Title:

Loss, meaning making, & reconstruction of narratives in adults enduring tinnitus exacerbated by exposure to sound.

Abstract:

Tinnitus is an auditory processing disorder involving frequently distressing levels of sound perception without corresponding external stimuli. In many cases, a complicating factor is the exacerbation of tinnitus intensity and pain following exposure to even moderate sounds, which can have profound implications on mental health and quality of life. Although more detrimental to patients suffering and more challenging to treat clinically, the experience of tinnitus exacerbated by sound is still poorly understood, as are implications for clinical practice and counseling. Considering that millions of people worldwide suffer from tinnitus and heightened auditory sensitivity to the point of disability, this qualitative study sought to identify relevant factors in encountering this complex disorder in clinical and counseling work. Thematic analysis of 418 unique open-ended question responses revealed themes of loss, psychological impact, inadequate understanding, crises of meaning, and solutions. Psychological intervenentions and the evidence basis of various theoretical methodologies are discussed.

Keywords: tinnitus, hyperacusis, sound-sensitive tinnitus, mental health, quality of life, counseling, clinical psychology, psychotherapy

\*This submission meets the ethical guidelines set forth by the American Psychological Association