

Effective Listening Strategies

The following advice is meant for those individuals who;

- have been fit with hearing instruments
- know someone who has recently been fit with hearing instruments
- know someone who has a hearing loss

Keep in mind that everyone has some degree of difficulty hearing and understanding speech when in groups or noisy situations. While most people can benefit from properly fit hearing aids, they do not solve all problems of hearing loss and will not make your hearing “normal” again.

When you're speaking with someone who has a hearing loss, you should keep in mind the following:

Speak Normally ...

1. Talk at your normal conversational rate.
2. Talk in a normal tone of voice. Shouting does not make your voice clearer.
3. Keep your voice at the same volume when talking.
4. Do not exaggerate when speaking. This distorts the message and makes use of visual cues from your face difficult to understand.

Reduce Confusion ...

5. Avoid chewing, eating, or covering your mouth. These activities make your speech more difficult to understand, and speechreading more difficult to accomplish.
6. Communication with the hard of hearing person is much more difficult when there is environmental noise. Try to find a quiet room or corner to converse if possible.
7. Avoid sudden changes in topic. If the subject of conversation is changed, check to be sure the hard of hearing person has followed the change.
8. If a person is having trouble hearing a word or phrase, try using a different word or rephrasing the sentence rather than repeating the original words over and over.
9. If you are giving specific information, such as a time or place, be sure it is repeated back to you correctly by the hard of hearing person. Many words and numbers sound alike.

Face to Face ...

10. Face the person directly, on the same level with them whenever possible.
11. The best distance when speaking to hearing impaired persons is from three to six feet from them.
12. Wait until you are visible to the hard of hearing person before speaking to them.
13. Never speak directly into the person's ear. This may further distort your message and hide all visual cues.

Remember ...

14. Recognize that everyone hears less well and understands less when tired or ill.
15. If you know the hard of hearing person has a hearing aid and does not use it, or it is not working, encourage them to see their Audiologist.

For further information on hearing loss or hearing instruments, visit the clinic website at

www.soundhearingclinic.com