

Tinnitus Activities Treatment

Hearing and Communication Session

Hearing 1

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

Hearing
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- The goal of this therapy is to help patients understand how tinnitus can affect hearing and provide some approaches for patients to use to improve their hearing.

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

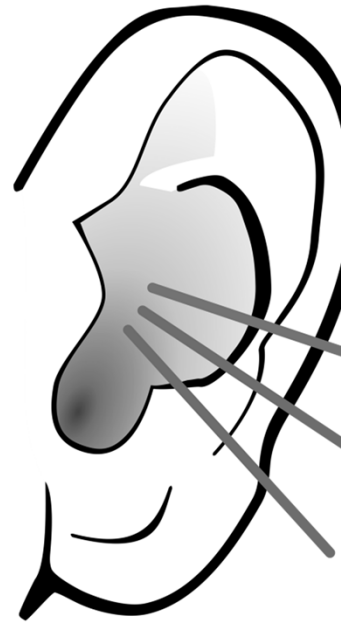


Hearing 3

- By improving hearing and communication in different situations, we hope to alleviate difficulties that might be experienced due to hearing loss and/or tinnitus

2. Your Hearing

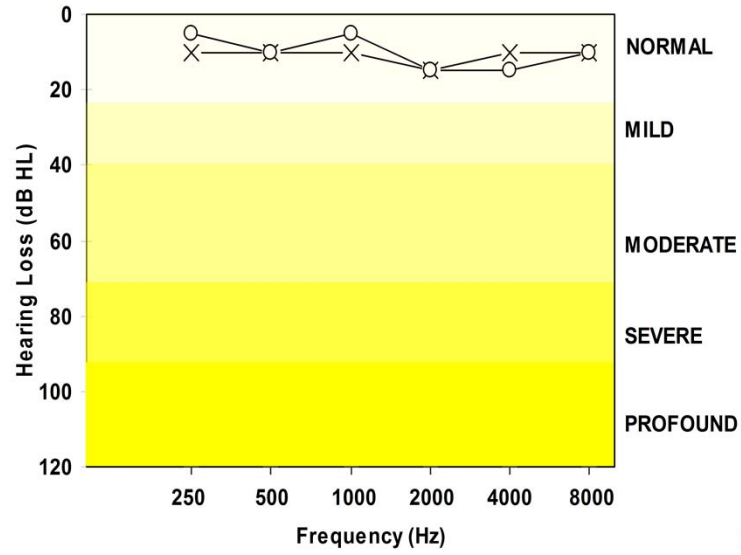
Understanding your audiogram



Hearing 4

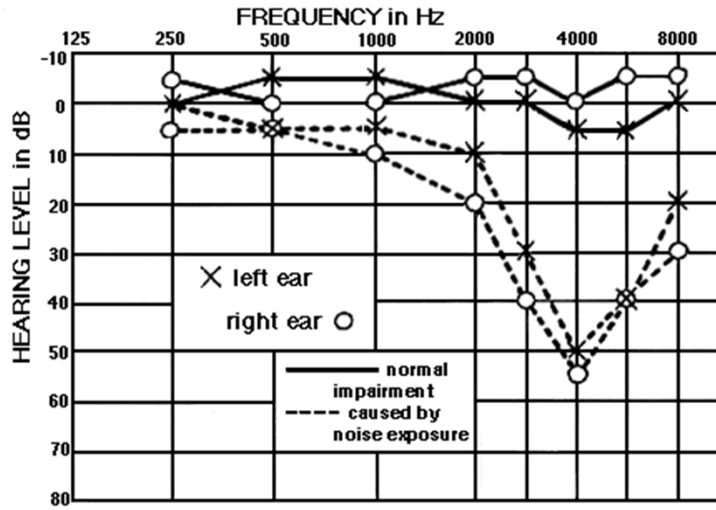
- Review the patient's audiogram so that they understand if they have hearing loss and the severity of the hearing loss.
- Review the audiogram like you are teaching this information to a graduate student.
- Be detailed

