

HOW TO HELP A LOVED ONE WITH HEARING DIFFICULTY

By Lawrence Cardano, Au.D.
and Lorraine Rein, Au.D



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Why We Wrote This Report

Susan was becoming more and more concerned about her mother's hearing difficulty. Her mother was setting the television volume loud enough to be very annoying for anyone else in the room. It was starting to seem that, in order for her mother to understand what she was saying clearly, she needed to be right in front of her and facing her. She began to realize that asking her mother a question from another room was useless. Even when she spoke to her mother in the same room she would often misunderstand, or answer the wrong question.

Her mother would often ask Susan to repeat herself. Sometimes her mother still didn't seem to hear her clearly even after repeating. Lately, Susan realized that there were times when she thought her mother understood what she was saying, because she did not ask her to repeat, only to find out later that her mother was just pretending to understand. When her mother started making excuses for not meeting her friends at the diner every week like she used to, and not going to the bingo games she used to enjoy, Susan realized that the frustration of hearing difficulty was probably making her reluctant to participate in those activities.

Susan wanted to help her mom, but whenever she mentioned her hearing difficulty, her mom would get defensive and, sometimes angry. Sometimes she would say things like "My hearing is not that bad – you just don't speak clearly." At other times she might respond with a version of "What do I need to hear so much for? Look how old I am..." Susan wanted to help her mother, but was at the end of her rope. She didn't know what to do.

The authors of this report have heard variations of Susan's story again and again over years of helping hearing impaired people and their families to overcome the challenges of hearing difficulty. As a clinician, it can be heartbreaking to listen to family members talk about how hearing difficulty has caused frustration and strained or diminished relationships.

As a result of our study and research on this topic, and our years of experience with real-life situations in which family members want to help a loved one with hearing difficulty, we have found a number of things that are extremely helpful in most cases. In this report you will find a condensed version of what we have found to be most helpful.

Who This Report Is For

If you have a loved one who is coping with hearing difficulty and would like to help them, we wrote this special report just for you. Whether your loved one currently wears hearing aids or not, you will find this report to be a helpful resource.

Research confirms what many people who have loved ones with hearing loss know: hearing difficulty can negatively affect many different aspects of a person's life. One important aspect that is often negatively affected is relationships with family members. This is why it has been said that "When one family member has a hearing problem, the family has a hearing problem." Hearing difficulty can lead to needless misunderstandings and arguments. In some cases, loved ones may limit their communication with the hearing-impaired person or eliminate details and nuances in their conversation with them to avoid the frustration of being misunderstood or having to repeat themselves. Under these conditions the relationship will obviously suffer.

We know that it can be frustrating and sometimes even heartbreaking to watch a loved one struggle with hearing difficulty. We have personally seen many cases over the years in which family members of a person with hearing loss are at their wit's end because they what to help their loved

"I found the staff at Hearing Center of Long Island very helpful and professional. My mother's quality of life is so much better now. She is happier and more engaged since you helped her improve her hearing. Thank you, Hearing Center of Long Island, for everything!"
Clara Brissett
Elmont, NY

one or get help from them, but do not see an effective, practical way to do it. Fortunately, if you have a love one who is coping with hearing difficulty there are some simple ways you can help. This report will provide you with some of the information and methods we have found to be helpful for many.

Who This Report Is Not For

This special report is not for you if you are struggling with hearing loss yourself. If you would like assistance in overcoming hearing difficulty yourself, we certainly have other resources to help you. This report is not one of those. (Contact us at 516-872-8485 and mention this report for more information.)

This report is also not for you if you have a loved one who struggles with hearing loss but *you* are not interested in investing any time or effort to help them. It may be hard to believe but we have seen cases in our office where a family member does not seem to be interested in doing anything to help their loved one overcome their hearing difficulty. There are a number of possible reasons this can happen. Sometimes it is the strain that the hearing loss has put on the relationship over time. Sometimes the family member has just “given up”. Whatever the reason, if you are not willing to invest at least some time and effort to help your loved one overcome their hearing difficulties please put this report aside or give it to someone else – it is not for you.

However, if you want to help your loved one to enjoy better communication and improved relationships that improved communication allows, we will give you the guidance you need to avoid typical mistakes and have the most positive impact you can on your loved one’s quality of life.

