

QUICK START GUIDE: SESSION SIX TOPICS

You can use the sixth session to focus on various types of technology beyond hearing aids and cochlear implants that can help persons with hearing loss improve their quality of life.

Why do I need more Technology?

Hearing aids and/or cochlear implants help people with hearing loss but there are situations where other types of technology may be useful.

For example, hearing aids do not always work well in adverse situations, such as:

- Listening to someone at a distance
- Listening in a noisy environment
- Listening in a room with reverberation

Some types of Hearing Assistive Technology (HAT) help with difficult listening situations and others are essential for your safety and can protect your hearing.

What Kind of Hearing Assistive Technology is Available?

Give participants a sense of the assistive technology available at various public locations. Try to use local examples whenever possible, such as an overview of the technology available at the local movie theater.

- Alerting and warning devices can help you hear doorbells, telephones, smoke and carbon monoxide detectors alarms, alarm clocks, etc.
- Telecommunication devices can enable you to be aware of and understand telephone calls more easily.
- Assistive listening devices can enable you to hear what people are saying, e.g., conversations, lectures, television, etc.

What Types of Assistive Listening Devices are Available?

- Infrared systems are available that can help you hear the television better. They can also help you in large spaces such as halls and movie theaters. With an infrared system, sound from the TV is transmitted using infrared light waves. Watching television with other people can be more enjoyable, since this allows the television to be set to a volume comfortable for other viewers with normal hearing.
- FM radio systems can be described as miniature radio stations that operate on special frequencies. Personal FM systems can be useful in many different situations. They can help you hear in noisy places such as restaurants, as well as enable you to hear lectures, meetings, and group activities with less difficulty. FM systems are used more and more in public spaces such as theaters, places of worship, museums and other community buildings.
- Induction loops and telecoils can help you hear significantly better with your hearing aids and/or cochlear implants at places of worship, performance halls, group meetings, etc. An induction loop systems works together with your hearing aid. It will allow you to hear the sounds that are being spoken directly into a particular microphone. Many hearing aids have a particular setting that will allow you to pick up the telecoil signal.
- Hard-wired devices consist of an amplifier and a headset, and may be used by themselves, or connected to your hearing aids or cochlear implants via a personal neck loop. Hard-wired devices include a number of hearing assistive devices such as alarm clocks, fire alarms, listening devices, personal desk top sound systems, etc.

If possible, it is a good idea to have assistive listening devices available for participants to examine. In lieu of trying out the devices, or to add to the discussion, you can use videos to demonstrate the many uses of assistive listening devices. One good video is from the Deaf Action Center in Texas called Solutions for People With Hearing Loss In Career And Educational Environments DVD.

Another helpful way to inform group participants about hearing technology is to provide them with relevant websites, such as:

- American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, Hearing Assistive
- Technology
- Harris Communications
- Beyond Hearing Aids