

Partnering for Great Hearing Care



A guide for people with
hearing loss and professionals



Introduction

Great hearing care is only possible when the person with hearing loss and their hearing care professional trust each other and work together. When this happens, they can build a strong partnership that leads to better outcomes for both the person with hearing loss and the clinician.

There are four key building blocks in this partnership:

- Build trust
- Connect as people
- Be an active partner
- Invite family and friends



On the next pages, you'll find practical tips for how to put each of these into action, whether you're a hearing care professional or someone with hearing loss.

To learn more about the importance of a good hearing care partnership and these building blocks, take a look at the [interactive version of this guide](#), where you'll meet Peter, who has hearing loss, and his audiologist Sara.



Build trust

If you have hearing loss

- Come prepared to communicate your hopes, fears, and expectations around your hearing. Make sure to explain what is most important to you.
- Be open and honest about yourself and your hearing strengths and difficulties.
- Be upfront about your budget if paying for devices and services.
- Ask for a written summary of the visit that you can share with your loved ones.

If you're a clinician

- Help your clients prepare for their appointments beforehand and invite the client and family to share their expectations and priorities at the start of the appointment.
- Listen actively and without interruption. When making notes on your computer, explain to the client what you are writing.
- Ask questions to clarify and understand the client's communication needs in detail.
- Summarize their priorities to confirm that you have understood correctly and offer a written summary of the diagnosis and visit that can be shared with loved ones.
- Offer a menu of both technological and non-technological solutions as part of your treatment options.
- Offer clear information about your pricing structure and consider unbundling your costs.
- Be accessible by responding to emails, phone calls, and messages in a timely fashion.





Connect as people

If you have hearing loss

- Be prepared to share details about your daily life and unique circumstances, for example, the people you talk to most, your workplace, and your hobbies and social life. Good hearing care relies on more than just technological devices and it requires a detailed understanding of your daily life.
- Connect with your audiologist as a person. Respect and make the best use of your audiologist's training and expertise, while recognizing that they are human too!
- Bring your sense of humor. Keeping a lighthearted attitude can go a long way toward building a successful partnership.

If you're a clinician

- Show compassion and express empathy to make each client feel valued.
- Ask open-ended questions to understand individual preferences and needs.
- Ask about and remember small but personal details such as a client's birthday, a visiting grandchild, or an upcoming vacation.
- Offer regular opportunities for your client to discuss the impact their hearing loss has on their life, and respond with compassion.
- Acknowledge that your client is an expert about him/herself and treat your client like a teammate.





Be an active partner

If you have hearing loss

- If your professional uses language you don't understand, ask them to repeat or to explain it another way.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions.
- Explain to your professional how you would define a successful outcome – for example, what activities would you like to participate in?
- Communicate your feelings. They are as important as your physical hearing condition.
- Ask for instructions to be provided in a format that best suits your learning style. This could be writing, pictures, or videos.
- When you receive excellent care, let the clinic owner or senior manager know. When you have concerns about your care, let your professional know in the moment.
- Complete patient satisfaction surveys honestly and constructively. Take time to answer open-ended questions.



If you're a clinician

- Ask how your client best receives information and act on this when possible, e.g. writing, pictures, videos.
- Never make decisions on behalf of your client. Communicate all the different treatment options, provide your professional opinion, and then make a joint decision about next steps.
- Ensure your website and social media pages contain resources and information to support your clients in self-managing their hearing condition.
- Invite feedback by routinely sending out patient satisfaction surveys.





Invite family and friends

If you have hearing loss

- Invite a family member or a friend to your appointments to provide support and to be an extra set of ears and eyes.
- Involve your family when preparing for your appointment. Ask for their perspective and note it down to share it with your professional. Use the opportunity to talk to your family about your hearing loss.
- Explain to your friends or family what your hearing condition is like. Since it can be difficult to understand for people who have not experienced it, you could consider asking them to wear earplugs in a safe setting so they can experience a little of what it's like to have hearing difficulties.
- Ask for your family or friend to be included when instructions are being conveyed, if you think that this might be helpful. For example, when being shown how to insert your hearing instrument, change the battery, or replace a wax filter.

If you're a clinician

- Make it a standard practice in your clinic to invite a family member or friend to client appointments and train all team members to explain why bringing someone can be important and beneficial.
- Give dedicated talk time to both client and companions, refer to information shared from both parties, and provide reading material on communication strategies for companions to read while testing is in progress.
- Provide opportunities to both parties to respond, ask questions, and discuss options, and ask your client and their friend or family member about their thoughts.
- Highlight communication strategies for communication partners and ask the companion to also make observations before the next appointment.
- Be mindful of your client's wishes and respect their decision if they prefer not to bring someone.
- Offer online appointments where helpful and make sure these are captioned.





Something extra

We hope you enjoyed these practical hints and tips for building successful partnerships with your hearing care professional or clients.

