

WHEN SOMEONE
YOU KNOW HAS A
HEARING LOSS



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Your hearing • Our passion

Take the First Step

The effects of hearing loss are not limited to the hearing-impaired person alone. Hearing loss also has a significant impact on family, friends, and co-workers. It can be frustrating for everyone when communication is difficult. Fortunately, there are things you can do to help make communication easier. The first step is to be aware of the difficulties faced by people with hearing loss.

Facts About Hearing Loss

- 1.** Most people with hearing loss experience a decrease in the clarity of speech, even when it is loud enough. Though a person may “hear” what you say, they may not always understand all the words. Or, they may confuse some sounds with others.
- 2.** Background noise makes understanding extremely difficult, even for people with normal hearing. For those with hearing loss, the problem is even worse.
- 3.** Some people might feel embarrassed about their hearing loss. Some may pretend to understand when they actually don't.
- 4.** Hearing loss can be mistaken for confusion in older people. Make sure that a thorough hearing test is part of any health evaluation.

Good Communication Habits for Everyone

- 1.** Get the other person's attention before you start speaking. If they are ready to communicate, they are less likely to miss anything.
- 2.** Don't shout, don't speak too loudly, and don't overemphasize your words. Just speak clearly and naturally.
- 3.** Don't speak too quickly or too slowly. Again, just speak clearly and naturally.
- 4.** Make sure your face can be seen clearly. Lighting should be adequate and there should be nothing covering your mouth or face (speech is picked up by the eyes as well as the ears).
- 5.** Background noises can make understanding more difficult. Turn off sources of noise (e.g., running water) before having a conversation. Alternatively, move to a quieter area, if possible.
- 6.** Don't talk to someone in another room. The further away you are, the harder it is to hear. Make sure you are in the same room and close enough to be easily heard and seen.

- 7.** Rephrase rather than repeat. Sometimes different words will be easier to understand.
- 8.** Be on the lookout for misunderstandings. Ask questions from time to time to make sure that the person has understood what you have said.
- 9.** Relax and be patient. Sometimes it can be stressful and tiring trying to follow the conversation when you have a hearing loss. If you relax, it can help others relax and enjoy the conversation too.
- 10.** Encourage the person you know to seek the advice of a hearing care professional and to have a hearing test. A hearing test is relatively quick, easy, and painless. Consider going with them to keep them company and to help collect information.

The Road Ahead

Early identification of hearing loss, followed by appropriate intervention and management, can make a big difference. People with hearing loss, and those around them, can benefit from the use of hearing aids and related services. For more information, read the Bernafon booklets “Understanding Hearing Loss” and “Understanding Hearing Aids”. There is also more information on the Bernafon website www.bernafon.com.

Remember that it takes time to get used to a hearing aid, especially for those who have had a hearing loss for a long time. The world can seem very noisy and even overwhelming at first. If you know someone who has tried hearing aids but has stuffed them into a drawer, encourage them to go back to their hearing care professional to have the aids readjusted. It can take several visits to achieve a comfortable fit and good sound quality. Relearning forgotten sounds takes time. Your patience and encouragement can be a big help.

Hearing and understanding are basic human needs. Hearing problems and the resulting social consequences represent a challenge to society. We believe in a world where people with restricted hearing can communicate again thanks to advanced technology.

Visit www.bernafon.com for more information about hearing and hearing loss.

Your hearing care professional:

