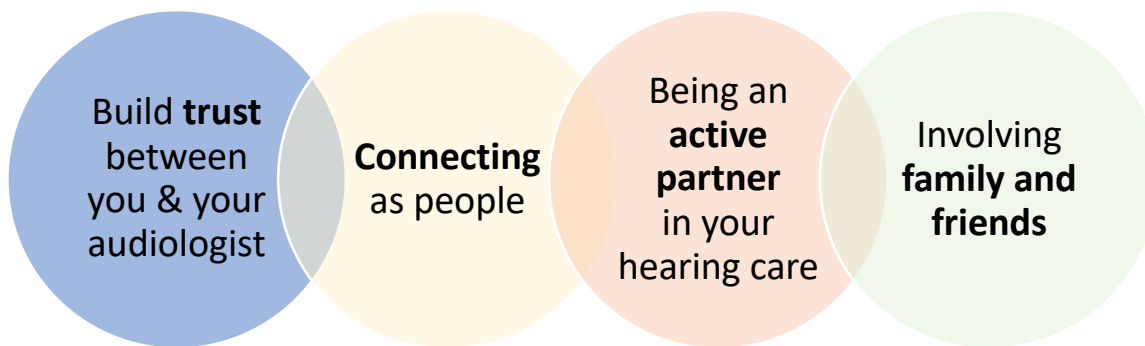


The First Hearing Appointment

Good hearing care is only possible when the person with hearing loss and their audiologist or hearing care professional trust each other and work together. When this happens, they can build a strong partnership that leads to better outcomes for both the person with hearing loss and the clinician.

There are four key building blocks in this partnership:



For this to happen it is important that you prepare for your first appointment. The tips below offer some guidelines for a successful appointment & experience.

(Acknowledgement: “Partnering for Great Hearing Care”. The Ida Institute, Denmark).

Building Trust

- Come to the appointment prepared to communicate your hopes, fears, and expectations around your hearing.
- Make sure to explain what is most important to you. e.g., your lifestyle.
- Be open and honest about yourself and your hearing strengths and difficulties.
- Be upfront about your budget if paying for devices and services. Ask also if you might be eligible for Hearing Services Program (HSP) or National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).
- Ask for a written summary of the visit that you can share with your loved ones.

Connecting with your Audiologist

- Be prepared to share details about your daily life and unique circumstances, for example, the people you talk to most, your workplace, and your hobbies and social life. Good hearing care relies on more than just technological devices and it requires a detailed understanding of your daily life.
- Connect with your audiologist as a person. Respect and make the best use of your audiologist's training and expertise, while recognising that they are human too!
- Bring your sense of humour. Keeping a light-hearted attitude can go a long way toward building a successful partnership.

Being an active partner

- If your audiologist uses language you don't understand, ask them to repeat or to explain it another way.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions.
- Explain to your professional how you would define a successful outcome – for example, what activities would you like to participate in?
- Communicate your feelings. They are as important as your physical hearing condition.
- Ask for instructions to be provided in a format that best suits your learning style. This could be writing, pictures, or videos. When you receive excellent care, let the clinic owner or senior manager know. When you have concerns about your care, let your professional know in the moment.
- Complete patient satisfaction surveys honestly and constructively. Take time to answer open-ended questions.

Involving Family & Friends

- Invite a family member or a friend to your appointments to provide support and to be an extra set of ears and eyes.
- Involve your family when preparing for your appointment. Ask for their perspective and note it down to share it with your professional. Use the opportunity to talk to your family about your hearing loss.
- Explain to your friends or family what your hearing condition is like. Since it can be difficult to understand for people who have not experienced it, you could consider asking them to wear earplugs in a safe setting so they can experience a little of what it's like to have hearing difficulties.
- Ask for your family or friend to be included when instructions are being conveyed, if you think that this might be helpful. For example, when being shown how to insert your hearing aid(s), change the battery, or replace a wax filter.

The Hearing Test: What you should expect in a hearing assessment

Acknowledgement: “Hearing Aid Buyers Guide for the Self-Funded Australian”. C Fourie

The audiologist should

- Ask about your hearing & hearing difficulties as part of establishing a case history.
- Look in your ears - Otoscopy.
- Perform a thorough hearing test using two different types of headphones. (In quiet).
- Perform a word test in quiet.
- Perform a sentence test in noise.

The information you should expect:

- An overview of how the ear works & how we hear sounds.
- An easy-to-understand explanation of the tests performed during the tests & your results.

If hearing aids are recommended, the audiologist should:

- Provide you with information on what hearing aids are suitable for you & why.
- Recommend more than one hearing aid option for you (if not, ask why). You may wish to ask what other comparable products are available from different manufacturers.
- Clearly explain the costs involved & what is included.

Support Guides are shared by HMA as a service to members and those in the community who have an interest in hearing loss. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information provided, however HMA accepts no responsibility for any adverse consequences arising from the contents of these sheets. HMA information sheets are for personal use only. Downloads and printing allowable for whole sheets. Contact HMA with queries or amendments.

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