Understanding The Person

In our office we occasionally see individuals with significant hearing loss who appear to have little or no motivation to improve their hearing. Some of the issues that can interfere with motivation to get the proper help for

hearing difficulty—and which a caring professional can help you overcome—are: giving up, assuming nothing will really help, fear of embarrassment, and lack of awareness of the problem.

Giving up

Some people react to the frustration of hearing difficulty by becoming withdrawn and, in effect, giving up on hearing. Like the patient who told me that she thinks she has “heard enough already,” a person may have stopped engaging in much of the meaningful interaction with other people that they had enjoyed in the past. Fortunately, this situation can usually be prevented or corrected with proper help.

Assuming nothing will really help

Some people who realize they have hearing difficulty may not think that hearing aids, or anything else, will help. This may be due to stories about bad experiences others have had with hearing aids. In this case the person may feel it is not worth the trouble to try to get help.

The belief that a problem cannot be solved creates some incentive to deny having that problem. No one wants to admit they have a problem that cannot be solved. In most cases, fortunately, at least some amelioration of hearing difficulties is possible with the proper professional guidance. Assuming you will not be helped by hearing aids, or that you will have the same trouble friends or family members have had—without reviewing your case with a skilled hearing care professional who can explain what realistic expectations are in your case—can be a costly mistake.

In our practice we have found an effective way to overcome this often-erroneous assumption and help the individual with hearing difficulty to get the help they need is with our Free Real-Life Hearing Solution Experience program. This is a program that allows us to provide expertly customized hearing aids and / or whatever strategies or technology the individual needs to give him or her the experience of better hearing at

home and during their normal daily activities on a temporary basis with no cost or obligation. Often, the real-life experience of improved hearing and communication ability removes negative attitudes toward getting help. *(For more information on the Hearing Center of Long Island Free Real-Life Hearing Solution Experience contact us at 516-872-8485 or info@HearingCenterofLI.com.)*

Fear of embarrassment

One of my patients shared a moving story with me about fear of embarrassment of wearing hearing aids. He told his wife that he was reluctant to wear hearing aids because he was concerned he would feel embarrassed if his friends knew he was wearing them. His wife quickly reminded him of a recent dinner they had with a number of other couples at a restaurant where he often asked others at the table to repeat themselves and occasionally answered questions completely inappropriately because he was guessing at what the question was. She reminded him that it would have been much less embarrassing—and much more enjoyable for everyone at the table—if he had been wearing hearing aids so he could better hear the conversation. Not hearing clearly may, in fact, be more embarrassing than wearing hearing aids.

The fact that hearing difficulty may be more noticeable and/or annoying to others than wearing hearing aids is often not appreciated. The relative importance of hearing versus cosmetics deserves some consideration. Think about this fact: Research has shown that first-time hearing aid wearers are much more likely to rate cosmetics as a high priority than experienced hearing aid wearers. Experienced wearers rate sound quality and hearing improvement as higher priorities than cosmetics. I would say that wisdom comes with experience.

Lack of awareness of the problem

There are at least five common reasons why someone may not be fully aware of the hearing problem they have:

People with hearing loss are not aware of sounds they do not hear, and therefore, are not aware that they missed anything.

Think of a dog whistle that produces sounds that dogs can hear but are above frequency range of human hearing. A human might say the dog whistle makes no sound. If dogs could talk, they would obviously disagree!

Speech and environmental sounds are moving targets.

Sounds in our everyday environment fluctuate all the time. Sometimes people actually do mumble. Sometimes the sound from the television might actually be soft or distorted. These are situations in which even a person with normal hearing has difficulty. A person with hearing loss will also have difficulty in these situations. In addition, a person with hearing loss will have difficulty in situations where a person with normal hearing would not. The difficulty in disentangling one from the other allows for many to hold the opinion that their difficulties are not due to hearing loss.

The ability to follow conversation involves your auditory system, your visual system, and your brain, which is the central command station!

The visual system (taking advantage of facial expressions and gestures) and the cognitive system (being able to fill in gaps based on context) are essential to your understanding of speech. The fact that you can follow conversation in certain situations may lead you to honestly believe your hearing is good, when, in reality, it is because these other systems are compensating for inability to hear the sounds important to speech understanding.

Sneaking up on you.

For most people hearing loss takes place slowly over time, which makes it difficult to notice the change. To be able to perceive the change in hearing, you would need to have a clear memory of how you heard a particular sound a number of years ago. This is not realistic.

