

Reduce background noise as much as possible.

TV, music, air conditioners, running water, or several other people talking are just a few of the disruptors that may cause interference with the flow of communication. To improve understanding, move away from such sounds.

Take a few pauses during the conversation.

People who speak quickly are harder to understand, so help the listener by slowing down slightly and take a few pauses during the phrase/sentence. This allows the person to process what is being said. Be patient. Ask what you can do to help.

Avoid saying "What?" causing the speaker to repeat.

Typically when a person doesn't understand, they only miss one or two key words. Help the speaker by repeating what you did hear, so they can repeat what was missed. This will reduce frustration on the part of the speaker, since they will know the phrase or word that you missed. In addition, the speaker will recognize that the listener was interested in what was spoken, consequently they realize that they were not being ignored.

Rephrase rather than repeat a sentence.

If someone does not understand, try not to repeat the phrase exactly as it was first stated. Try to use other words that have the same meaning. Some words are easier to understand or lip-read than others.

Speak in a normal tone-of-voice if the person you're speaking with wears a hearing aid.

Hearing aids work best when set for normal speech levels. Therefore, raising your voice may cause discomfort or distortion.

Additional References

Audiology Associates, Inc.
www.aiaaudiology.com/events

National Institute on Aging Information Center
www.nia.nih.gov

National Institute of Deafness and Other
Communication Disorders
www.nidcd.nih.gov

**For more information, schedule
an appointment at the nearest office.**

www.aiaaudiology.com

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Communication Strategies

The process of organizing conversations in various listening situations is referred to as communication strategies. These strategies are helpful whether or not a hearing loss is present. The overall goal is to enhance communication. These helpful suggestions are useful in a variety of settings such as home, work, restaurants, and on the telephone. Remember, some listening environments will be more difficult than others. Speaking habits are difficult to change; however, with practice and focus using these suggestions, conversations can be improved. Please share these ideas since they will enhance your ability to understand and thereby participate in conversation.

Who can use Communication Strategies?

Communication strategies improve understanding and clarity of speech. Individuals with hearing loss can benefit especially from communication strategies to improve speech understanding. Those with normal hearing can use communication strategies to help enhance a conversation in a difficult listening environment (e.g. noisy restaurant). These listener/speaker ideas require practice to make them routine. Consistent use will result in less frustration associated with misunderstanding conversations.

In which environments is it most beneficial to use communication strategies?

Communication strategies will be helpful in all listening environments. The more difficult the listening environment (e.g. loud background noise or when other distractions are present), the more communication strategies will help facilitate conversation. Using them in a quiet environment creates good habits. When you experience a noisy restaurant, try using these strategies and evaluate what works best for you, your family, and your friends.

What else can be done to help enhance conversations?

Understanding your hearing acuity is essential to facilitate improved communication. An audiologic evaluation by a Doctor of Audiology (Au.D.) will determine if you have hearing loss, as well as the degree and type. Health insurance plans view diagnostic audiology services as a covered benefit. Thus, if you feel that you are experiencing frustration with conversations, then it would be worthwhile to schedule an appointment to develop a treatment plan that is designed to meet your needs. If a hearing loss is present, then hearing aids would be part of a treatment plan. Hearing aids help amplify particular sounds. The latest technology improves your ability to understand in difficult listening situations (e.g. listening in the presence of background noise and understanding people in meetings). Additionally, assistive listening devices can be used with or without hearing aids to help in particular situations, such as theater environments.

Helpful Communication Strategies

Look the person in the eye when you are speaking to them.

Remember, our eyes help us hear. Gestures and facial expressions give clues to what a person is saying. Avoid distracting movements such as chewing, smoking, or turning your head.

Get the person's attention before speaking to them.

Start by addressing the person by name and wait until they look up before continuing to speak. This helps the listener to focus on your message.