

Tinnitus Activities Treatment Hearing and Communication Session

Overview

1. Goals of treatment
2. Hearing and communication difficulties
3. Factors that affect hearing and communication
4. How tinnitus can affect hearing
5. How to improve your hearing
6. Activities for home

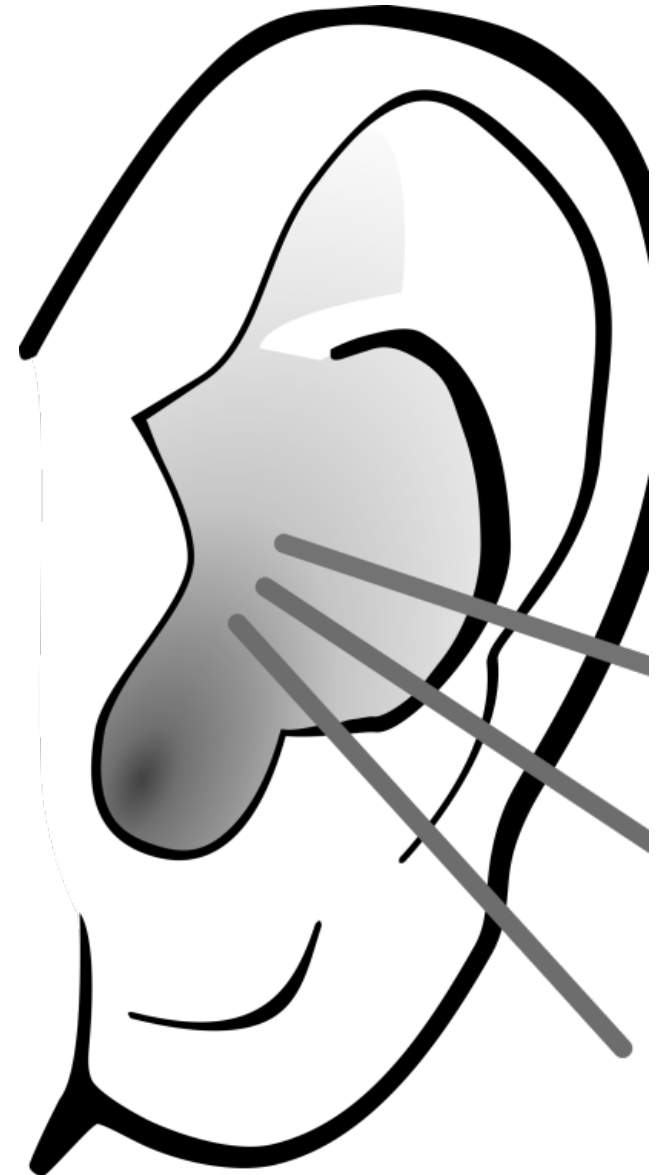
1. Goals of Treatment

- Reduce communication difficulties:
 - What difficulties do you have with hearing loss?
 - What difficulties do you have with tinnitus?
- Reduce stress associated with communicating