Nothing wrong with the volume: “I can always hear when people are talking, it’s just not always clear.”

As I noted before, very often hearing loss occurs in the high frequencies that are most important to speech understanding. The lower frequency speech sounds, which are actually louder, may not be affected. Although hearing in the high frequencies is important for clearness of speech perception, the fact that loudness seems to remain normal may lead one to honestly believe that hearing status is not an issue when, in fact, it is.

Understanding The Problem

To understand how you can help your loved one overcome the frustrations of hearing difficulty and comprehend speech better, it will help to know the factors that affect their ability to hear speech well. Once you understand these issues you may even come up with your own ways to deal with them.

Most people think of hearing difficulty as something that is simply caused by the lack of ability to hear sounds, or to hear them loud enough. While “hearing loss” in that sense is an important factor causes hearing difficulty in most cases, the following factors are also importance. Fortunately, these are factors you usually can do something about, even if your loved one’s ability to hear sounds loud enough is not improved.

Hearing versus listening

First, it is helpful to keep in mind the distinction between hearing and listening. For our purpose here, we can define hearing as the ability to detect sounds, and listening as the ability to understand and appreciate what we hear so we can respond appropriately. Listening involves extracting meaning from what we hear. It is difficulty in “listening”—not difficulty in “hearing”—that causes the most frustration for most people. Many of the complaints that people report as hearing difficulty can often be considered listening difficulty.

While your ability to hear can certainly have a significant impact on your ability to listen and understand, there are a number of other important factors. In general, these factors can be divided into two categories: those involving the sound you are listening to (the message), and those involving the person listening (the listener).

“The level of service and expertise that the doctors and staff at Hearing Center of Long Island gave my father and me is exemplary - the very best. Thank you for helping my father enjoy the benefits of better hearing.”

***Dr. Richard Sternberg, M.D.
Cooperstown, NY***

The Message

Rate of speech

As the speed at which someone speaks increases, the potential for two different problems develops. First, the faster a person speaks, the more likely it is that they will drop some speech sounds, or allow others to blend together. Second, more rapid speech puts greater demands on your ability to keep up and to process the speech. To put it another way: the speaker may be speaking faster than you can listen.

The ability to understand rapid speech varies among individuals and is generally reduced with age. Research suggests that slowing down the rate of speech can result in an impressive forty-percent increase in comprehension.

Background noise

The ability to focus on the sound or the voice you want to hear becomes more difficult with increasing background noise. However, it is not just the loudness of the background noise that determines the amount of difficulty. The key factor is the difference between the loudness of what you want to hear compared to the loudness of competing sounds. This is called the signal-to-noise ratio. It means that even if the background noise is fairly loud, you may hear well or not, depending on whether the voice you want to hear is a little louder or a little softer than the background noise.

Reverberation

In some situations, like in a worship service or a lecture hall, or even when watching TV in your living room, some of the sounds you want to hear come to your ears directly from the source. At the same time, however, some of the sound that comes from the source bounces off the walls, the ceiling and/or the floor, and then arrives at your ears at a delay. This combination of direct sound and delayed sound arriving at your ears at the same time causes distortion that can make it difficult to understand speech even when it is loud enough.

The Listener

Attention and cognitive load

If you have ever driven a car while listening to the radio and gotten lost, you know that one thing most people instinctively do in that situation is turn the radio off in order to concentrate more fully on finding their way. Splitting your mental resources between listening to the radio and figuring out which way to go makes it harder to do either well.

Similarly, splitting your mental resources between listening to the person you want to hear and any other task that competes for your attention can make it much more difficult to comprehend what you are listening to. The competing task can be thinking about what you are going to say, watching TV, doing the dishes, driving a car—almost anything.

Frequency resolution

Frequency resolution refers to the ability to distinguish between sounds at similar but different frequencies. The most common type of hearing loss involves deterioration of cochlear(?) function. This can result from many factors, including what you might think of as normal wear and tear. The cochlea is part of the inner ear. It is the last stop in the journey of sound that enters the ear before it reaches the nerve for hearing that will carry the signal to the brain. One of its functions is to separate sound into its component frequencies or “itches.” In speech there are sounds that are in the low frequency range, including vowel sounds like “ah” or “oo,” and

others that are in the high frequency range like “f” and “s.” The deterioration of cochlea function results in difficulty recognizing the difference between sounds of similar but different frequencies. When this happens, an individual may be able to hear the “f” sound and the “s” sound but may not be able to recognize the difference between them. This makes it impossible to tell the difference, for example, between the words “fat” and “sat.”

