

Talking to a Loved One About Their Hearing Loss

When your spouse, parents, or friends are experiencing hearing trouble, it could be you who experiences much of the stress. Many people with hearing loss are content to let their hearing fade for many years before seeking help. However, dealing with a loved one's hearing loss can test your patience and make normal life difficult. It might be time to start encouraging your loved one to seek help for their hearing.

Why Treating Hearing Loss is Important

Hearing loss is relatively common, especially in older adults. The ASHA estimates that about 15% of the US adult population suffers from some form of hearing loss. However, less than 30% of hearing loss sufferers have ever used a hearing aid or sought help for their hearing. Millions of people with untreated hearing impairments live in the US alone.

This is bad for several reasons, as untreated hearing loss has many negative side effects. Even gradual hearing loss can cause major mental and physiological problems. A few of the most common are:

- Depression
- Mood change and irritability
- Loss of memory
- Increased risk of dementia
- Loss of balance and increased risk of vertigo

Fortunately, seeking treatment can significantly reduce or eliminate these risks. People who have sought hearing treatment report thinking more clearly, feeling happier and more energetic, and being more engaged with their loved ones and families.

How to Encourage Someone to Get Help

First, you should talk about how their hearing loss affects your relationship with them. Many people find being the "hearing" member of the relationship stressful and tiring. If you can describe how their hearing loss makes you feel or show them



what effects it's having on you, it might help convince them they should seek help.

Another good tactic is to point out examples of what they aren't hearing when you're together. For instance, if you're watching a movie, having a conversation or even just walking outside, point out what you can hear and ask if they can hear it too. Don't be obnoxious or pushy with this tactic, though. Doing it too often or too condescendingly can make your loved one pull back or create resentment. Instead, simply point out things you think they'd enjoy hearing to help push them in the right direction.

Along with pointing out examples of what they're missing, it also helps to step away from the role of being the "ears" in your relationship. Many people with hearing impairment expect their significant others to pick up the slack from their hearing loss. By moving away from that role, you can show your loved one how much they actually rely on outside help in order to hear and understand. Even a simple change, such as pointing out directly when you're helping them hear something, can make your point clear.

Things You Should Avoid Saying or Doing

One of the most common mistakes people make is getting angry or blaming their partner when they refuse to get hearing help. Unfortunately, placing blame is only going to make them less likely to seek help. Most people need some support to make a change in their life they're not sure about.

Another common mistake is to try to use the features and selling points of hearing aids to convince someone to try them. Most people don't care about features for a device they think they don't need. Instead, try to convince them that a hearing aid will be a personal benefit.

Finally, don't enable your loved one to keep living without a hearing aid. It's not helpful to change your behavior to be more accommodating to someone with hearing loss. A better course of action is to behave like normal and let them realize their hearing problem is their issue, not everyone else's.

Where to go for Hearing Help

While a hearing instrument specialist (HIS) does offer hearing aid fittings and support, they don't offer the same level of care or experience as a licensed audiologist. HISs are generally more salespeople than medical professionals. Their ability to test and diagnose your hearing problems will likely be limited.

Instead, you should seek out a licensed audiologist like the ones at Audio Recovery. An audiologist has the training and experience to diagnose a wide range of hearing problems and recommend the right solutions. An audiologist will deliver the best service and care for your hearing problems every time.

Call Audio Recovery today at 405-949-1906 to schedule an appointment for yourself or a loved one.