Normal Hearing thresholds on an Audiogram



Hearing 5

Hearing thresholds after noise exposure



Hearing 6

3. Factors that Affect Communication

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

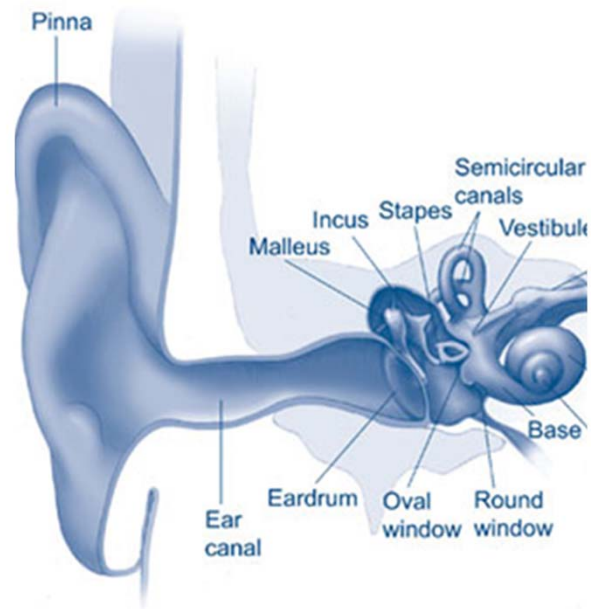


Hearing 7

- There are many different factors that affect communication. Many of these can be actually demonstrated, not simply discussed.

Hearing Loss

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

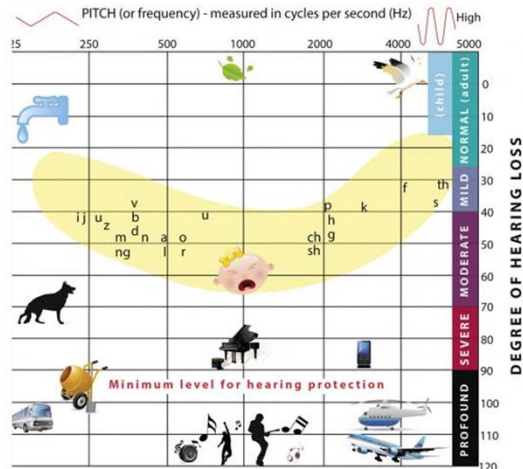


Hearing 8

- Discuss the types of hearing loss, with sensorineural as most typical.
- Be detailed

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



Hearing 9

- Depending on the severity and configuration of hearing loss, some sounds are not heard at all (often in high pitches). Other sounds may be distorted and will be less clear.
- Discuss the effects of high-frequency hearing loss on audibility of high-frequency sounds, and the impact on communication abilities.

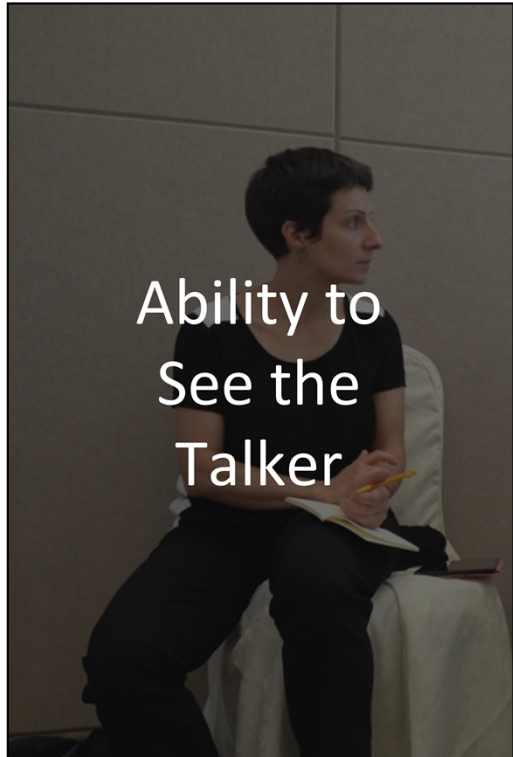
Background Noise

- 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



Hearing 10

- Discuss how background noise can affect hearing, and the importance of signal-to-noise ratio



Ability to See the Talker



- Lip reading
- Facial cues
- Body language

Hearing 11

- We get a lot of speech cues from lip reading, facial cues, and body language.
- These cues rely on your ability to see the talker, so it is important that you maximize this to communicate better.