Working memory

You might find it strange that we are mentioning memory in a discussion of listening difficulties. However, if you keep in mind the distinction between hearing and listening, the importance of memory becomes clearer.

Working memory capacity has been defined as “the cognitive ability that allows one to keep information within easy ‘cerebral reach,’ while simultaneously processing it.” For example, if the person you are speaking with is saying a long sentence, it is possible that by the end of the sentence, you might not remember the first word or two of that sentence. If the person is telling a story, remembering what was said near the beginning of the story by the time they reach the end may be even more difficult. In either case, problems with working memory interfere with the ability to listen. This can be a problem, particularly if you are simultaneously using some of your mental capacity to think about how you are going to respond to the person speaking or trying to use context to understand exactly what was said.

There are many types of non-hearing-aid technology that can be helpful for some people under certain listening conditions. While none of them offer a complete solution, your hearing care professional should be able to identify which, if any, may help you in specific situations. The following list is by no means exhaustive, but it includes some of the most practical options.

Special (But Simple) Assistive Technology

One of the simplest ways you can help a loved one with hearing difficulty to overcome some of the factors mentioned above that make understanding speech difficult by encouraging them to use one or more of the simple assistive devices below.

Wireless TV Headphones

These devices transmit sound directly from your TV to headphones you wear. They are widely available at electronics retailers. They allow you to turn up the volume in the headphones without having to turn up the actual volume of the television. This way, other people in the room can listen at a lower volume at the same time. For some types of hearing loss, the results can be very good. For others, the clarity of sound will be poor even when it is loud enough. There are also some other disadvantages:

- Some people find it uncomfortable to wear headphones for the length of time they usually watch TV.
- The sound is not customized for your hearing profile, which means that the clarity of the sound may be limited.
- While you are using this device, it will likely be difficult for you to hear other people in the room.

These disadvantages can be overcome with the use of more advanced technology such as “directed audio” (mentioned later in this section) or hearing aids with the capability of direct wireless connection to television.

Caption Telephones

If you have difficulty hearing telephone conversation clearly, recently improved technology that allows you to read telephone conversation may be very helpful. (The words that you read on the special telephone’s screen are called captions.)

The most practical aspect of these devices for most people is that they do not require either party in the phone conversation to dial any special phone number, or require the person you are speaking with to have any special equipment. You can listen to the conversation while you read it.

All you need besides the specialized telephone is a regular telephone line and an internet connection (not a computer). There is no charge beyond the cost of a regular phone call to use this service. Currently, you can get one of these phones and have it installed by the manufacturer at no cost to you. The manufacturer is able to provide the equipment and installation at no cost because they are compensated by the Federal Communications Commission when you use the service. There is even a version that can be used with some mobile devices. *(To receive a phone and installation at no cost, you will need verification of hearing loss from your hearing care provider.)*

Directed Audio

In late 2015 a unique category of hearing enhancement technology designed for those with hearing impairment was introduced. I was fortunate to be one of the first audiologists in the New York metropolitan area to be given a demonstration of it. The type of technology is called “directed sound,” and the product that was introduced is called HyperSound. (See <http://hypersoundhearing.com/hearing-health.>) This product consists of a pair of unique speakers that attach to your TV or other audio producing equipment. The speakers direct sound in an extremely narrow beam to a single listener. If you direct the sound to yourself so that you can hear it well, the person sitting next to you will actually be unable, or nearly unable to hear it. (Others in the room would be hearing the normal sound from the normal speakers that would still function as usual.) In addition, the sound can be customized to a limited extent by your hearing care professional, based on your particular hearing loss profile.

For improvement in TV listening, this is more expensive than some of the other options mentioned, but it has the advantage of not requiring any device to be worn on the body.

Assistive Technology You May Already Have

Two examples of simple assistive technology most people already have but may neglect to use are television closed captioning and

speakerphones. Although they have limitations, many people find them surprisingly helpful.

TV Closed Captioning

Most televisions have a setting for closed captioning that can be turned on or off. Turning this feature on allows the dialogue to be printed on the TV screen for you to read; the show you are watching provides it. While some find reading and watching a show at the same time to be difficult, others find it helps make dialogue more understandable.

