

Synaesthesia

Synaesthesia is a perceptual condition and is the term used to describe the joining of or merging of senses that aren't normally connected or the stimulation of one sense triggering an automatic, involuntary stimulation in another sense.

Synaesthesia can be the combination of any of a person's senses. Synaesthesia is not thought of as a common condition and is not yet fully understood. However, a couple of studies have found that synaesthesia appears to be more common in autistic adults.

The cause of synaesthesia is believed to be when an adult's five main senses hearing, sight, touch, taste and smell are processed by their brain separately but at birth they are interlinked. As a person's people this doesn't occur or is incomplete leaving some extra connections in place resulting in synaesthesia.

Synaesthesia occurs differently in all people with the condition. People who have synaesthesia may see sounds or taste words, some other examples include:

- the touch of certain textures causing a reaction of a certain emotion
- seeing numbers as colours
- perceiving letters as smells

Because synaesthesia is not widely studied there is currently no clinical diagnosis for it but it is possible to take tests which can identify the associations between a person's senses. The associations have to be consistent. There is currently no treatment for synaesthesia.