



THE UNIVERSITY  
OF QUEENSLAND  
AUSTRALIA



# ACE Your Hearing

*Hear Better, Connect More*

Active Communication Education Version 2

**People with Hearing Loss  
Workbook**

## **What is *ACE Your Hearing*?**

*ACE Your Hearing* is an updated version of a program that was originally released in 2001 called the Active Communication Education (ACE) program, made for adults with age-related hearing loss and their families and friends. The ACE Your Hearing program has been created to help you with everyday hearing and communication challenges, to keep you connected to your family, friends and community. It's all about helping you to hear better, as well as helping you to discuss how hearing loss can make you and others around you feel. *ACE Your Hearing* is designed to be a fun and interactive program. It works best in group settings where you can join in with others who understand what it's like to live with hearing loss.

During the group chats and activities, you don't just listen; you get to talk, share your stories, and learn from each other. Everyone has different tips and tricks for dealing with hearing challenges, and by sharing these experiences, you can pick up new ways to make your daily life easier. Plus, meeting and talking with others in the group helps you make new friends and feel more connected. It's all about learning together and enjoying the company of people who understand exactly what you're going through. If attending a group isn't possible or isn't your preference, don't worry – you can still discuss all the activities in this workbook and learn the important information one-on-one with your hearing professional, ensuring you don't miss out.

## Who can benefit from *ACE Your Hearing*?

*ACE Your Hearing* is a helpful program for all adults who have trouble hearing, regardless of the type of hearing loss you have. It's good for you whether you wear hearing aids or not, or even if you just found out about your hearing loss and haven't decided on your preferred management options yet. And it's not just for you - your family and friends can learn from it too. Together we will learn easy ways to communicate better with each other and share tips to make hearing and understanding easier. Everyone can be more connected with *ACE Your Hearing*, no matter how long you've been dealing with hearing loss or how you have chosen to manage it.

Why do we specifically include family and friends? Research shows that people with hearing difficulties are at an increased risk of social withdrawal and emotional distress, but so too are their family and close friends. This is often referred to as “third party disability”, where both the person with hearing loss and the people they love feel a reduction in the quality of their social interactions and wellbeing due to the hearing difficulties.



People new to hearing aids



People already using hearing aids



People who do not use hearing aids



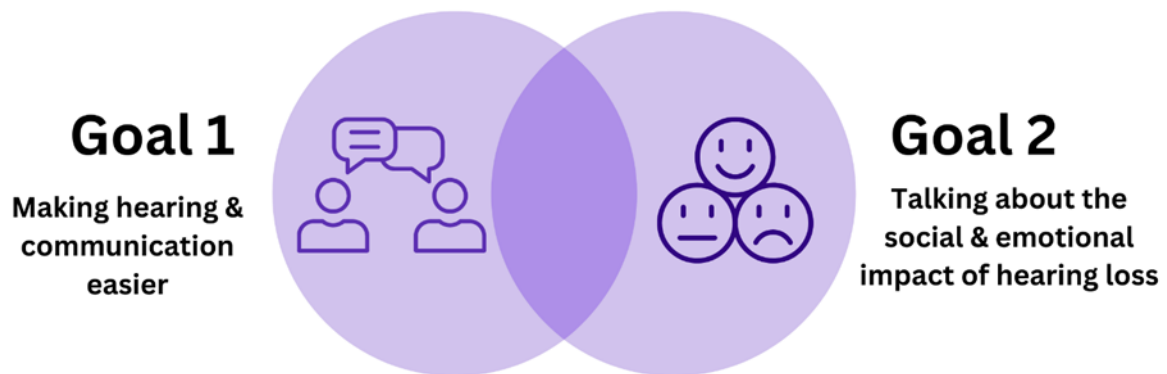
Family and friends of people with hearing loss

This is why it is important for the family and friends of people with hearing difficulties to be a good support, but to also learn how to understand and support their own needs to make sure the whole family is happy and healthy.

It's vital for family and friends to grasp the full impact of hearing loss, as research reveals they too are at risk of challenges like social isolation, emotional decline and depression. Hearing loss is not just an individual concern but a family and social issue, demanding a collective response to foster a deeper understanding of living with hearing loss, improving communication within the relationship, and facilitating open discussions about the mutual effects of hearing loss. Everyone can be more connected with *ACE Your Hearing*, no matter how long you've been living with hearing loss in your family members and/or social groups.