Speakerphone

Many people have telephones that include a speaker option and are not aware they have it, or have not thought of using it. Typically, there is a button labeled “speaker” on the phone. By pushing that button, you can listen to the conversation without holding the phone to your ear. For some individuals this can make a significant improvement because they are able to listen with two ears rather than just one.

Theater Assistive Listening Devices

The Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines require theaters to have assistive listening device systems if the theater either accommodates fifty or more patrons, or has an audio amplification system. Usually this takes the form of some type of headphone or earbud device. These can be extremely helpful in making dialogue clearer because the system gives you sound only from the show with

no ambient noise from the audience, and it gives you the sound directly to your ears with none of the usual distortion caused by sound from loud

“It was a blessing to come upon Dr. Cardano and Hearing Center of Long Island to help my mom get acclimated to new sounds and enjoy better hearing. The patience and guidance every step of the way made my mom so comfortable and helped improve the quality of life for her and our family. Frank Panariello Elmont, NY

speakers bouncing off walls, ceilings, or floors. Although the sound will not be customized for your hearing profile, for many hearing-impaired individuals, this can be a very helpful tool.

My experience has been that it is best to get to the theater a little earlier than usual to ensure that you can get a device and inspect it before you use it, in case it has a dead battery or is malfunctioning. Although you will have to take the initiative to ask an usher for one of these devices, do not be bashful. They can make your theater experience much more enjoyable.

Training

What is the most important part of the body for hearing? It can be argued that the best answer to that question is the brain, not the ears. No matter what the quality of sound is that our ears are able to collect, our brains must be able to process and make sense of that sound in order for it to do us any good. Although our ability to process and make sense of the sounds we hear tends to deteriorate over time, those abilities can be maintained and improved with training.

Most people with hearing loss notice that situations where there is background noise and when the speaker speaks quickly are the most difficult. Fortunately, focusing on one voice in the midst of background noise and handling rapid speech are skills that your brain can get better at with training and practice. Auditory training has been shown to improve speech-in-noise perception, auditory processing speed, and auditory memory. There are currently a number of easy-to-do programs designed for this purpose. An example of a simple listening training program that is a free app for mobile devices is called Hear Coach. More comprehensive programs that can be done at home using a computer or DVD player and coaching by your hearing care professional include Listening And Communication Enhancement, often called L.A.C.E. (available at www.neurotone.com), and Read My Quips (available at www.sensesynergy.com/readmyquips). Your hearing care professional should be able to recommend a program that is appropriate for you.

Here is an excerpt from a comment I received from one of our patients who used such a program:

Dear Dr. Cardano,

I wanted to write to tell you about my wonderful experience with the L.A.C.E. program.

I cannot thank you enough for having me participate in this enlightening program. I found the program easy to use and by the third day I found myself looking forward to doing the exercises. By the end of the program I realized that...there are many things I can do throughout the day to hear better and improve my quality of life... I would say to anyone, if you have the chance please try it, and you will find that you will have techniques at your fingertips to make your daily communication with others more relaxing and pleasant.

*- Domenica S.
Merrick, N.Y*

Communication Tips

Below is a brief list of simple techniques you can use to improve communication with a loved one who struggles with hearing difficulty. Now that you have some understanding of the factors that can make it difficult for you loved one to understand speech – even when it is loud enough – the reasons why the following tips help should be clear, and you may be able to add to this list yourself.

We are all creatures of habit. If you are not in the habit of following some of these tips yet, you may want to review this list periodically to remind yourself of them so that they become your normal way of communicating.

- **Get the listener's attention before you begin to speak.** Any diminishment of hearing – or even adverse listening conditions like background noise with no hearing loss – makes focused attention more important. In many cases the listener will be able to understand what is said when he or she is paying close attention even when they otherwise would not have

