

Assistive Listening Devices

We all know that hearing aids can change the life of a person with hearing loss by improving their ability to hear. We also know that for some people hearing aids alone are not enough to assist with our complex and constantly changing lives.

We are challenged by films, theatres, phone calls, restaurants, and shopping malls, just to name a few, and we need to be able to converse with friends, spouses, children, and unfamiliar, often accented voices. Without adequate infrastructure in public places, people living with hearing loss are expected to cope without any additional support, which often causes people to feel even more isolated and dependent, even with hearing aids.

While hearing instruments aim to support, or 'aid' the user, they cannot normalise the hearing, and they cannot compensate for any other issues such as loss of vision or change in cognition. They also may not be able to cope with every different listening demand that the user encounters. This is where Assistive Listening Devices become useful.

Assistive Listening Devices, or ALDs, are devices that work with your hearing aids, or without them if you do not have them, to assist you to function better. They can be selected based on the individual's specific needs to help in many different situations. These include our traditionally challenging environments, such as when there is distance between the listener and the sound source, when there is competing noise, when there are poor acoustics in the room, or when listening to people with heavy accents.

Some people, especially younger people, are able to cope in all of these challenging situations. However, for some, a little more help is needed. A person may require a special telephone, a TV streamer or amplifier, or a personal listening device that would help them to direct the sound towards the person they want to listen to. There are also devices to assist a person living with hearing loss when they may not be wearing their hearing aids, such as an alarm clock that vibrates under their pillow to wake them up, or a doorbell that initiates a flashing light, or a baby monitor.

For more information about the available Assistive Listening Devices, see www.sahearing.co.za, or contact Francis Slabber and Associates' nearest branch to arrange a viewing.

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