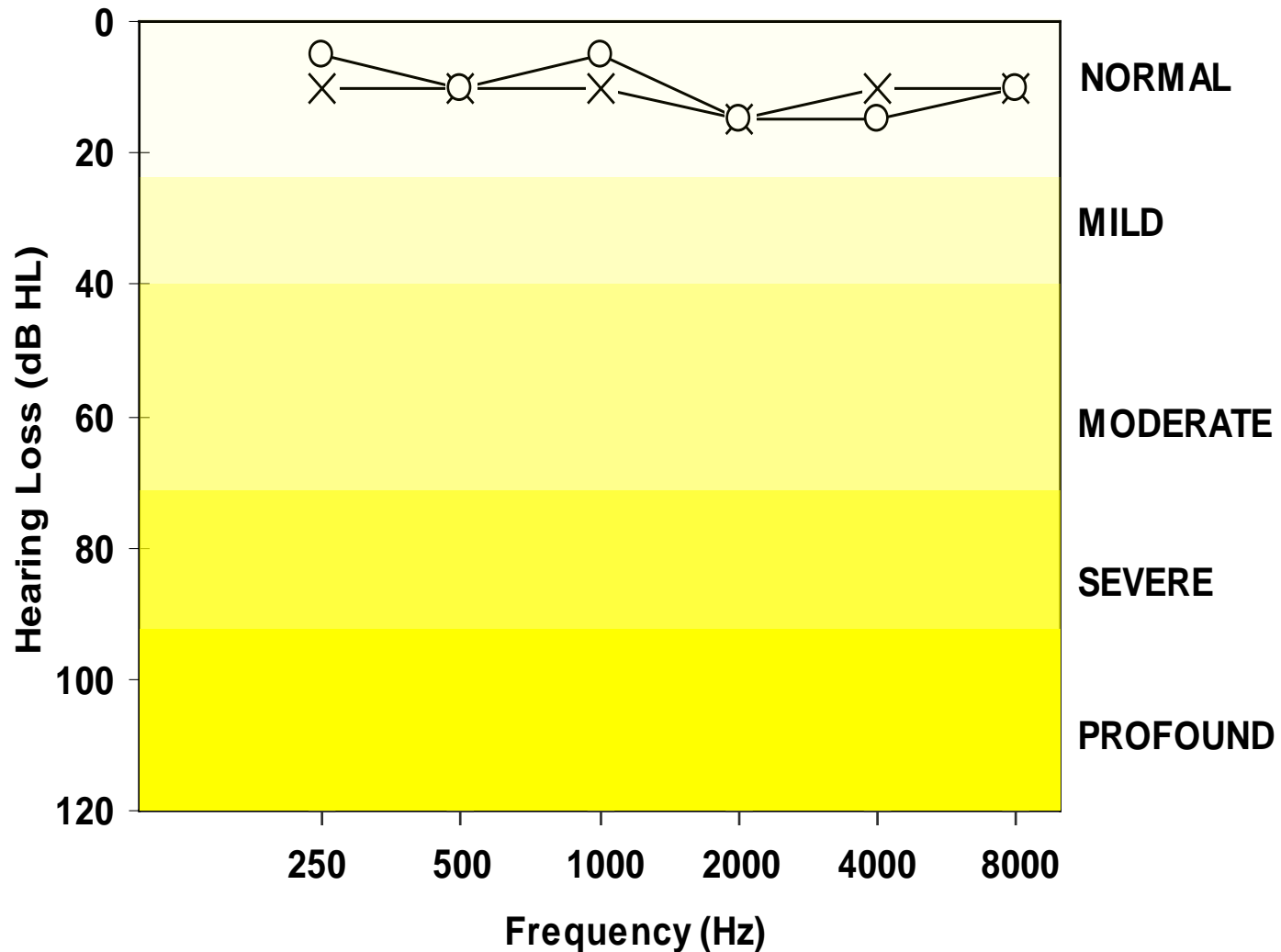


2. Your Hearing

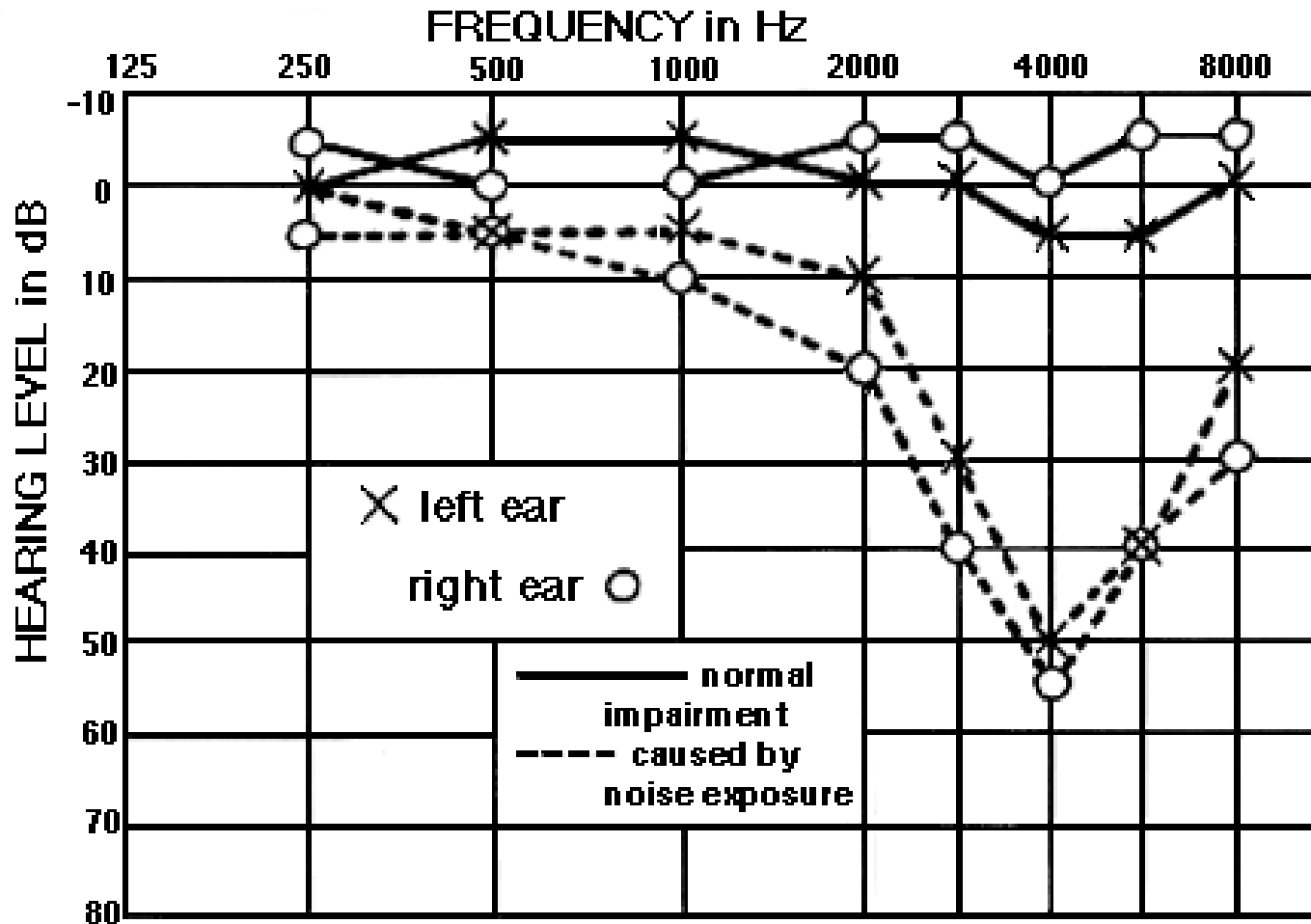
Understanding your
audiogram



Normal Hearing thresholds on an Audiogram



Hearing thresholds after noise exposure



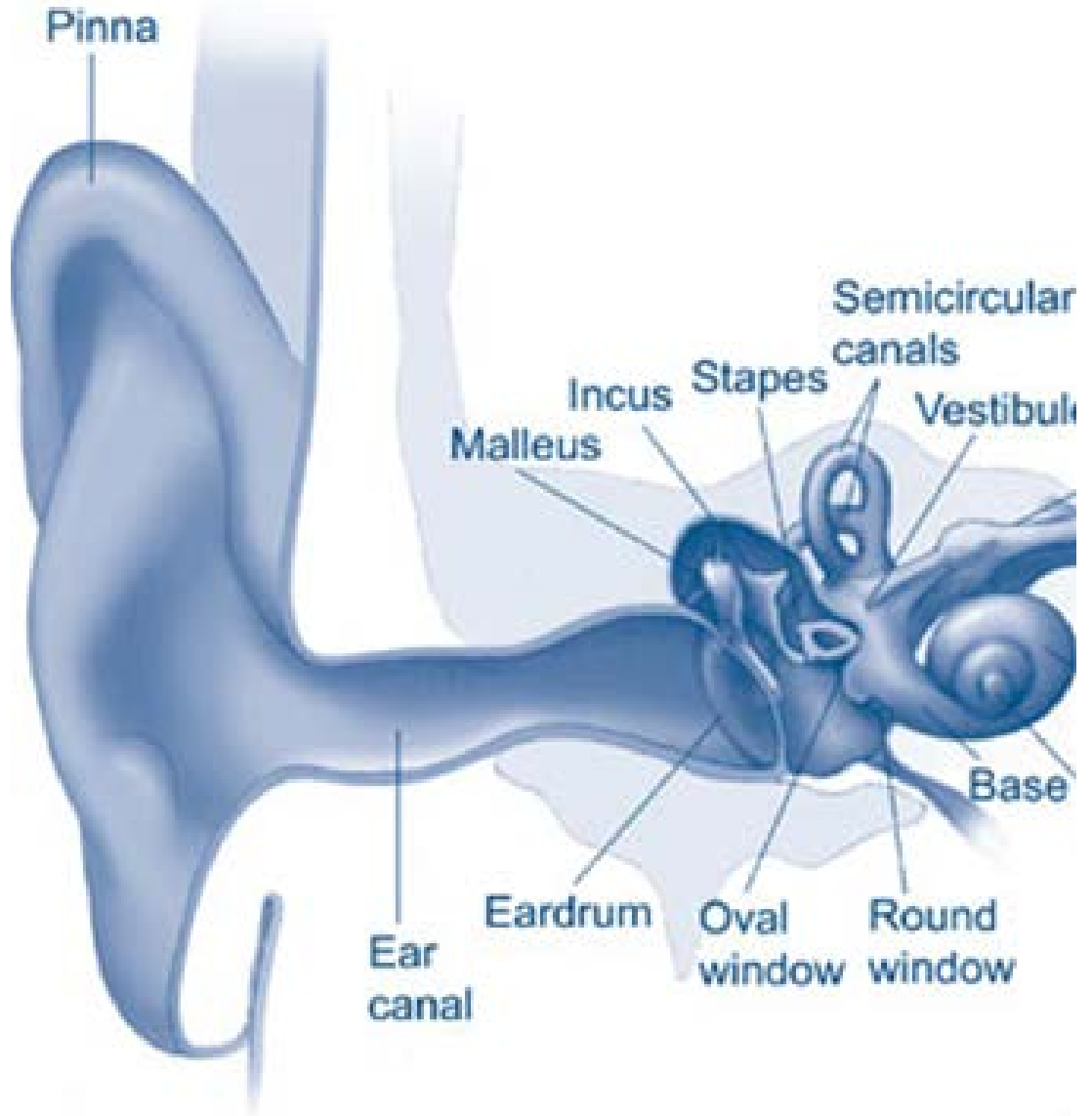
3. Factors that Affect Communication

