



## COMMUNICATION TIPS FOR HEARING CONDITIONS

### FACT SHEET

If you are experiencing hearing loss, there are some relatively simple plans that you can put into practice right now – things that you can do, things that your family and friends can do, and changes you can make to your environment to make listening a little easier.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES

If you have a hearing condition or live with somebody who does, there are some simple things you can do to the living and dining areas of your home that can make socialising a little easier.

- **Buffer the sound of the room.** Fabric absorbs sound and reduces echoes. Carpeted floors, soft furnishings, tablecloths, and drapes will allow for a quieter and more accessible setting than hard floors, bare surfaces and uncovered windows.
- **Check your lighting.** People who lip-read need good lighting to see other people's faces clearly so make sure your rooms are clearly lit.
- **Go full-circle.** Circular tables create a better listening environment and allow people with hearing conditions to lip-read more easily so opt for a circular table in your dining room, and ask if a circular seating arrangement is possible if you are dining out.
- **Find your quiet place.** Identify a quiet part of the house where you can retreat to if you need a listening break; this is also helpful for people who can experience sensory overload.
- **Turn down the music.** While music adds a nice tone to any occasion, it can become overpowering to people with hearing conditions. The effort in trying to catch people's words over the background music can be exhausting, so make sure music levels are low. If you are struggling to hear, ask the host to turn the music down a notch.
- **Location, location, location.** Try to sit with your back to the wall and with a light behind you. This will improve acoustics and allow you to lip-read more easily.
- **Choose a buddy.** If you are going to an important social event like an engagement party or a Christmas party, having someone that you can talk to one-on-one on the day and can help you catch words you may have missed can go a long way in making you feel included. Ask a person to be your buddy in advance so you can have peace of mind on the day.
- **Take it outside.** If you're in the middle of a one-on-one

#### ADDRESS

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#### HEARING LINE

**1300 242 842**

For hearing, social & emotional support, & general enquiries, Monday to Friday, 9am – 5pm

#### LET'S CONNECT



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“ ”

Recently, my wife was talking to me and I had no idea what she was saying. I just wanted her to speak up a little bit over the car noise, and my own tinnitus. I just sort of sat there and let the muffled sound wash over me. I think she is realizing that it is an issue, but it's taking a while – Steve

conversation and are struggling to hear, ask the person you're speaking with to go to a quieter place with you.

You can use similar approaches when socialising outside the home – taking note of your environment, selecting your seating carefully and even thinking ahead about where you plan to go (for example, is the place likely to be noisy or is it a small and quiet setting) can go a long way towards making listening a little easier.

### SELF-ADVOCACY, FINDING SUPPORT

As a person with hearing loss, advocating for your needs can be challenging, particularly if your hearing condition is

new. It takes practice, and confidence, and these build over time. In the meantime, if you need a little help advocating for yourself – in the workplace, with your social groups, or even at home – there are some advocacy groups that can provide tips and advice, such as Soundfair (<https://soundfair.org.au/>), Deafness Forum of Australia (<https://www.deafnessforum.org.au/>) and Deaf Australia (<https://deafaustralia.org.au/>).

This factsheet is intended to be a guide of a general nature, having regard to general circumstances. The information presented should not be relied on as a substitute for medical advice, independent judgement or assessment by a healthcare professional, with consideration of the particular needs and individual circumstances. This factsheet reflects information available at the time of its preparation, but its currency should be determined having regard to other available information. Soundfair disclaims all liability to users of the information provided.

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