### **What are the goals of *ACE Your Hearing*?**

In *ACE Your Hearing*, we care about helping you communicate better, hear better and making sure you feel more in control of your hearing. To achieve this, the program has two main goals that overlap:



- 1. *Making Hearing & Communication Easier*:** The first goal is to enhance both your communication skills and your ability to hear better in daily life. We focus on improving your ability to hear in different situations by using practical skills such as adjusting your position or environment, noting down key points, and interpreting body language more effectively.

You'll learn strategies to clearly express your needs and manage conversations in noisy settings without relying solely on your hearing or hearing aids. Our comprehensive approach is designed to boost your confidence and enjoyment in communicating, whether you're navigating a bustling cafe or enjoying quiet time at home with family.

- 2. *Talking About the Social and Emotional Impact of Hearing Loss:*** The second goal is about understanding the impact of hearing loss on your feelings, social interactions, and relationships. We gently mix these talks into our communication lessons to learn better ways to manage these concerns. This means that while you learn about hearing better, you also discover ways to manage the social consequences of hearing loss that include ensuring you don't feel left out of conversations. Our group chats and activities are a safe place to share your stories and learn from others. This helps everyone feel better and more connected.

### **Who was involved in the creation of *ACE Your Hearing*?**

*ACE Your Hearing* was made with help from lots of different people, including older adults who have hearing loss, their families, hearing experts, hearing business managers and owners, community organisations representatives and university researchers who have experience in hearing healthcare, communication, and social and emotional health. Everyone worked together as collectively as a team. This way of working and creating is called 'co-design'. It means everyone's ideas are important and used together to ensure the program that better suits the needs of all people who will use and access *ACE Your Hearing*. People with hearing loss and their families told us about what it's really like to live with hearing loss and where they needed most help in relation

to their communication and social interactions. This helped make *ACE Your Hearing* useful for everyday life. It's not just about the science of hearing, but also about how hearing loss makes you feel and affects your life with friends and family. So, *ACE Your Hearing* is a program made with care, listening to real stories, and thinking about what you really need.

## The *ACE Your Hearing* Co-design Team



## 1. The Core Modules



**Core Module 1:** Introduction & Preparation



**Core Module 2:** Introduction to Common Challenging Environments

After finishing the core modules, proceed to the optional **Pick-and-Choose** modules as guided by your Communication Needs Analysis results in the preparation step.

## 2. Pick-and-Choose (P&C) Modules



**P&C Module 1:** Conversation around the home.



**P&C Module 2:** Enhancing conversations with diverse speakers



**P&C Module 3:** Tuning in to Technology - TV, Phones, Computers and Public Address Systems



**P&C Module 4:** Communication Strategies to Support Hearing Aid Use



**P&C Module 5:** Wellbeing with Hearing Loss



**Extension Module:** Revision and reflection

**Note.** The extension module should only be offered if completing the full 4-session program format, once all prior content modules have been completed.

*All Pick-and-Choose Modules include self-guided reading and activities. So, if you're unable to cover all the modules during your sessions, you can explore these vital topics at home.*

**All modules include discussions on the social and emotional impact of hearing loss.**



## Core Module 1: Introduction and Preparation

Welcome to **Core Module 1: Introduction and Preparation**, the essential foundation of our program, this module sets the stage for everything that follows by starting with group rules and introductions to create a welcoming and supportive environment. You will explore the varied impacts of hearing loss and learn about the strategies used throughout the program to address these challenges. This module is crucial as it provides the groundwork for understanding the impacts of hearing loss and equips you with practical tools. It concludes with a Communication Needs Analysis to assess your group's specific needs and determine which Pick-and-Choose modules will be covered.

### Activities in this module:

1. Group rules
2. All about me introductions
3. My feelings of hearing loss
4. My communication difficulties
5. Core communication skills and strategies
6. SPOT the problem
7. Communication needs analysis



# GROUP RULES

---

## ***Respect:***

01

- Valuing the diverse experiences and perspectives of all participants.
  - Listening attentively when others are speaking and refraining from interrupting others while they are speaking.
- 

## ***Confidentiality:***

02

- Group members must not share any names or identifying information about other participants outside of the group.
  - Personal experiences, feelings and stories shared during group sessions should remain within the group and not be disclosed to others.
- 

## ***Active Participation & Supportive Discussion:***

03

- Each member is encouraged to engage fully in activities and discussions, sharing their experiences and insights.
  - It's important to listen actively to others and contribute positively to the conversation.
- 

## ***Time is tight! Stay on task:***

04

- To make the most of our time together, it's important to stay focused on the topic of hearing loss and its impact.
- Please keep discussions relevant to the content we are covering and avoid going off topic.

