

COMMUNICATION IS A TWO WAY PROCESS

One person talks and the other listens when you are having a conversation. It is therefore the responsibility of both people to make sure that communication is taking place effectively. If one person is talking and the other person cannot hear, or is missing part of what is being said, the *speaker* has a responsibility to do something about the situation. However, the *listener* also has a responsibility to tell the speaker that they cannot hear or have missed something. People are not mind readers and because hearing problems are invisible, they will not know how to help unless you tell them.

If you tell the person that you have a hearing difficulty in a positive way, then they are much more likely to respond in a helpful manner. Sometimes people need guidance and prompting to learn how to help eg “if we sit here so I can see your face, I’ll be able to hear you a lot better” or “I don’t hear too well, but if you speak a bit louder it will help”.

Being assertive about what you need means that you are able to ask for what you want from others. By stating clearly what your needs are, you increase the chances of getting what you want and this leads to a reduction in tension.

HOW OTHER PEOPLE CAN HELP WITH GOOD COMMUNICATION

- 1 Speak clearly and slightly slower
- 2 Let your face be seen
- 3 Get the person’s attention first, before speaking
- 4 Cut background noise if possible
- 5 Rephrase or write things down
- 6 Don’t shout or say, “It doesn’t matter”. Be patient.

HELPFUL HINTS FOR EFFECTIVE LISTENING



- 1) WHAT IS LISTENING?**
'It means your mind takes in and makes use of sounds'. Listening for **SPEECH** is a skill, which we learned as infants. Like any other skill, listening may be improved by *knowledge* and *practice*.
- 2) WHAT IS OAD?**
It could be described as decrease in listening ability, which is *not* due simply to defective hearing. It is worthwhile to try to find out what other factors make listening difficult. This knowledge will help to improve listening skills.

Conditions which influence listening

Think about **what** prevented you from hearing. Think about practical examples where you have found it difficult to hear someone and consider how you can try and improve the situation. You can usually break the problems down into three areas:-

1 Background noise

Try and remove or reduce the level of background noise eg radio in the background. Position yourself so that you can see and hear as much as possible eg opposite the person, with light on their face, in a corner or with your back to the wall. Tell the person, if necessary, that the noise is causing you a problem eg it's really noisy in here – shall we go somewhere quieter? Remember, the ideal distance for listening is between 3 and 7 feet.

2 Speaker

Think about what the speaker was doing which made it difficult to follow what they were saying. eg were they walking out of the room, were they mumbling, looking away or doing something at the same time, speaking quickly and quietly or did they have a strong accent that you are not familiar with. Can you influence how they speak to you? eg saying “could you speak a bit slower and louder, so I can hear you better”.

3 You

Think about what **you** were doing, while the other person was speaking to you. eg were you giving them your fullest attention and concentration; how interested were you in the subject; were you feeling tired/ill, so it was difficult to concentrate?

Tactics

- **Ask for a repetition BUT** this strategy does not always work eg could you say that again, please? Try not to get into the habit of saying ‘eh’, ‘pardon’ or ‘what’ and **vary your tactics**.
- **Repeat back** as much as you have heard and let the other person fill in the rest eg so, we’ll meet at....? This shows that you were listening and trying to follow the conversation. Then you get the word that you missed the first time.
- **Confirm or clarify** what was said eg so we’ll meet at 6 o’clock on Friday or “I missed that part – were you saying that....”.
- **Ask a closed question** eg did you say it costs £3? The speaker only needs to say Yes or No.
- Say “what was the last word you said”. This **narrows down** the field for repetition.
- Ask someone to **rephrase what they have said or expand** on what they have just said. This gives you a second chance to pick up on the thread of the conversation, but hopefully using a different set of words.

*These are just a few suggestions. There are plenty more. The important thing is that you choose phrases and tactics, which **YOU** feel comfortable saying.*

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