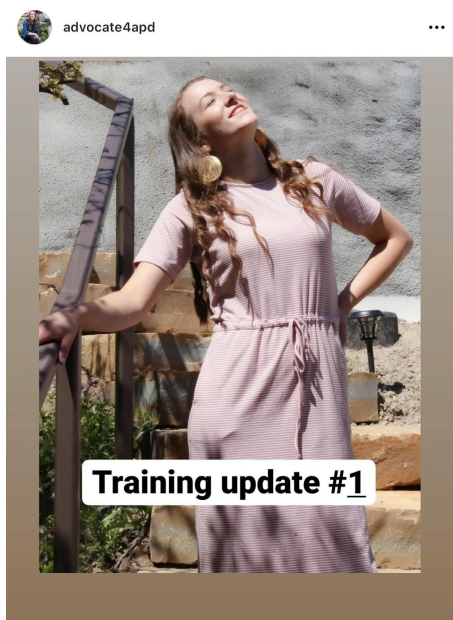


A Student's Perspective on APD and Auditory Training

Adalyn Smith, now a high school senior, learned that she had Auditory Processing Disorder (APD) when she was eight. She is passionate about sharing knowledge about what it's like to live with APD and ways to self-advocate and make life easier.

Adalyn participated in cognitive learning therapy at Stowell Learning Center as a remote student. Her Cognitive Learning Plan included The Listening program (TLP-Online), Auditory Stimulation and Training (AST-Comprehension) and processing skills training (AMPS).

She gave us permission to share the training updates she shared with us and posted on her Instagram @advocate4apd.



advocate4apd Training update #1

Training has been amazing so far and I can already feel that my mind is changing and growing and expanding which is the best feeling. Sometimes absolutely exhausting but so good.

Specifics of training

-3 times a week I meet with a clinician and we do brain exercises. They vary a ton but they all help. Exercises we do vary from changing the tone of our voice to repeating to doing mind puzzles to reading to writing summaries.

-5 times a week (2x for 15 minutes every day) I listen to a music program. I do one session of 15 minutes in the morning and one at night. This helps my brain and auditory system get ready for auditory input and then helps me wind down at night.

I'm serious seeing so many incredible improvements already. The other day I was trying to find my keys to get in the car. I asked my mom "do you have the keys?" As with every question we raise the voice at the end it so we know it's a question and not a statement. She could clearly understand what I was asking and responded with no. It was such a profound moment for me. Bc my clinician and I had worked so much on changing our tone of voice and what that could do to the meaning of a sentence, I understood how important it was to have the right tone.

I remember when I was little I would always get mad or upset in a situation bc I could never understand someone's tone of voice. Obviously I've grown out of that, but training my brain to hear so many different types of tones has been tremendous help!

All in all the first couple weeks have been so so good and I can't wait for more!!

Thank you @stowellcenter for being so great!!!



advocate4apd "Stop doubting yourself"

This is something my clinician says to me whenever I tell her I feel like I can't do another mind bender that day. (a logic puzzle) To be completely honest this happens a lot. And being the amazing clinician she is, she always brings me back up and tells me "yes you can!!!!". And that right there always gets me to do another one no matter how exhausted I am or no matter how many times I know I'll have to have information repeated.

This is actually something I've learned throughout my training so far. Often times we sell ourself so short when we are capable of INCREDIBLE AND BEAUTIFUL things. When we don't think we can do a certain task we immediately back down and don't think about it cus we've already put an x through the option in our mind.

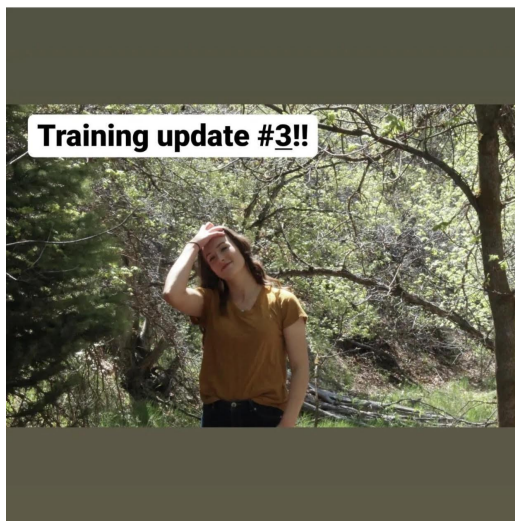
Some improvements I've noticed:

- 1) I understand people's tone of voice so much better when having a conversation. (If you didn't know, when I was younger I would often get upset bc I couldn't understand that people were trying to help me cus I didn't understand their tone of voice)
- 2) I have started thinking in pictures instead of trying to memorize information by repetition. (Example: My mom texted me to go to the store and pick up sour cream and milk. I didn't know what size of sour cream she wanted so I called her. She said 16 oz. Without me even realizing it, I made an image of the number 16 in bubble letters. I hung up and realized I forgot what size already. I then remembered my picture. But just for safe measures I called again and clarified. I got it right!! Pictures ya'll. Try it out.)
- 3) Whenever I do my listening in the morning, it makes it easier to think of my to do list for that day. It also wakes me up without too much auditory input to start off with. I often notice that I am better able to clear my head when I do listening.
- 4) Ive noticed that I don't need repetitions as much because I'm making more concrete pictures in my head.
- 5) Listening helps me wake up and then power down at the end of the day.



advocate4apd

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advocate4apd Training update #3!