- Hearing loss
- Background noise
- Ability to see the talker
- Familiarity with talker
- Familiarity with topic of discussion
- Stress level



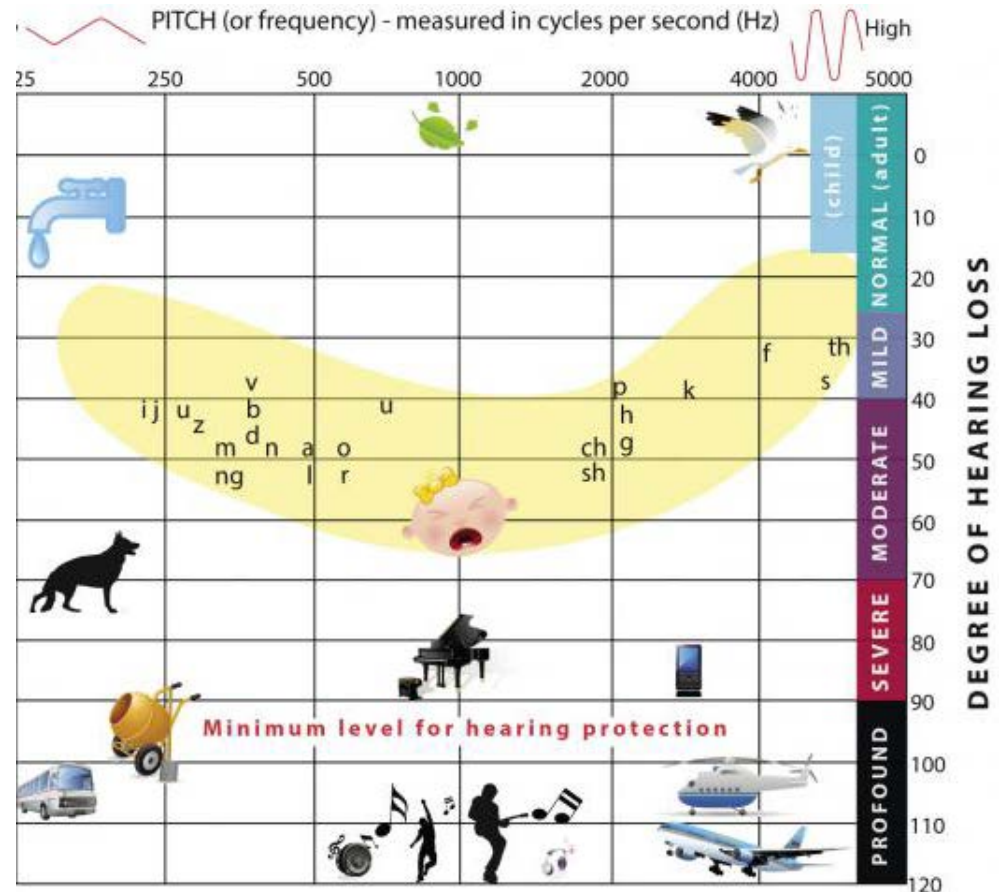
Hearing Loss

- Types of hearing loss:
 - Conductive
 - Sensorineural
 - Mixed



How Hearing Loss Affects Communication

- Some sounds are not heard at all (high pitches)
- Some sounds may be distorted and less clear
- Low-pitched sounds are usually louder, so a high-pitched loss often is not noticeable
- May experience fatigue from struggling to communicate



