



Sound Advice

Courtesy of Physicians Hearing Services

Winter/Spring 2007

Communication - It takes more than good hearing to communicate well!

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Hearing loss affects the ease with which people communicate. When a hearing loss is present, it is often frustrating for both the person with the hearing loss and the individuals with whom he/she is attempting to communicate. Amplification through the use of hearing aids or other assistive listening devices improves the sensitivity to sound for hearing impaired individuals. However, the primary objective is not just to improve hearing, but to improve overall communication. It takes two to communicate effectively: *the listener and the speaker*. As such, following is a list of some very effective communication strategies for both to use. In the busy, noisy world in which we live, the approach we take to ensure that information and ideas are properly communicated is very important. Much of what is suggested is a matter of changing habits we have developed over time. With or without the use of hearing aids, these are strategies that will definitely improve your communication.

Relax:

As a *listener*, you should;

- Try to understand the context of the conversation, not every word or sound. Remember, trying to hear better does not mean you are going to understand better. Allow your knowledge of the subject and the use of visual cues to do some of the work for you. It's the way the brain is supposed to work!

As a *speaker*, you should;

- Speak a little slower, but don't drag out your words or over emphasize your mouth movements. It is better to speak at a normal rate, but take short pauses between sentences and phrases. You'll be amazed at how well this works!

Make Use of What Can Be Seen:



As a *listener*, you should;

- Watch the speaker's lips, facial expressions and gestures while he/she speaks.
- Position yourself to get a full view of the face, not just the profile.

As a *speaker*, you should;

- Face the listener, get his/her attention and do not hide your mouth with your hand or any other object.
- Pay attention to the listener for cues that he/she does not understand.

Control the Environment:

As a *listener*, you should;

- Use a quiet room to talk, and reduce background noise
- In public places, ask for any assistive listening devices that might be available. Movie theaters and playhouses often have devices that will amplify the performers' voices.
- Maximize the use of lighting. Have the light behind you, not behind the speaker, where it may cast a shadow on his/her face.
- Avoid sitting with your back against walls or other hard surfaces. Sound may bounce off these surfaces, making speech difficult to understand. Instead, sit with the noise behind you.

Office Hours

Scheduled
appointments
8 am - 5 pm
Monday-Friday
closed 12-1
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As a *speaker*, you should;

- Be patient with the listener. Realize the amount of energy and concentration he/she is putting forth.
- Talk to your listener only when in the same room as him/her.
- Take turns speaking; avoid interrupting others.

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Rephrase/Repeat:

As a *listener*, you should;

- Repeat or rephrase what you think you heard. This lets the speaker know what you heard and what needs clarification. Asking the individual to repeat everything they just said can lead to frustration.
- Be honest when you don't understand. If you only pretend to understand, the speaker may think you are not interested in what he/she is saying.

As a *speaker*, you should;

- Summarize what has just been discussed before moving on to a new topic.
- Say things using different words if repeating is not successful.

*The Audiologists of
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**Above all: don't lose your sense of humor.
Misunderstandings occur in communication everyday!**

QUIZ—When Is It Time For New Hearing Instruments?

A. The hearing aid(s) I own is/are currently:

1. 0 - 2 years old
2. 2 - 5 years old
3. 5 - 8 years old
4. 8 years or older

B. The technology of my hearing aid(s) is:

1. Very new, up-to-date
2. Pretty current
3. I'm not sure
4. I don't think they make these any more

C. My hearing aid(s) help me communicate in background noise:

1. Yes
2. Sometimes
3. No Way
4. They can do that?

D. I've been wondering if there is something better for me:

1. No, what I have is great
2. Yes, is there something that can best fit my communication needs?

E. My Hearing Aids currently reside:

1. In my ear
2. In their case



Now, add up the numbers to each of your answers. If your score was: _____

12 - 16: It's time to look into new technology, and see how new devices can improve your hearing ability and communication needs.

8 - 11: You could go either way, if anything, learning what's new could help with the decision process for the future

4 - 7: It appears that you have up-to-date technology that meets your communication needs!

We would like to announce two new additions to our Audiology Staff:

D. Krystin Farrell, Au.D., CCC-A - Joined our practice in August of 2006. Previously, she was practicing in Dallas, TX, through the Callier Center at the University of Texas, Dallas. She holds a Doctor of Audiology degree from Gallaudet University. She provides diagnostic audiology and dispensing services, with a specialty in working with the deaf.

&

Mark G. Smith, Au.D., CCC-A - The most current addition to our staff, as of January 2007. Previously, he was practicing in the Seattle, WA area. He holds a Doctor of Audiology degree from the University of Louisville. He provides diagnostic audiology services, and will soon provide dispensing services as well.



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