

Help your
parents to
be better
listeners

(isn't that ironic?)

The easiest way to deal with hearing loss is head on. You get a hearing evaluation, and you go forward from there.

But let's face it. This isn't about you. It's about your Mom or your Dad, or someone else you care very much about. You may have already tried head on. Yet here you are, still searching for answers.

Stick with us a few minutes. We just may be able to help.

*"how can i be sure
it's hearing loss?"*

*(I mean, besides being able to
hear their tv from a block away.)*

You really can't be 100% certain how profound someone else's hearing loss is until a professional conducts a hearing evaluation. And a lot of people, for whatever reason, feel ashamed at the very idea of having a hearing problem. So even getting a loved one to an evaluation can sometimes be a struggle. (Never mind that it's really no different than getting an eye exam to see if you need glasses to correct a vision problem. We get older. Our bodies change. We're human.)

This is about improving the quality of life for someone you love. If you're suspicious of a hearing loss problem, watch for some of the signs that may be a little less obvious than just being asked to repeat yourself.

- They seem to have trouble with phone conversations, or they try to get off the phone very quickly.
- They withdraw from conversations, even with the family.
- They respond to questions directed at them with odd answers.
- They seem more irritable and shorttempered than in the past; or maybe even depressed.
- They seem to be straining to study your face as you speak.
- They're becoming less social with friends and family.



Okay, so the signs are all there. Now how do I convince them to look into it?

If you don't remember anything else, remember these three words: Understanding. Patience. Persistence.

If your loved one is resistant to even the idea of having a hearing problem, much less wearing a hearing aid, bullying is not going to help.

And they do need your help.

First of all, try to choose a time when there's no rush, and pick a place where it's quiet.

Hearing difficulties are compounded by back-

ground noise. In that same vein, try to make it a one-on-one conversation. Any hard-of-hearing person will have a much easier time understanding what you're saying if there aren't different voices coming at them from different directions. Besides, no one likes to be ganged up on.

Try not to be judgmental. Think concerned, not accusing.

Talk about the things you've noticed that made you think your loved one wasn't hearing as well as before, giving them plenty of chance to respond. Then talk to them about the things they may be missing. Start with the good stuff: a grandchild's stories, Sunday dinner with the family, even waves breaking at the beach or rain cascading off the roof during a summer storm.



Waves at the beach are one thing, but shouldn't I be worried about safety?

It's perfectly fine to bring up some of the dangers of hearing loss. They're very real. Especially if your loved one drives.

If your mom or dad can't hear a knock on the door or their doorbell, they could miss being alerted to a nearby fire. And a safe walk around the neighborhood includes being able to hear when a car is coming.

Just realize that getting people to accept that they need to do something about hearing loss is a process, and it may take time. Your loved one has to take action because they want to, not because you've pressured them. It has to be their decision. Remember: Understanding. Patience. Persistence.



My dad's really worried about looking old. Who's going to blame him for that?

We live in a youth-oriented world. No one's going to deny that. The great news is, digital technology has dramatically brought down the size of many hearing aids. So those concerned with looking old can be helped by hearing aids that fit completely into the ear canal, and can only be seen on very close inspection. Even for those who need larger hearing aids because their loss is more profound, the question becomes: Which makes you look older? Wearing a hearing aid? Or answering questions inappropriately because you heard wrong?

Mom says they can't afford hearing aids, and I've heard they can be expensive. How do I respond?

They're an investment that will pay dividends to your loved one (and you, for that matter) for years to come.



What if dad doesn't like his hearing aids once he gets them? Does that mean he's wasted his money?

If something doesn't seem right, you and your parents should know that there could be any number of things going on that are easily corrected.

First on that list: It takes time to get used to a hearing aid. For most people, it helps if they begin by wearing them for short periods - even as little as 15 minutes - and gradually add wearing time. This is no different than the adjustment time for contact lenses in the beginning. Your hearing healthcare professional will design a schedule tailored just for the new wearer.

Second, many problems can be fixed as easily as having the wearer explain the problem to the hearing healthcare professional and letting them make minor, on-the-spot adjustments. Even if there are repairs that require returning the hearing aid to the manufacturer, in most cases, it's back in the owner's hands within three days.

And finally, there are so many different types and models of hearing aids, it's usually just a matter of working with the hearing healthcare professional to find the right one.

Remember: Understanding. Patience. Persistence. It worked for you. It can work for your loved one, too.

Founded in Germany in 1962, Interton today is part of one of the world's largest hearing aid organizations, the GN Group. We use their proven core technology in a way that falls in line with our own way of doing things. We believe that most people need a straightforward, functional and easy-to-use hearing solution at a fair price. So that's what we give them.

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