Background Noise

- Difficult situation for many people
- Noise covers up speech
- Remove noise source if possible
- Move away from noise or re-position yourself so that the noise source is away from the talker



Ability to See the Talker



- Lip reading
- Facial cues
- Body language



Familiarity With Topic

- Knowledge of conversation
 - *Work project*
- Know key vocabulary
 - *Co-workers names*

Your Situation!

- What situations cause you difficulty?
- What techniques have you tried to improve your communication?
- What techniques have been successful?
- What techniques have been unsuccessful?
 - *Thinking what to say next instead of listening attentively*
 - *Getting others to communicate for you*

4. How Tinnitus Can Affect Hearing



- Tinnitus is not damaging your hearing
- Tinnitus can make it harder to hear sounds and distract one from listening
- Tinnitus can also mask some sounds

5. Strategies to Improve Hearing and Communication

1. Use of Amplification
2. Reduce background noise
3. Watch faces
4. Use 'repair' strategies
5. Use an effective communication style



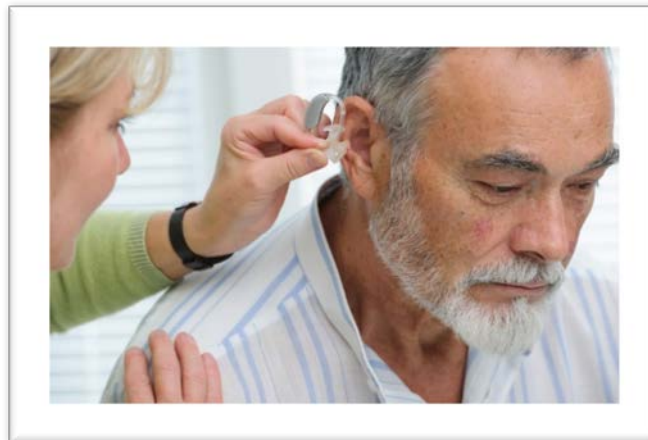
Amplification

- Hearing aids
- Cochlear implants
- Assistive listening devices



Benefits of Hearing Aids

- Better hearing of sounds and speech
- More opportunity to interact in conversation because communication is easier
- Localization of sound—important for safety
- What is your experience with hearing aids?



Potential Hearing Aid Problems

- They can amplify things we don't want to hear:
 - Loud music, machinery, background noise, etc.
- Improperly fitted hearing aids can make sounds tinny or unpleasant
 - It is important to find a knowledgeable professional to fit the aids
- It can take time to adjust to the new sound of things, including your own voice

Watching Faces

- Good lighting
 - Avoid light shining directly behind the talker
 - You need enough light to see talker's face
- Positioning
 - Face the talker
 - Position yourself close to the talker
 - Minimize noise
 - Minimize visual distractions

Anticipatory Strategies

- Know the topic and/or key vocabulary prior to the event
- Practice dialogue
- Use relaxation techniques



Speech Reading Strategies

- Consider:
 - Topic of discussion
 - Facial expressions and gestures



Ask the talker to make changes:

- Slow down and speak more clearly
- Face you while talking
- Refrain from chewing gum
- Remove hand from in front of mouth
- Don't shout



Repair Strategies

- Ask communication partner to:
 - Repeat
 - “Could you please repeat that?”
 - “I’m sorry, I missed what you said because of the noise over there.”
 - Rephrase
 - “Could you rephrase that? I heard you say something about the meeting.”



Repair Strategies, cont'd

- Reduce
 - “Could you summarize the most important points for me?”
- Elaborate
 - “I’m having a little difficulty following, could you give me a little more information about that medicine?”