Familiarity With Topic

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

Hearing
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- Being familiar with the topic of conversation will make communication more successful.

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*

Hearing 13

- This is an opportunity to learn from the patient:
- What communication situations cause difficulty?
- What have they tried and what has/has not worked?

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

Hearing 14

- Tinnitus does not cause hearing loss.
- It can make it harder to hear and distract one from listening.
- The tinnitus sound can mask of some environmental sounds.
- Also, the tinnitus sound can be confused with external sounds when they have the same pitch.

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



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Amplification

- Hearing aids
- Cochlear implants
- Assistive listening devices

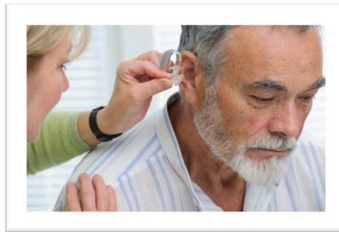


Hearing 16

- The first step in managing a hearing loss is to make sure that patients are fit with an appropriate hearing device.
- This may consist of fitting the patient with a hearing aid or assistive listening device.

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?



Hearing 17

- Hearing aids help to:
 - improve hearing sounds and speech
 - discover new sounds in our environment
 - reduce the amount of effort to listen.
- Because communication is easier, we can interact better with others in conversation
- Getting two hearing aids is recommended if you have hearing loss in both ears. It helps with your ability to localize sound (tell where a sound is coming from, such as a siren) and to hear better in noise (one ear away from noise helps with speech perception)

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

Hearing 18

- Encourage the patient that any hearing device will take time to adjust to. Just as the patient likely lost hearing over time, it is expected that it will take time to get used to the amplified sound.
- If patient is already wearing a hearing device, the appropriateness of the fit can be verified.

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

Hearing 19

- Patients are often unaware of how the environment influences their hearing performance.
- These tips on environmental modifications will help facilitate conversation:
 - Make sure there is adequate light to illuminate the communication partner's face without shadowing it
 - Move away from light that is shining directly in the listener's eyes and making it difficult to see partner's face
 - Being close to communication partner, creating a better signal-to-noise ratio
 - Make sure that the face of the communication partner is visible and not in profile
 - Close a door to eliminate movement from another room
 - Close a window to eliminate blowing curtains or outside noise
 - Turn off the TV or other noise sources

Anticipatory Strategies

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



Hearing 20

- Familiarize yourself with the topic of conversation.
- You can do this by
 - anticipating what the topic will be
 - learning key vocabulary when it is not something you know well
 - Practicing the dialogue that will likely occur
 - Using relaxation techniques to remain calm when you feel you are lost in the conversation

Speech Reading Strategies

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



Hearing 21

- Speech reading strategies such as watching facial expressions and body movements are effective at improving communication abilities.

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



Hearing 22

- Using clear speech, which is slowed speech, not necessarily louder, will help facilitate communication.
- Often demonstrating clear speech is helpful to the patient or communication partner, and then practice having patient ask others to slow down.

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.”



Hearing 23

- Repair strategies will help repair communication breakdowns.
- These include asking others to
 - repeat (though often will take longer for person to repeat entire phrase)
 - Rephrase (lets person know what you did get out of the message)

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?”



- Repair strategies also include asking person to
 - Reduce or highlight the most important parts (you can ignore the less meaningful information)
 - Elaborate or provide 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

Hearing 25

Define the three communication styles

Encourage the patient, regardless of their personality type, how to become assertive rather than passive or aggressive.

Effective Communication

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



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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



Hearing 27

- Empower the patient to take charge of their hearing loss by using an effective communication style
- Telling others that they have hearing loss is an important step, if not already done.

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.



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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.*

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