If you didn't know, I have been doing Auditory Training with Stowell Center for about 7 or 8 months now! Training has been incredible the last couple months! Brain exercises that used to be so challenging to me, are now second nature for my brain to complete! Here are some things I've noticed:

Confidence level:

I have learned how much music I can handle in one day or a week. If I have a day where I've had so much auditory input, it's likely I won't listen to music for fun at all that day. It's too much stimulus for my brain..I've also learned how many events I can go to without being burned out from noise. I used to think that if I didn't go to every event in one week I was a bad person or that I wasn't trying my best. Truth is, everyone has their limit on what they can handle. Knowing what your limit is and sticking to it is handling this the best way. Knowing how much I can handle has made me so much more confident about how and where I spend my time.

PARENTS: please take time to notice when your child is tired. Maybe it's after a long day at school with a lot of input. Maybe it's after a short hangout with a friend or an afternoon at the park or a zoo. If you have a big event to go to one night but your child is exhausted from whatever activity, notice this and maybe have them spend a majority of their time at the event in a quiet place. They are already so tired from the day, they might have a hard time wanting to go because it's been such a long day.

Stress Levels:

All throughout training I have learned several different techniques to de stress. Some of which are mental and some are physical. Some mental techniques are doing my TLP listening program. This is part of the training. It is specifically engineered music for your ears! It helps prepare my auditory system for noise that day and helps me relax at night! Another technique is taking a brain break! Even just a walk or a drink of water or a stretch can do so much!

For physical techniques you can do some cross crawls! Or some push pull twists! See my post about this!)

I will be forever grateful for the training I have received and the amazing impacts I see it making on my life. I have no doubt in my mind it will help me all throughout life and all throughout college.

Some things I have noticed are my confidence level, my stress levels, and creating mental images!

Confidence level:

Ever since I started training I have noticed I am so much more sure of myself and how my brain works. I notice how much music I can handle in one day. I've noticed how my brain works in regards to which learning strategies work best/better for me than others. I've learned more in the past couple months than any time in my life. Just because I use different learning strategies, I

can still learn! Using different strategies isn't a bad thing at all. I have truly noticed how much input and activity I can handle in one day. I used to cram so many events into one week, thinking or feeling guilty that if I didn't go to all of them I wasn't trying my best. I now know that trying my best is actually knowing how much activity/auditory input I can handle in one day/week and sticking to that. I have found that if I push myself over my level of input, it takes me a full week to recover. One of my good friends put it this way "We are all like a plant pot. We all have a care tag that tells the owner(ourselves)how much water, sunlight, oxygen, and soil we need to grow and develop to be our best selves." This is the same concept with people. We each have a "care tag" that we have to figure out. For me it's, getting enough sleep, not listening to too much music in one day, not having too much auditory input in one day or week, not going to too many events, turning on captions on when watching TV and so many more. I have really learned what I need for an everyday basis.

Stress Levels:

In training I have learned what techniques help me reduce stress in my everyday life. Some of which are study techniques and some are physical exercises such as, cross crawls or an exercise I was taught called "Push Pull Twist"(I believe). I love the cross crawls because I can feel my brain almost mending back together and working as one brain again instead of two separate sides meant for different skills. I have noticed that I study for tests differently than I used to. I used to try and cram information into my head. At the end of my Junior year of high school I remember memorizing close to a hundred flashcards. By the end my brain felt like mush. Now, I make mental images that connect to a certain term or phrase I need to remember. This has been night and day for me. It has also decreased the time I study for tests and allowed time for other aspects of life. Another helpful thing I have noticed is doing my daily TLP listening. It makes such a massive difference in my daily life. I love listening in the morning as it helps prepare the auditory part of my brain for input that day. It helps me think of my to-do list for the day and in general be less stressed. At night I love listening because it helps my brain almost calm down and relax. It is often the last item I check off before I go to sleep. It helps me sleep so much and lessens my anxiety for the next day. I notice when I don't listen in the morning, higher pitched sounds actually hurt my ears. This has been incredibly interesting to learn about myself.

Creating Mental Images:

This has been huge for me all throughout training. I have loved learning the practice of making concrete mental images in my head. It makes lists much easier to refer back to when I have a picture I can lean on when I forget a certain list item. When we make mental images in training to remember a list of items I will make my images;then Laura(my clinician) will have me repeat the list back. If I ever stumble and can't remember a certain item on the list, she will jog my memory with my picture I made!! This was so cool to learn! I had never been able to do this before. It was again, night and day for me and gave me hope as remembering lists and steps of instructions is something I used to really struggle with.

Jill, I want to thank you a thousand times for this training. It is truly life changing and I will be forever grateful for this. I have been learning so much and know that I will continue to learn a

lot. I'm so ready and eager to learn more. Often my mom will tell me and others about how well I am doing and all the improvements she sees in me. She is so happy to see me less stressed, more happy and more sure of myself. I have already been thinking of ways this will help me in college and the list is never ending. Thank you so much! I love working with you and Stowell Center. Laura is such an amazing clinician and she is doing great work.

Thanks again for everything,
Adalyn Smith

Additional References

[LD Expert Podcast](#) Episode 6: Living with Auditory Processing Disorder with Adalyn Smith

[LD Expert Live](#) Huh? What? Living with Auditory Processing Disorder and How to Make Real Change with Adalyn Smith

For insights and tips on APD check out Adalyn's instagram channel: [@advocate4apd](#)