

Hearing and Communication

Session 4

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 associated with hearing loss and/or tinnitus
 - What can we associate with your hearing loss
 - What can we associate with your tinnitus
- Reduce stress associated with communicating in general



2. Your Hearing



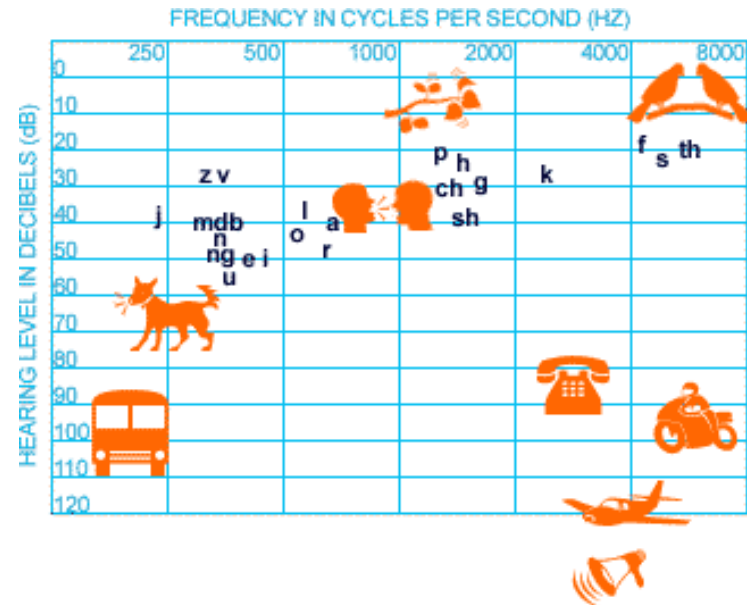
Understanding your audiogram

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



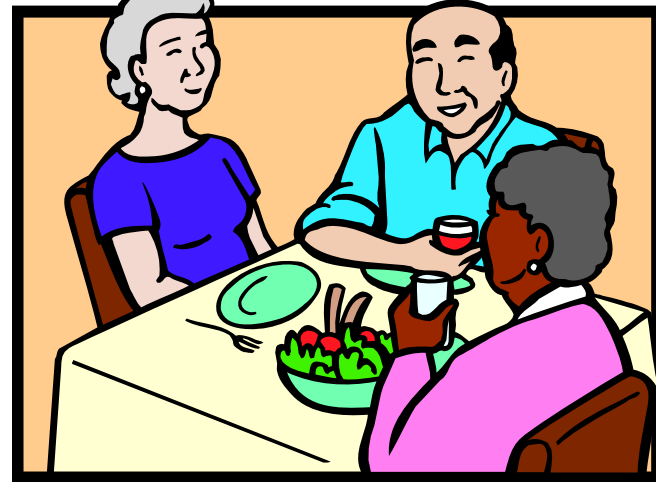
- Types of hearing loss
 - Conductive
 - Sensorineural
 - Mixed
- How hearing loss affects communication
 - Some sounds are not heard at all (usually high pitched sounds) and some sounds may be distorted
 - Low pitched sounds are usually louder, so a high pitched loss often is not noticeable; things just sound less clear
 - May experience fatigue from struggling to communicate

Background Noise

- Difficult situation for many people even those with normal hearing
- 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
- Know key vocabulary



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

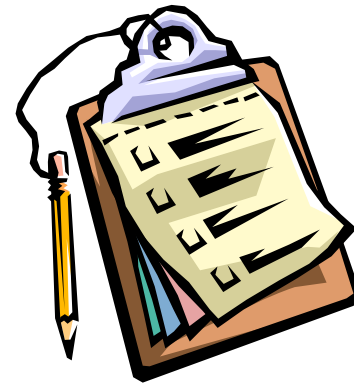
4. How Tinnitus Can Affect Hearing

- Tinnitus is not damaging your hearing
- When you focus on your tinnitus, it is harder to attend to your communication partner
- Tinnitus might make some sounds difficult to hear



5. Strategies to Improve Hearing and Communication

1. Amplification
2. Reducing background noise
3. Watching faces
4. Using 'repair' strategies
5. Positively influencing the communication situation

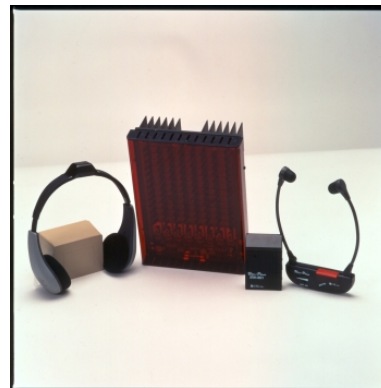


Amplification

- Hearing aids
- Cochlear implants
- Assistive listening devices



Unitron Hearing



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Advanced Bionics Corporation

Benefits of Hearing Aids

- Discover new sounds not heard before
- 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 tuned 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



Lip Reading Strategies

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



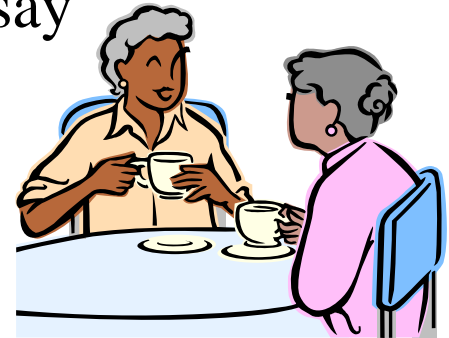
Asking the talker to make changes:

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



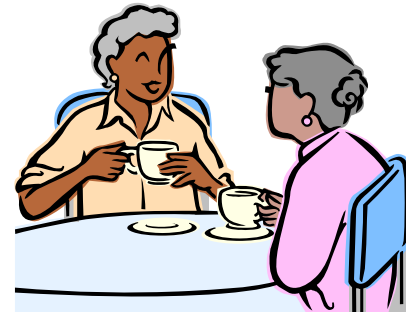
Repair Strategies

- 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 a baseball game.”



Repair Strategies continued

- Reduce - length of phrase
 - “Could you summarize the most important points for me?”
- Elaborate – provide more information
 - “I’m having a little difficulty following, could you give me a little more information?”



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

Communication Repairs and Style

- 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 is the lighting?
 - Can you move to see the talker's face?
 - If a new hearing aid user, try to distinguish different sounds.
 - Rehearse repair sentences.



Activities

- Utilize the strategies discussed to improve hearing and communication.
 - List the most difficult listening situations for you
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 - What can you do to improve those listening situations?
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 - What can you do to reduce the background noise?
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____