

Patient Information

## Centre for Hearing and Balance Disorders

# General Hearing Tactics

### Communication strategies

These are methods of coping with difficult listening situations:

- Planning ahead
- Manipulating the environment
- Repairing conversations

#### Planning ahead:

This is preparing for and trying to lessen any hearing difficulties you might have. For example, if you were attending a lecture, try to turn up early to get a good seat, also ask the speakers to use a microphone and to make sure that their faces can easily be seen by you.

#### Manipulating the environment:

These are steps such as asking the speaker to move into the light or into a spot with less background noise, or asking them to take their hand away from their mouth.

It is important to be clear with people when they talk to you. Let people know you are having difficulty hearing them and advise them how they can help you. Hearing loss is an invisible disability so you may need to ask people to slow down and face you if you are struggling to hear them.

Sometimes by making small changes to your listening environment it can improve communication for you. For example: turning the TV down before you answer the phone.



## Patient Information

To improve other situations you might want to consider some of the following tips:

- Remember to speak to someone only when you are in the same room
- Try to get rid of as much background noise as possible – turn the taps off, don't talk when the kettle is boiling, turn the TV down.
- Good room acoustics help. Having curtains, carpets, table cloths and sound insulated walls can reduce echo. Echo in rooms can interfere with how clear speech can be heard.
- Ensure that there is good lighting and that you can see the person's face you are speaking to. (If they are positioned in front of a bright window, ask if you can swap seats).

### **Repair techniques:**

These are ways of getting information repeated or confirmed for better understanding. This can be done by asking someone to repeat what they have said, or by repeating back what someone has said by saying "Did you say....?" or getting people to write things down.

### **Involvement of family and friends**

Communication is a two way process and family and friends play an important part in helping you to hear as well as possible. It is important that they understand how background noise, lighting, acoustics and mumbled speech can cause problems when having a conversation.

It may also help to identify home situations that create special hearing difficulties so family members can act together to reduce problems.

### **Lip-reading**

Only 30% of the English language is 'lip-readable', however hearing conversation is much easier when you get visual clues from the speaker. In Coventry and Rugby there are lip-reading classes which are free to attend. If you want more information please call 01926 318161.

## Patient Information

### **Assistive listening devices**

A hearing aid can only help if you have a hearing loss or a hearing loss within a certain range. There are other devices known as Assistive listening devices which can help in areas you may be struggling in. For more information on how to purchase these products, information can be found through websites such as [www.connevans.co.uk](http://www.connevans.co.uk) or [www.gordonmorris.co.uk](http://www.gordonmorris.co.uk)

If you are in employment and are struggling at work, Access To Work may be able to provide support, for further information visit <https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work>. If you are in education, speak to student support services at your college or university who may also be able to provide you with support.

### **Further Information**

For further information contact: Bernadette Parker, departmental lead for The Centre for Hearing and Balance Disorders on 024 76 966444

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this Information in another language or format please contact 024 7696 6444 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy

To give feedback on this leaflet please email [feedback@uhcw.nhs.uk](mailto:feedback@uhcw.nhs.uk)

#### **Document History**

Department:	Hearing and balance disorders
Contact:	26444
Updated:	January 2021
Review:	January 2024
Version:	1
Reference:	HIC/LFT/2551/21