

MAKING CONVERSATIONS EASIER

Today's hearing aids may offer more flexibility and better sound than ever before but they still cannot repair a damaged hearing nerve or revive the ability to interpret what we hear. There are however techniques and strategies that can be applied to make conversation easier to follow.

Conversation is a 2-way street, there are certain things the speaker needs to do to ensure the message is received correctly and there are certain things the listener can do to ensure the message is heard and interpreted correctly.

The speaker should speak in a clear and concise manner, speech should become naturally slower and louder and stress or emphasis placed on certain syllables. Clear speech occurs when the speaker attempts to express every word and sentence in a precise, accurate and fully formed manner. It is not a substitute for other communication habits such as:

- Maintain eye contact
- Avoid speaking from a different room
- Ensure your face is well lit
- Avoid background noise
- Do not over pronounce words or speak while chewing or smoking or while leaning on your hand.

Some of the things you can do:

- Control the amount of background noise. Turn down the TV or radio
- Face the person that you are talking to
- Don't talk from a different room or with your back turned. Even with normal hearing this can be trying and frustrating, and it is just not polite.
- Speak at a natural pace
- Do not shout or over-articulate. With some hearing losses, speech actually becomes less distinct with more volume and the hearing aids today aim to clarify speech and not amplify it.
- If you are having trouble being understood, try rephrasing.
- Use gestures, body language can make what you are trying to say much more visible and combined with good intonation patterns, it becomes less necessary to hear all that was said.
- It is easier to follow a conversation if you know the context. All of us use predictive measures to understand fully what is said in conversation, but without a theme or topic it is difficult to guess what might be said next.
- Do not interrupt each other while talking.