- **Face the listener.** This will allow him or her to supplement the auditory signal with speech reading. As hearing diminishes, most people begin to acquire speech reading ability even without formal training. Use facial expressions and gestures to enhance the message.
- **Don't cover your mouth or look down while speaking.** Making it harder for the listener to see your mouth when you speak can make it more difficult for him or her to distinguish between speech sounds. Moustaches or beards can obscure the mouth making speech reading difficult. Also, remember what your mother told you: when you are eating, don't speak with your mouth full!
- **Speak slowly and clearly.** Research indicates that comprehension can increase by as much as forty percent when speech is slightly slower than normal. The speed at which the message travels from the ear to the brain slows with age. One way of describing the problem that results from speaking too quickly is that you may be "speaking faster than the listener can listen". By speaking slightly slower than normal you will avoid letting some speech sounds run into others or dropping out and will give the listener time to process what you are saying. Slowing your rate of speech gives the listener time to process the message and fill in gaps using the context of the message.
- **Don't shout.** Shouting distorts the signal and may cause the listener to get flustered or embarrassed. Speak in a loud voice with good breath support. You can use a public speaking technique called diaphragmatic breathing. Place your hand on your belly and inhale deeply. Feel the breath push your belly against your hand. This allows your lungs to expand fully and helps you effortlessly produce strong and resonant speech. With a little practice you will be able to breathe this way without placing your hand on your belly.
- **Rephrase your message rather than repeating it word for word if you are misunderstood.** For someone with a hearing loss, the problem is not only that speech is not loud enough, often the hearing

loss creates distortion and speech is also not clear enough. Using different words can help to overcome the lack of clarity.

- **Be patient.** Remember even people with normal hearing mishear sometimes. Miscommunication is frustrating for both the listener and the speaker. By staying calm and using these techniques you can reduce stress and communicate better.

Getting Professional Help When Your Loved One Is Reluctant: 3 Steps

The tips above will help if your loved one has any degree of hearing loss, whether you have any professional assistance or not. However, the amount of help that can be provided without improving the hearing-impaired individual's hearing with customized amplification or other professional assistance is limited. Of course, if the individual's hearing can be improved with professional assistance, communication will be easier whether you or others use these tips in speaking with your loved one or not.

Encouraging a reluctant family member to get professional help for his or her hearing can be frustrating. After working with hearing impaired for many years, we have found the following three things to be most helpful for those with a loved one who denies or is reluctant to address his or her hearing loss:

1. Try to understand the real reason your loved one opposes the idea of seeking help.

This is not always obvious. For example, many people are honestly not aware how poor their hearing is because their hearing loss developed slowly or they may be avoiding the issue because they are afraid that their hearing difficulties can't be helped.

In some cases, your loved one might express a reason that is actually a "smoke screen" for the real reason. For example, some people who would rather not admit they are concerned about the way hearing aids will make them look will instead say they are concerned about the cost.

In other cases, people may readily admit the true reason they are reluctant to address the problem of hearing difficulty. The reason may seem completely valid but can be based on false or partial information. For example, some people may have heard that friends were unsuccessful

with hearing aids and assume that means they will be unsuccessful as well – not taking into account the fact that their hearing loss might be very different from their friend's and the many other factors that may have been different in their friend's case.

2. Express to your loved one your feelings and the stress and frustration his or her hearing difficulty is causing you.

Letting your loved one know how their hearing loss is affecting you, in an honest, nonjudgmental way – rather than simply telling him or her what to do or being argumentative - can make a big difference in the way they respond and in the quality of your communication with each other. Try to convey how important they are to you, how much you want to be able to converse easily with them, and that you would like them to enjoy the improved quality of life that better hearing can make possible. Then take his or her response seriously.

We often see cases in which frustration dominates the situation and a family member dealing with a loved one who has hearing loss inadvertently neglects to emphasize that the reason they are trying to encourage them to get help is because they care about him or her. Don't let that happen in your case.

3. Work with an experienced, knowledgeable audiologist who will truly listen to you and your loved one.

Every hearing-impaired individual's potential for improvement is different. An audiologist experienced in helping families with these issues should be able to help you both understand how much improvement can reasonably be expected and also help each of you understand each other. A skillful and caring audiologist can help facilitate a more productive discussion between the hearing impaired individual and family members so that, together, they can agree on a solution that is best for both of them.

At Hearing Center of Long Island, some tools our audiologists use to help families in this situation are:

- **Techniques that demonstrate for the hearing impaired individual and family what the extent of the hearing difficulty is in practical terms.** This includes demonstrations that show an individual in denial about their hearing loss what they are missing when they listen compare to those with normal hearing.

