

Information for Patients

# Listening Skills and Communication Techniques





# Conditions which affect listening

When communication becomes difficult it could be due to:

## 1) Background noise:

Remove and reduce background noise

- Position yourself so that you can see and hear as much as possible. For example: sit or stand opposite the person, have light on their face, sit or stand in a corner sit or stand with your back to the wall or window.
- Tell the person that the noise is causing you a problem. You could say 'it's really noisy in here, shall we go somewhere quieter?'

The ideal distance for listening is between 1 to 2 metres.

## 2) Speaker:

Think about what the speaker was doing which made it difficult to follow what they were saying. For example, were they:

- Walking out of the room
- Looking at their phone while talking
- Looking away or doing something at the same time
- Speaking quickly and quietly
- Have a strong accent that you are not used to
- Mumbling, covering their mouth

Can you change how they speak to you? For example, say "I am having difficulty hearing you". Ask them to speak a little louder.

## 3) You

Think about what you were doing, while the other person was speaking to you. Were you:

- giving them your fullest attention and concentration
- interested in the subject?
- Were you feeling tired, ill, stressed, so it was difficult to concentrate?

20 minutes is the amount of time a person can concentrate. Even with a slight hearing loss it takes much more concentration to listen.

Look at [www.C2HearOnline.com](http://www.C2HearOnline.com) for communication ideas

## What would I do differently next time?

### Tactics

Help the people talking to you understand the importance of getting your attention first and facing you when speaking. It will reduce frustration on both sides. Do not feel that you have to apologise for your hearing loss. Try the following:

- Check what was said. For example, you can say "so, we'll meet at 6.00pm on Friday" or "I missed that part, were you saying..."
- Repeat back as much as you have heard. Let the person fill in the rest. For example, you can say. "So, you want me to buy potatoes, bananas and...?"
- Ask closed questions where the speaker only needs to say yes or no. For example, Did you say that it costs £3?
- Be clear on what you need repeating. For example, "What was the last word you said?"
- Ask someone to word it in a different way. This is so that you have another chance at picking up the conversation.
- Ask people to repeat when you have missed the whole sentence.

It is important that YOU decide what you feel comfortable saying and that you practice it. This will help your confidence. Others will find it easier to communicate with you.

Communication works both ways. The important thing is not to guess or bluff. This can lead to mistakes and frustration. Write down and practice the new phrases or record them.

## Telling other people you have a hearing loss

Hearing loss is invisible. No one can tell just by looking at you that you have a hearing problem.

If you do choose to tell someone, suggest how they can help you. You could say I have hearing loss so it would really help...

.... if you could face me so that I can hear you as clearly as possible

.... if you could say my name first to get my attention.

It puts you back in control of situations. It takes practice and reinforcement to find out what works for you. Reading books on assertiveness skills can also help.

## How other people can help with good communication before speaking

Before speaking get the person's attention first. You should say their name and face the person. Speak clearly and not too fast.

Cut background noise down, if possible. Rephrase or write things down

**Do not ever shout or say, "It does not matter". Be patient and considerate.**

## House rules for family members

No talking from the next room or from upstairs to downstairs. Even with a mild hearing loss it is difficult to hear from the next room. Vowels travel well, but consonants do not. If you take the consonants out of a sentence, it makes little sense. This is why it just sounds like a mumble. A hearing aid will not help in this situation. Family need to understand that shouting from another room will not work. It is important that the person can see your face.

### **No talking when you leave the room**

When you walk out of a room it is difficult for others to hear you. This is because the sound is travelling in the opposite direction. It is important to face the person when you are talking to them.

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## Further information is available from:



### Feedback

We appreciate and encourage feedback which can be shared in a number of ways through the hospital website. Scan the QR code to give feedback. [www.sath.nhs.uk/patients-visitors/patient-experience/feedback-hub/](http://www.sath.nhs.uk/patients-visitors/patient-experience/feedback-hub/)

### Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS will act on your behalf when handling patient and family concerns, they can also help you get support from other local or national agencies. PALS, is a confidential service.

Royal Shrewsbury Hospital, Tel: [0800 783 0057](tel:08007830057) or [01743 261691](tel:01743261691)

Princess Royal Hospital, Tel: [01952 282888](tel:01952282888)

## Other Sources of Information

### NHS 111

A fast and easy way to get the right help, whatever the time. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.

111 (free from a landline or mobile) [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

### Self Help & Support Groups

A selection of websites providing access to good quality health information, local organisations and community groups is available from the library. [www.library.sath.nhs.uk/find/patients/](http://www.library.sath.nhs.uk/find/patients/)

### Information in Other Languages or Formats

If you require this information in a different way such as easy read, a different language, larger print, audio or braille please tell a member of staff or contact the Patient Experience Team;

[sath.patientexperience@nhs.net](mailto:sath.patientexperience@nhs.net) or [01743 261000](tel:01743261000) ext. 2503.

## Your information

Information about you and your healthcare is held by the NHS. You can find out more about how we hold your information and how it is used on our website: [www.sath.nhs.uk](http://www.sath.nhs.uk)

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