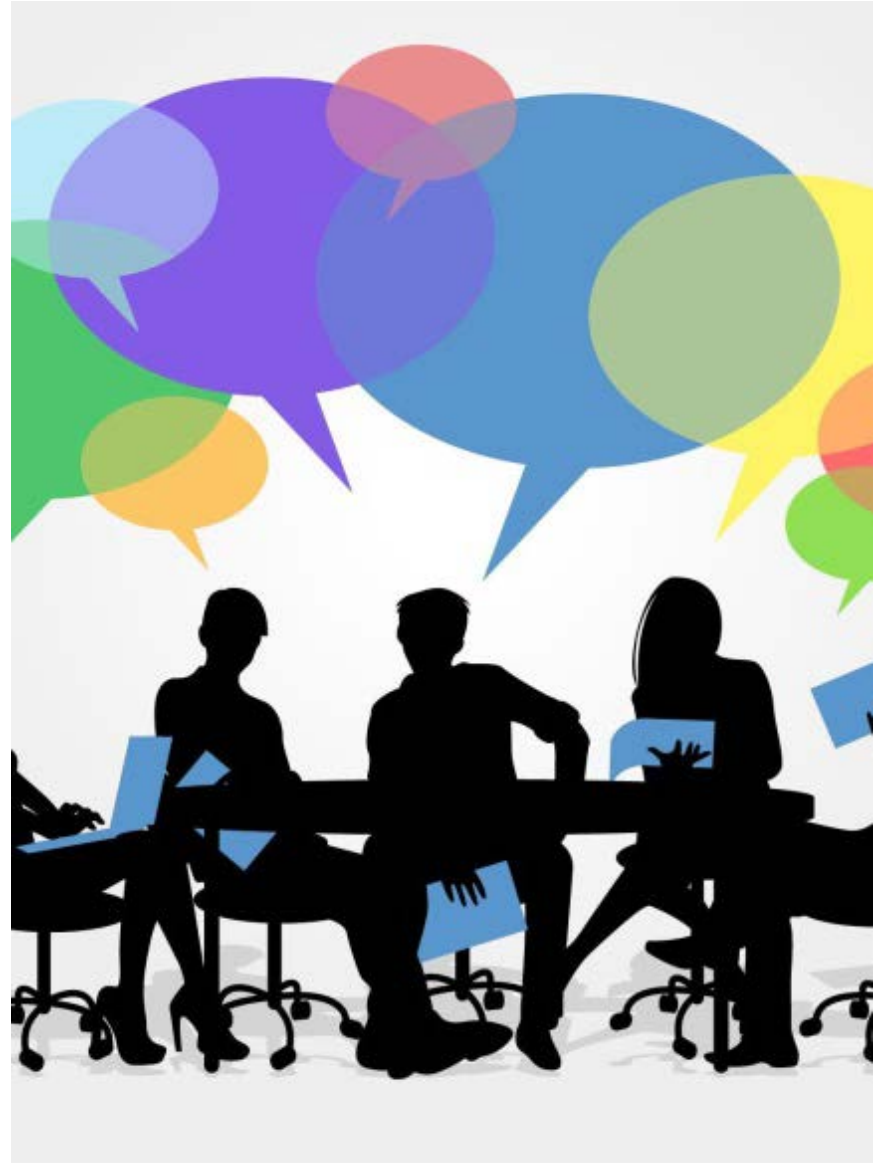


Communication Styles

- Assertive
 - Interacts appropriately, guides communication partner
 - Takes responsibility for communication difficulties
- Passive
 - Withdraws from conversations/avoids social situations
 - Bluffing/nodding/pretending to understand
- Aggressive
 - Dominates conversation
 - Bad attitude, hostile/belligerent, unwilling to take responsibility for communication difficulties

Effective Communication

- What communication style do you believe best describes you?
- What repair strategies would you be most comfortable using?



Communication Style

- Take charge of hearing loss by using an effective communication style
- Guide your communication partner
- Inform communication partners that you have a hearing loss



6. Activities

- Keep track of what strategies you use and how they help you hear and communicate better.
 - Can you see the talker's face?
 - Where was the lighting?
 - Can you move to see the talker's face?
 - If a new hearing aid user, try to distinguish different sounds.
 - Rehearse repair strategies.



Activities, continued

- Utilize the strategies discussed to improve hearing and communication.
 - List the most difficult listening situations for you
 1. *Talking with my adult children at a noisy restaurant.*
 - What can you do to improve those listening situations?
 1. *Seat myself next to my kids so that I can easily see and hear them.*
 2. *Recommend a restaurant that is well-lit.*
 3. *Ask my kids to look at me and slow down when they talk.*
 - What can you do to reduce the background noise?
 1. *Ask to be seated away from the busy kitchen.*
 2. *Choose a restaurant that does not play lots of background noise.*