

QUICK START GUIDE: SESSION TWO TOPICS

The main goal of the second session is to acquaint participants with communication strategies that they can use with family members, friends, coworkers and anyone else they interact with in their daily lives.

Follow-Up On Last Session

You can start the session by addressing questions and interests identified at the first session. You can do this by providing information, Internet resources, brief PowerPoint lectures, etc.

For example, if attendees would like to know more about tinnitus, you might explain the various causes of tinnitus, different treatment options and potential outcomes. You may also want to tell them about useful online references such as the [American Tinnitus Association](#), which offers tips for managing tinnitus, treatment information, frequently-asked questions, tinnitus research, and news and publications regarding tinnitus.

Communication Strategies

It is important for all participants, including spouses, to learn strategies that will make most of their communication situations much easier.

Many people who do not hear part or all of what a communication partner said to them will respond simply with “huh” or “what was that?” This type of response does not inform the speaker as to why they were not understood.

Speakers often speak too softly, cover their mouths, turn their heads away or speak too quickly, making it difficult for someone with hearing loss to comprehend the words. If a person cannot understand what is spoken, and responds to the speaker by saying, “I didn’t get what you said,” the speaker will remain clueless as to why the other person did not understand what they said.

It is important for the participants to understand that they should explain to the speaker why it was difficult to understand them. By providing these helpful hints in a response, the communication partner can modify their behavior and work towards improving the lines of communication.

You can begin by providing the following examples of helpful and unhelpful responses:

Unhelpful Responses:

- What did you say?
- Huh?
- I didn't get what you said.
- Eh?

Helpful Responses:

- Could you say that a bit more slowly?
- I didn't understand. It helps if I can see your lips.
- Please speak a little bit louder.
- Please face me when you're speaking.
- I didn't get the last part of what you said.

It Takes Two to Tango

In your role as the facilitator, make it clear to the group that it takes two to tango! Both people are responsible for improving communication situations. The communication partner is often the principal determinant as to whether communication breakdowns are successfully managed.

Toward the end of Session Two, you may want to offer some general tips to improve communication. These might include:

- If you don't understand, ask for clarification.
- Watch the speaker.
- Place yourself at a good distance, not too close and not too far.
- Be assertive (but not bossy).
- Don't blame people for not speaking clearly. Coach them in a way that will make them happy to accommodate your listening needs.