



**Gateshead Health**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Hearing Tactics

# Communication tactics for you, your family & friends

This leaflet provides advice about how you can use good hearing tactics to improve how well you can communicate with others.

## Do's:

- Be open; tell others you have difficulty hearing.
- Get the speaker to catch your attention before talking and watch their lips, gestures and facial expressions.
- Ask the speaker to face you and be in a good light so you can watch the speakers' lips.
- If you don't hear something clearly, ask the speaker to rephrase and speak more slowly rather than just repeating what you have already missed.
- Try to find out what the topic of conversation is – an awareness of the subject makes it easier to follow conversation.
- Try to keep calm, if you reflect for too long on what you missed it will be harder to rejoin the conversation.
- Use hearing aids if you have them.

## Don'ts:

- Don't stand too far away from the speaker and ask them not to turn away from you when talking.
- Don't be too hard on yourself. No one hears correctly all the time.
- Don't bluff, a good communicator will clarify what they have said if you look puzzled.
- Don't let others simply shout as this distorts the sound.
- Don't let others talk to you from a different room - ask them to join you or you go to them.

## Finding the best listening conditions:

- Keep the talker's face clearly visible and in the light.
- If you hear better on one side, ask friends and family to sit next to that side when talking to you.
- Sit near the front in large venues like churches or theatres and use the loop system if it is available.
- In pubs and restaurants, try to sit away from any loudspeakers, and in a corner or with your back to the wall. This reduces background noises.
- Turn off, or move away from the TV, radio or noisy household appliances.
- Discourage people from trying to talk to you from a different room.
- Close any doors or windows that let in additional noise.
- In your own home choose soft furnishings (thick carpets and heavy curtains) and double glazing.
- When listening to the TV or a music system, use headphones or a loop system with your hearing aid so you can reduce the volume on the TV. If the sound is distorted, turn it down; increase the treble for listening to speech and the bass when listening to music.
- Ask your audiologist about music/TV programmes for your hearing aid.

## **Recognising the limitations of a hearing aid:**

There are two types of hearing problems; one is of loudness and one of clarity. A hearing aid can make things louder, however clarity is limited by your hearing loss. You should notice an improvement in hearing speech with a hearing aid as it increases the volume of speech but it won't return your hearing to normal.

The hearing aids will amplify all sounds because it is important that you are aware of what is happening in your surroundings. Our range of digital hearing aids is designed to help to reduce background noise where possible. Ask your audiologist if you would like more information.

## **Being assertive about your hearing needs:**

These are methods of manipulating the environment and planning ahead to improve your ability to hear conversations in difficult listening situations. You have already seen some examples of this in 'Finding the best listening conditions' on page 2.

It is important to make those around you aware that you have a hearing loss, don't be afraid to ask people to face you or speak more slowly when they speak to you. Remember that noisy places such as busy streets and large shops may be more difficult to communicate in because of the loud background noise. If you do miss parts of a conversation, repeat the bits you have heard back to the speaker then ask them to clarify what you have missed, this shows the speaker that you are listening to them but missing some words due to your hearing loss.

## **How to contact us**

Audiology Department  
Queen Elizabeth Hospital  
Sheriff Hill  
Gateshead  
Tyne & Wear  
NE9 6SX

Audiology Department  
Bensham Hospital  
Saltwell Road  
Gateshead  
Tyne & Wear  
NE8 4YL

Audiology Department  
Blaydon Primary Care Centre  
Shibdon Road  
Blaydon-on-Tyne  
NE21 5NW

## **For all appointments and queries please telephone:**

**0191 445 2530**

Please note that all hearing aid appointments, including hearing aid repairs are made by calling the number provided above.

Hearing aid batteries are available from QE Gateshead's Audiology reception desk without an appointment. You will need to produce your battery card/record book when obtaining batteries. If you bring your used hearing aid batteries into the department we will recycle them for you.

## Useful links:-

Action on Hearing Loss

Telephone: 0808 808 0123

Website: [www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk](http://www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk)

National Deaf Children's Society

Telephone: 0808 800 8880

Website: [www.ndcs.org.uk](http://www.ndcs.org.uk)

British Tinnitus Association

Telephone: 0800 018 0527

Website: [www.tinnitus.org.uk](http://www.tinnitus.org.uk)

## Data Protection

Any personal information is kept confidential. There may be occasions where your information needs to be shared with other care professionals to ensure you receive the best care possible.

In order to assist us to improve the services available your information may be used for clinical audit, research, teaching and anonymised for National NHS Reviews. Further information is available in the leaflet Disclosure of Confidential Information IL137, via Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust website or the PALS Service.

**This leaflet can be made available in other languages and formats upon request**