Don’t You Get It?

Living With
Auditory Learning Disabilities

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Harvey, Jay and Loraine
As you may already know auditory processing problems can cause significant difficulty in communication and academics. But if you are not sufficiently aware of exactly what an Auditory Processing Disorder (APD) is or what impact it may have on the person and their family then, “Don't You Get It? Living with Auditory Learning Disabilities” was written for you. This book not only covers what APD is and how to test for it, but also discusses how to treat the problems that are uncovered. However, uniquely this book also lets you hear the stories, insights and suggestions of those who have personally dealt with and minimize this problem.

It is important to know about APD because there is so much that can be done to alleviate it and to improve these abilities. It is also important because of the widespread misinformation, or lack of information, that causes too many people to needlessly suffer the continued consequences of APD.

One of the biggest problems facing those who have APD is that not enough parents and professionals know that it exists and also that it is not difficult to diagnose it – even in young children – and effective compensations and therapies are available which permit children and adults with this problem to make major strides in overcoming its effects. Thus, those who read this book can not only help themselves and/or loved ones, but can serve others in helping to erase some of the misinformation, clarify vague concepts, and illuminate APD for those who are not aware that it is right here in our midst.
Don’t You Get It? Living with Auditory Learning Disabilities provides information about the nature of this disorder from a leader in APD for many years and discusses what the central tests and therapy procedures can offer. Dr. Jay Lucker also discusses classroom management strategies that can ease the burden of those with APD. This book is written in an easy to read, informal style that should appeal to parents and professionals alike.

I too have dealt with APD all of my life, but when I was a child there was no concept of auditory processing problems, so children were thought to be too lazy to learn (as I was considered) while I myself thought that I was mentally retarded because of my consistent failure to learn. But I was fortunate because we were not taught to read until second grade and taught to spell even after that. Nowadays the demands on children are greater and earlier in life, so the consequences are more severe. We cannot afford to let children continue to fall through the cracks because of the many negative consequences to the individual, their family, their school and to society.

It is my hope that you will use what you learn from those who have made their way out of the confines imposed by APD and encourage others that this need not be a life-long sentence. When those who are resistant to the concept of APD hear from enough people who have been helped, let’s hope they too will “Get It” and help rather than ignore this important problem.
Chapter One

Don’t You Get It?
An Introduction

by Jay R. Lucker Ed.D., CCC-A/SLP, FAAA

If you or someone you know has (APD), an Auditory Processing Disorder sometimes called a central Auditory Processing Disorder (CAPD), also described as an Auditory Information Processing Disorders (APD) (Lucker 2005a), this book can give you the answers to the many questions. Two of the most often asked questions about APD are: ‘What is it like to have the disorder?’ and ‘Can a person overcome it?’ This book provides insights into both of these questions.

It has been estimated that three to five percent of children have APD with an unknown percent of them continuing to have problems processing auditory information into adulthood (Geffner & Ross-Swain, 2007). In a research project looking at auditory information processing abilities in children identified with specific learning disabilities (SLD), this author found that over half failed tests of auditory processing. Thus, over 50% of those children with learning problems have some difficulties processing auditory information.

The number of adults with APD is unidentified because less focus has been placed on testing auditory information processing problems in adults. As we are still learning to recognize APDs and differentiate them from other disorders such as AD/HD, attention deficit disorders, we struggle as professionals and specialists in the area of auditory processing to identify exactly what is and what is not an auditory processing deficit. We do know and recognize that both children and adults have APD, and that there are a variety of factors
that account for the problems people may experience when processing what they hear. *(For a better understanding of APD, see Chapter Two.)*

APD is most readily identified in children, and, as you will see from cases presented in this book, it affects their education, socialization, but most importantly, their self-esteem. However, there is help today. Children with APD, as well as adults, can learn to overcome their processing difficulties either by developing improved ways to process what they hear or by learning strategies to compensate for the difficulties APD can present. Additionally, as APD is becoming better recognized and understood, people are beginning to receive help in many countries throughout the world. (See the APDUK website on the internet at www.apduk.org.)

A number of popular books have been written about APD. One discusses what it is like to be a parent struggling to understand her child’s auditory processing problems (Foli, 2003). Another is written by a professional who discusses APD from a very technical perspective, though her book is understandable by parents, teachers, and people with APD (Bellis, 2003). A recent publication is written primarily for professionals but understood by anyone. In this book, there is an entire chapter presenting sample reports from professionals regarding APD issues in children that provide the reader with insights into how different children perform on various measures used to assess APD as well as providing some recommendations to help these children (Geffner & Ross-Swain, 2007).