On the next pages, you'll find some additional links and resources that might be useful to further support your hearing care journey.





For people with hearing loss and their families

The resources below can help you support yourself to live well with hearing loss. Why not have a look and share them with family, friends, or your hearing care professional? If you're a clinician, consider sharing the resources with your clients that are relevant to them.

- [Getting ready for a hearing care appointment](#)
Online questionnaires to help you organize your thoughts and concerns
- [Everyday life with hearing loss](#)
Practical things you can do to make it easier to communicate in daily life
- [Communication tips when using face masks](#)
Practical things others can do when wearing a mask to communicate clearly
- [Manage your tinnitus](#)
Resources to learn about tinnitus and to communicate how you're feeling to your hearing care professional
- [Hearing loss stories](#)
Videos of people with hearing loss sharing their experiences
- [We're all ears](#)
Tips on helping your provider better manage your hearing loss
- [Mayo Connect](#)
Online community for anyone with hearing loss
- [Ideas Worth Hearing](#)
Practical suggestions for how you can raise awareness of hearing loss in your community

Ask your professional for contact details of a local hearing loss support group and note it down here:



Name of organization and contact person:



Contact phone number or email address:



For children, teens, and tweens with hearing loss

We've got resources for children and young people with hearing loss and their families too. These can help you prepare for appointments, organize and express your thoughts and concerns, and manage key transitions.

- [Getting ready for a hearing care appointment](#)
Online questionnaires to help teens and tweens organize their thoughts and concerns
- [My Turn to Talk for Parents](#)
Online questionnaire to help parents prepare for their child's appointment
- [Growing Up with Hearing Loss](#)
An interactive platform with checklists, videos, and questionnaires to help children aged 0-18 and their families manage key transitions
- [My World](#)
A board-game style tool for professionals, parents or teachers to help children talk about their hearing loss

Ask your professional for contact details of a local support group for children with hearing loss and/or their families, and note it down here:



Name of organization and contact person:



Contact phone number or email address:



For hearing care professionals

It's often the small things that can make a big difference in making someone with hearing loss feel understood and appreciated at their hearing care appointments. Here are some further practical suggestions that can help your clients feel welcome and ready to start on their hearing care journey with you.

- [How to make your clinic hearing loss friendly](#)
Top tips from someone with hearing loss
- [Tips to support patients in the clinic](#)
Practical suggestions from a patient's perspective
- [How to improve your clinic's marketing](#)
Tips from a patient on how to make your advertising more honest, realistic, and informative
- [Ideas Worth Hearing](#)
Practical suggestions for how you can raise awareness of hearing loss in your community
- [Online Clinician Well-being course](#)
Practicing self-care is vital if you want to provide the best care to your clients long term. Check out our free course on clinician well-being

To create a hearing loss friendly clinic, consider incorporating some of the ideas below.

Ensure everyone in your office has received training in deaf awareness, the use of clear speech, and person-centred care, for example, through the [Ida Institute's free online courses](#)

If your clinic is Inspired by Ida, display the badge in your clinic rooms and on your website, and share your commitment to person-centred care with your clients, for example, by writing an article in the local newspaper or share on your clinic's social media pages.

Install a loop system or use a pocket talker device at the reception desk.

Provide speech to text support via apps like NALscribe, Otter orAVA.

Facilitate a quiet office atmosphere with good lighting and soft furnishings for optimal acoustics and speech reading.

Alert your clients personally when the professional is ready for them. Even in a small office, clients may have difficulty hearing if their name is called. Let them know you will tap them on the arm when it is their turn to see the audiologist so they can relax while waiting. In a larger office, a text message or email alert could also suffice.

Make your reception area a space for clients to learn, interact, and prepare for appointments:

- Share relevant literature in your waiting area.
- Provide information and brochures from local hearing loss support groups and recommend these to your clients.

Here's to building a great hearing care partnership!

Find more resources for professionals and people with hearing loss on the [Ida Institute](#) website. Or connect with us via [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#).

We would like to thank the people and organizations below for their valuable insights, support, and feedback during the development of this resource and the accompanying animated guide:

Darcy Benson

Sophie Brice

Tim Browning

Priya Carling

Shari Eberts

Bridgitte Harley

Christine Ann Hunter

Silva Kuschke

Dana Sunderland

Linda Parton

Stephanus Petrus du Toit

American Speech-Language Hearing Association

British Academy of Audiology

British Society of Audiology

Canadian Academy of Audiology

Canadian Hard of Hearing Association

Hearing Loss Association of America

Hearing Matters Australia

Mayo Connect

Royal National Institute for Deaf People

Soundfair



idainstitute

Egebaekvej 98C
DK-2850 Naerum
Denmark

Telephone +45 7022 7217

Email contact@idainstitute.dk

Visit us www.idainstitute.com