Strategies for fatigue

Sensory Fatigue is very common for people who have Usher syndrome, as a result of the extra effort needed to process visual and auditory information. Hearing technology (if used) does not replace natural hearing, and listening using cochlear implants or hearing aids requires lots of concentration and energy. Strategies to minimise sensory fatigue are vital to enable children and young people to be able to engage with all the opportunities and learning within and outside school.

"I get really sensitive to noise sometimes. By the end of a day at school, my eyes and ears have had enough."

14 year old

Strategies

- [ ] Allow frequent rest breaks when needed
- [ ] Designate a quiet space within school which CYP can access to reduce fatigue
- [ ] Give option for child to remove hearing devices to take a listening break either at lunchtime, rest break or during lessons where less listening is required, if needed
- [ ] Maintain clutter-free resources and whiteboard (present the main diagram or key words)
- [ ] Where possible, excuse the CYP from copying tasks, which will help to reduce visual fatigue (except where the action of copying is intended as main learning within exercise)
- [ ] Give CYP access to teacher notes / key concept diagrams [link to example] to reduce the need to take notes and enable student to concentrate on content
- [ ] Reduce viewing at distance – give access to ICT with mirroring software so CYP can view teacher's board on own screen
- [ ] Homework – consider extended deadlines or reduce tasks (see *point below re: level of challenge) or alternative format (e.g. audio recorded essay, or paper-based tasks rather than screen-based tasks, or vice-versa, depending on what CYP finds easier to access)
- [ ] *Consider reducing workload (but ensure no reduction in challenge: e.g. give option of completing every other question in a maths activity rather than the first 5, to allow CYP to access the same increasing range of challenge as their peers)
- [ ] If fatigue is extreme or persistent, consider reducing timetable (agreeing for a non-core subject lesson to be missed, ideally towards middle or end of week) to create a built-in rest period
- [ ] If fatigue is extreme / persistent, can also consider reducing the number of exam subjects studied, if the child and family agree this would be beneficial

> ***It can be helpful to find ways to reduce the volume of work, but it is important not to reduce the challenge***

"If I don't take rest breaks, I get a headache, which just gets worse as the week goes on."

16 year old

Key: CYP = Child or young person