- **Specialized testing to determine how much improvement in hearing ability is really possible.** This includes testing that quantifies how much background noise affects the ability to comprehend speech. Reliable data about what the actual potential for improved hearing is critical for determining realistic expectations and for choosing the most appropriate solutions.
- **Hearing loss simulation to demonstrate for family members how it sounds to have the type of hearing loss their loved one has.** This helps the hearing-impaired family member have an appreciation of the difficulty their loved one faces.
- **Questionnaires designed to clarify the difficulties a family member thinks the individual is having and the difficulties the individual notices him or herself.** With the help of an experienced and empathetic audiologist to guide the conversation, the comparison of the observations of the hearing-impaired person with those of a loved one often helps make the conversation between them much more productive and promotes understanding.
- **Demonstration of the difference between the way the individual has been hearing and the way they would hear with help.** Since hearing loss often develops very gradually, the person with hearing loss is often not the first one to notice it. Having a demonstration of what it sounds like to have hearing correction with customized hearing aids or other assistance can be an enlightening experience.
- **Real-life experience with customized hearing aids that your loved one can wear at home and during all usual activities.** Hearing loss often develops so slowly over time so that the hearing-impaired person is the last one to notice it. Often, having actual real-life experience of improved hearing with properly chosen and customized hearing aids makes it much clearer to the person with hearing loss how much they have been missing and how much better they should be doing. A free, no obligation “test drive” with customized hearing aids allows your loved one to make their own decision about using hearing aids or not based on their own experience and without pressure – rather than basing the decision on advertising hype

or the experience of others whose cases may be very different from their own.

Because communication is the basis of any relationship - and hearing is such an important way of communicating - it can truly be said that "When one family member has a hearing problem, the whole family has a hearing problem." We have found that - with expert and

caring professional guidance - families can successfully overcome the challenges of hearing difficulty and enjoy improved quality of life.

"I could not have asked for a more friendly, knowledgeable and efficient service than that which my mother received at Hearing Center of Long Island. Thank you."

***Dr. Richard M. Halford, M.D.
New York, NY***

If you have any questions or would like to schedule a free consultation with and experience doctor or audiology to discuss your particular concerns, call us at (516) 872-8485 and mention this report. We look forward to hearing from you.

About the Authors



Dr. Lawrence Cardano, Au.D.

Dr. Cardano has devoted over 25 years to improving the quality of life for those with hearing loss. He is director of Hearing Center of Long Island and author of the recently published book "Better Hearing With or Without Hearing Aids" as well as the quarterly newsletter "Long Island Sound". He earned his Master's degree in audiology at Columbia University and his Doctor of Audiology degree from University of Florida and is Board Certified in Audiology. He has helped thousands of individuals and families overcome challenges of hearing difficulty.



Dr. Lorraine Rein, Au.D.

Dr. Rein is a staff audiologist at Hearing Center of Long Island. Her past positions include Clinical Supervisor for Doctoral of Audiology students and Hofstra University and Chief of Audiology at Parker Jewish Institute for Health Care and Rehabilitation. Dr. Rein has also worked for the Long Island Hearing Screening Program, a not for profit organization providing hearing screenings to pre-school age children. Now, she uses her extensive experience and sincere compassion to provide the best solutions for those coping with hearing difficulty. Because she knows firsthand Dr. Rein knows so well how easy it can be for her patients' connections to their friends and loved ones to deteriorate when hearing becomes difficult, she has made it her personal mission to keep everyone connected.

MORE HELP

General questions?

If you have any questions regarding your hearing or that of a loved one, send them to us at the following web page:

<http://HearingCenterofLI.com/questions/>

Want to talk to an expert?

If you would like to schedule a complimentary 15 minute telephone consultation with one of our doctors of audiology to discuss any concerns or questions regarding hearing help for you or a loved one simply call us at 516-872-8485 or send your request by e-mail to info@HearingCenterofLI.com.

Want a personal Communication Enhancement Plan?

If you or loved one would like to get a complimentary personal Communication Assessment and Communication Enhancement Plan, schedule a complimentary consultation at Hearing Center of Long Island with a doctor of audiology. To book your appointment call our office at **516-872-8485** or submit your request for a consultation at the following web page:

<http://HearingCenterofLI.com/appointment/>

Want to experience better hearing with no cost or obligation?

If you or a loved one would like find out if you qualify for an opportunity to experience better hearing with no cost or obligation, ask us about The Hearing Center of Long Island FREE Real-Life Hearing Solution Experience. Just call us at 516-872-8485 and ask about the FREE Real-Life Hearing Solution Experience or send your request by e-mail to info@HearingCenterofLI.com.