Information on Hearing Loss and Hearing Treatment

A Presentation to Seattle-King County Aging & Disability Service
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Hearing Loss Increases With Age
3rd most common chronic health condition

ONE IN THREE people age 65 to 75
ONE IN TWO people age 75 and older
FOUR IN FIVE people age above 80
What Hearing Loss Sounds Like

“Take two pills three times a day and make a follow-up appointment to see me in six weeks.”

Daily Challenges With Hearing Loss

CONVERSATIONS  TELEPHONE  TV  DOORBELL  ALARMS
Emotional Toll of Hearing Loss

STIGMA
- Shame
- Embarrassment
- Lowered self-esteem

FEAR
- Social interactions
- Losing relationships
- Personal safety

Health Impacts
- Linked to multiple chronic conditions
- Cognitive decline and dementia
- Depression, loneliness, social isolation
- Falls, balance problems
Know the signs of hearing loss

- complains everyone mumbles
- others think the TV is too loud
- difficulty understanding conversations
- difficulty hearing on the phone
- monopolizing the conversation
- withdrawal from conversation and social activity

How to Talk to People With Hearing Loss

- Get the listener’s attention
- Face directly and make eye contact
- Choose quiet, well-lit settings
- Don’t shout, cover your mouth, chew
- Be patient, rephrase if not understood
- Use whiteboard, pen and paper, infographics
- Use a microphone
Tips for People With Hearing Loss

• Don’t BLUFF — admit you don’t understand
• Pay attention — look for visual cues
• Sit close to the speaker, ask that they use a microphone
• Choose a quiet well-lit location
• Request written clues if needed

Personal Technologies and Resources

• Positive impact of wearing hearing aids
• OTC hearing aids
• Smartphone apps
• Assistive listening devices and systems
• WA State agency services
• HLAA-WA
The Positive Impact of Hearing Aids

- Reduced risk and/or severity of dementia
- Reduced fall-related injury
- Lower risk of isolation and depression
- Higher earning capacity
- For children, improved learning and social development
- For families and friends, improved communication and emotional relief

Over-the-Counter Hearing Aids (OTC)

- Lower price point, no prescription required
- For adults with perceived mild to moderate hearing loss
- A diagnostic hearing test by an audiologist is recommended
- May need a smartphone
- Read the fine print for the return policy and warranty
- Look for a telecoil feature
Financial Assistance for Hearing Aids

Washington State:

- 2023 legislation requires some group health insurance coverage
- Fully covers hearing aids for people on Medicaid
- State and school employee benefit programs cover hearing aids

Many Medicare Advantage Plans provide some assistance (Kaiser, Blue Cross, United Health Care)

HLAA-WA website dedicated page for financial assistance options
CLEAR FACE MASKS

Smartphone or Tablet Captioning Apps

- Ava
- Google Live Transcribe
- Apple Captions (BETA)
- Live Caption
Assistive Listening Device

Pocketalker, personal amplifier
can be used with or without hearing aids

Assistive Listening Systems

**Hearing Loops** — No additional equipment is needed for people with telecoil-enabled hearing instruments.

**FM, radio frequency** — Everyone needs a receiver and connector.*

**Infrared (IR), light** — Everyone needs a receiver and connector.*

*Hearing Aid Compatibility (HAC) via neckloop
A neckloop connects a receiver to a hearing instrument.
Hearing Loss Equipment and Services

Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH)

• Assistive Communication Technology (ACT) Program

• Communication Access Real-Time Translation (CART)

• Telecommunication Equipment Distribution (TED) Program

• Washington Assistive Technology Act Program (WATAP)

• Washington Relay and RCC

www.hearingloss-wa.org
www.loopwashington.org
www.facebook.com/HLAAofWA
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