Until now, there has not been a book that specifically looks at how people with APD have lived and learned to overcome the disorder from childhood into adulthood. This book was written by those people who have lived with APD their entire lives. Their contributions include data by professionals who are involved in the assessment, treatment, and education of children, adolescents, and adults with APD.

Additionally, the experiences of an adolescent, a young adult, and their mothers are included. This book will provide the reader with insights into how they struggled and overcame their APD problems,
with a focus on what elements helped them succeed. These adults and children will convince you that APD is something that *can* be overcome with the right support.

The technical information in this book is presented by a professional who has worked for over 30 years in the area of APD. He has been engaged in research as well as being involved in clinical practice assessing APD issues with a focus to provide treatments for children and adults with auditory information processing problems as well as offering consultations and support to anyone with an interest in APD. He has also presented numerous APD workshops and seminars, and is the president, chair of the board, and co-founder of the National Coalition on Auditory Processing Disorders, Inc. ([www.ncapd.org](http://www.ncapd.org)).

The authors who discuss their true life APD encounters include Harvey Edell, who has lived with problems processing auditory-linguistic information for over 60 years; his daughter, Loraine, a school psychologist, who has APD issues and works with school children having auditory based learning problems as well as being the mother of a child with APD; and her teenage son, Andrew who has APD, and contributes reflections about his life experiences with his disorders.

Another contributor, a professional woman with two children with APD, Carmela Bernacchio, the director of a center that focuses on treating communication and learning problems including those related to children and adults with APD problems, presents her own story as well as having one of her daughters reflect on her personal problems.

These six people have lived with and successfully overcome difficulties because of auditory information processing problems. They discuss how APD affects them now and how it affected them when they were young. Their insights provide perspectives for people who deal with or have APD.

You will find common themes throughout the individual stories. One important theme is to learn how each person felt having problems processing auditory-linguistic information. Another important
one is how each person overcame his or her problems including what factors helped him or her deal with APD and related issues. Identifying these themes can help you understand what you can do to help yourself or the person you know who has APD.

These stories are brought together to demonstrate the common threads woven into the lives of people who live everyday with APD.

This book provides you with a better understanding of what are auditory information processing disorders including various definitions and models developed that are used by professionals. Reviewing these models, you will better understand which professionals assess and diagnose people with such problems, and how these professionals work to differentiate between APD and other problems that look like APD, such as attention disorders and language difficulties. The book also provides an overview of how APD is assessed including actual data and interpretations from sample cases.

One chapter focuses on treating APD and what can be done to help children with APD problems. Discussions focus on treatments that some of the contributors to this book have undergone. The concluding chapter presents resources that include organizations, support systems, and how to find professionals who provide assessments and treatments of auditory information processing deficits. You will identify that APD is not debilitating and it can be overcome.
Meet the Authors

Harvey Edell
He has lived with having an Auditory Processing Learning Disability for over sixty years. Originally a printer by trade, he later became a teacher and now tutors children according to their individual needs or learning styles. This includes students who may have learning disabilities.
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Dr. Loraine Alderman is a licensed clinical psychologist and a certified school psychologist. She works in the New York City school system as a school psychologist and has a private practice. Her focus is to advocate for children and adolescents with learning disabilities. She was voted Best Psychologist by the readers of the Long Island Press for 2007 and 2008.
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Andrew Alderman
Is a young adult who will be attending Adelphi University in the Fall 2008. He has received two Presidential Gold Service awards for performing more than 250 hours of community service within a year. He has raised well over $10,000 for charities. Andrew is an avid lacrosse player and likes to coach younger children in sports.

Carmela Granata-Bernacchio, MS, CCC-SLP
Is Director of Humanistic Consultants, in Mineola, New York. She is a speech-language pathologist working with children and adults with APD. She has thirty-three years experience working in education as a classroom, resource room teacher and clinical supervisor.

Danielle Carmela Lisanti
Is a young woman who holds a BA in Psychology from Hofstra University and a Masters Degree in Early Childhood Curriculum from the University of Phoenix. She works at Humanistic Consultants, Inc. teaching children with special needs including those with APD. Danielle has completed triathlons and is a passionate advocate for physical fitness.