

IDEAS FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH HEARING LOSS. IMPROVING COMMUNICATION

If you feel you are “missing out” because of your hearing loss, it is first of all your own responsibility to do something about it. Listed below are some simple rules which can help you to hear and to communicate better, whether or not you are wearing a hearing aid.

Stage manage the listening situation to your best advantage. Sit opposite the speaker rather than beside them, so that you can comfortably observe the whole situation. Avoid facing a window or bright light that may put the speaker’s face in shadow.

Watch carefully, observing the whole expression of the person you wish to hear. Do not concentrate on the speakers’ lips alone. Do not be afraid to appearing to stare, or be rude. It is always polite to look at the person you are listening to.

Look for ideas, not single words. As you become familiar with each speaker, key words will emerge to help you to put the message together.

Identify the topic, as soon as possible. Family and friends may learn to give you this information, or you may quietly ask what is being discussed. You will find it much easier to catch on to what is being said if you keep up with current affairs and with the activities to your family and friends.

Re-wording. If you do not understand **anything** that has been said, ask the speaker to say same thing in different words. However, if you have caught any part of the message, use it in a question to fill in the gaps. Use questions that ask **WHEN – WHERE – HOW – WHY?**

Example: Companion: “Will you meet me outside the station at 5.00 o’clock
 Yourself: “**Where** did you want to me to meet you?
 Or: “**When** will you be at the station?”

Avoid saying **WHAT?, BEG PARDON? Or EH?** These will prompt only a repetition of what you have already missed – and you will probably miss it again.

- **Relax.** Do not strain either to hear, or to see, speech. It is a combination of hearing and seeing that will help you most.
- **Remember** that conversation is two-way. Do not monopolise it in order to stay in control.
- **Remember also** that many people do not know how to help a hearing impaired person. Put them at ease by telling them **firstly** that you do not hear well, and **then** what it is that they can do to help you manage better.

**TEACHING YOUR FAMILY, FRIENDS AND ASSOCIATES HOW TO BEST HELP YOU IS YOUR
RESPONSIBILITY**