



Helping People with Hearing Loss in Senior Centers, Nursing Homes, Adult Family Homes, and Assisted Living Facilities

Daily Communication

One-to-One Settings

- Use a personal amplifier, like a Pocket-talker, if the person lacks hearing aids
- Move away from background noise, including other conversations, if possible.
- Use a portable counter loop.
- Use a remote microphone or a proprietary hearing aid accessory, if the individual has one
- Use a caption app, like AVA or google live transcribe, on a smartphone or tablet.

Events and Large Group Settings

- Use microphones, PA systems, and hearing loops or other assistive listening technology for all events and activities.
- Seat people with hearing loss close to the front of the room or to the group leader.
- Provide captions for presentations; use live Communication Access Realtime (CART) or automatic captions in PowerPoint or other apps.
- Turn on the captions for movies and videos, always.
- Turn on captions for Zoom meetings, teleconferences, presentations, and webinars.
- Provide counter hearing loops at information desks and where information is exchanged.
- Attend—and encourage others to attend—our online hearing loss support meeting, HOPE.

Creating a Hearing-Friendly Community

- Download our communication tip cards here and share them with others: <https://www.hearingloss.org/wp-content/uploads/TipCards.pdf?pdf=Tipcards>
- Become familiar with basic hearing aid functions, buttons, maintenance, and changing batteries.
- Tell others about captioned telephones.
- Follow safe hearing instrument storage procedures. Have extra batteries available.
- Residential facilities: Arrange for a hearing professional to visit once per month to adjust hearing aids for free.

NOTE: Many of the above suggestions will also be useful for people with hearing loss living at home

Prescription Hearing Aids

- Can help many seniors hear and communicate better.
- Require an exam from a hearing professional; will need professional follow-up and maintenance.
- Frequently require time and practice to ensure they work well for an individual.
- Can be adjusted or reprogrammed.
- Require regular maintenance and cleaning.
- Perform best within a limited range of six feet.
- Used alone, may not be enough.

Over-The-Counter (OTC) Hearing Aids

- Designed for people aged 18 or older with perceived mild to moderate hearing loss.

- Mainly available online but may be found at Walgreens and Best Buy.
- May be difficult for seniors to set up by themselves.
- Available without a hearing exam, but an examination from a hearing professional is recommended and is often available free.
- May or may not be readjusted or reprogrammed.
- Frequently may require time and practice to ensure they work well.
- Require maintenance and cleaning.
- Perform best in range of six feet. Used alone, may not be enough.

Additional Resources

OTC Hearing Aids

- **Online hearing screening – A good first step:** <https://hearingloss-wa.org/support-for-hearing-loss/but-im-not-ready-for-hearing-aids/>
- **Consumer Reports guide, May/June 2023:** <https://www.consumerreports.org/health/hearing-aids/complete-guide-to-over-the-counter-hearing-aids-a3898239010/>
- **US Food and Drug Administration:** <https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/hearing-aids/otc-hearing-aids-what-you-should-know>
- **HCAA:** <https://www.hearingloss.org/?s=OTC>
- **Johns Hopkins:** <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/treatment-tests-and-therapies/hearing-aids/over-the-counter-hearing-aids-faq>
- **Hearing Tracker:** <https://www.hearingtracker.com/over-the-counter-hearing-aids>
- **NCOA:** <https://www.ncoa.org/adviser/hearing-aids/best-otc-hearing-aids/>
- **NCOA:** <https://www.ncoa.org/adviser/hearing-aids/best-online-hearing-tests/>
- **AAA:** <https://www.audiology.org/consumers-and-patients/managing-hearing-loss/consumers-and-otc-hearing-aids/>

Hearing Aid Financial Assistance (For Prescription Hearing Aids)

<https://hearingloss-wa.org/hearing-aids-new-technologies/financial-help-for-hearing-aids/>

Technology Assistance

Landlines

- Washington State ODHH Telecommunication Equipment Distribution Program (TED): <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/altsa/odhh/telecommunication-equipment-distribution>
Specialized telecommunication equipment that enables Washington residents to use the telephone. Sliding scale.
- Hamilton Relay from ODHH: Free service from ODHH. Trained assistants help TTY or captioned phone users to communicate with telephone users. 1-800-974-1548. [brochure-relay-wa.pdf \(hamiltonrelay.com\)](#)

Mobile Phones and Apps

- **HCAA:** <https://www.hearingloss.org/hearing-help/technology/phones-mobile-devices/>
- **Innocaption:** <https://www.innocaption.com/> (free)
- **Google Live Transcribe:** https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.google.audio.hearing.visualization.accessibility.scribe&hl=en_US&gl=US
- **Otter, CaptionMate, HamiltonCapTel Iphone(Beta)**

Alarms and Other Products for People with Hearing Loss

- **Diglo:** <https://www.diglo.com/>, 800-825-6758
- **Teltex:** <https://teltex.com/vibrating-clocks-watches/?sort=newest>, 888-515-8120