

Listening Communication Strategies

Listening skills and communication strategies involve more than auditory access. Oftentimes, changes in the environment or the communication partner's behavior yield huge improvements in understanding.

Communication Strategies for an Individual with a Hearing Loss

Once you have taken the step towards better hearing and have been fit with hearing aids or a cochlear implant, you may often feel challenged communicating with partners. The following are some helpful strategies to allow you to communicate more easily and effectively:

1. Always face the individual speaking to you. Although you may not realize it, you may often lipread and be able to catch the words that you miss through seeing the speaker's lips.
2. Decrease as much environmental/background noise (example: television, radio) as you can so that it does not interfere with your hearing and understanding speech. It is important to understand that even the best devices will not eliminate noise completely.
3. Ask for clarification.
4. Advocate – make sure your communication partners are aware of your hearing loss.

Communication Strategies for Family Members or Friends of an Individual with a Hearing Loss

1. Try to keep your mouth visible as you talk. Be aware of things that may conceal portions of the mouth, such as facial hair. This will help the listener to better see your lips and increase his or her ability to understand what you are saying.

2. Try not to talk to an individual when there are competing noises. Isolate you and the individual with the hearing loss so that the least amount of background noise is present.
3. If an individual with a hearing loss did not understand what you said, rephrase, rather than repeat, what you said. This will give the individual a better chance of understanding if he/she was struggling with one or two specific words.

Role of Audiologists

Audiologists identify, diagnose, and provide treatment options for patients with medication-related hearing loss and dizziness. They work closely with physicians and are an important part of the management team.

Do you think you or your child may have a hearing loss? Click on the "Find an Audiologist" link at www.audiology.org to locate and set up an appointment with an Audiologist in your area.

Reference

Munoz, K., Nelson, L., Blaiser, K., Price, T., & Twohig, M. (2015). Improving support for parents of children with hearing loss: Provider training on use of targeted communication strategies. *Journal of the American Academy of Audiology*, 26(2), 116-127.