Activity: Introductions

# Extra! Extra!

1. My name is  
.....



2. My experience with hearing loss.

- I have a hearing loss.
- I use hearing aids.
- I do not use hearing aids.



3. Pick **ONE** thing from the areas below to share with your group.

A bit about my social or community activities:

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

My favourite activities, hobbies or fun things to do:

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

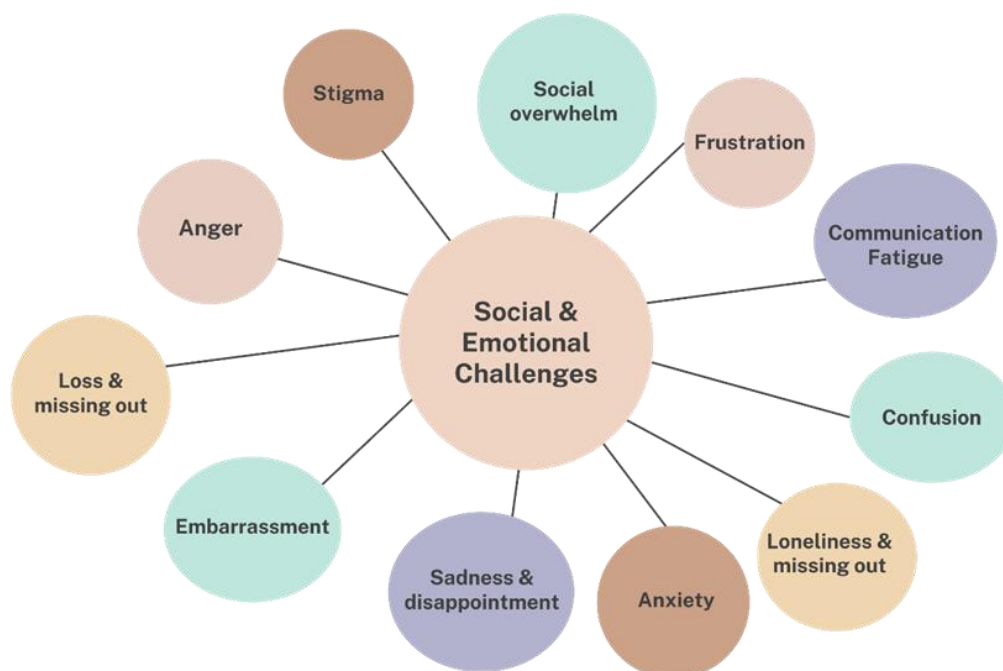


## How does hearing loss affect communication, and social and emotional wellbeing?

Hearing loss can impact not only how we connect with others but also our emotional and social wellbeing. When it becomes difficult to hear, everyday conversations and interactions can turn into a challenge, leading to misunderstandings and frustration. This can make social gatherings daunting, as struggling to keep up with discussions may cause withdrawal and a sense of isolation. The emotional toll is often an invisible burden, with individuals experiencing a range of feelings from embarrassment to sadness.

Acknowledging these difficulties is the first step in addressing them, which is why programs like *ACE Your Hearing* are important. They offer strategies to improve communication and support the overall wellbeing of those with hearing loss, ensuring that individuals can continue to engage with their world confidently and joyfully.

***Here are some of the challenging feelings linked with hearing loss:***



## Activity: My feelings of hearing loss

Which of these feelings, or other challenges, do you feel you have experienced because of your hearing loss?

.....  
.....  
.....

These feelings not only affect the person with hearing loss, but also the people around them. Do you think your family and friends have experienced any of these feelings, or other challenges, because of your hearing loss too?

.....  
.....  
.....



*This is a very brief introduction to talking about how hearing loss can affect your feelings. We will talk about this more in the modules to come.*

## What do we mean by ‘communication’?

What does 'communication' mean? Communication is when we share information and ideas with each other. It's not just about the words we say or hear. It also includes other ways we show what we mean, like waving our hands, nodding our heads, or facial expressions. Good communication happens when we combine talking and listening with these other signals, so everyone understands each other well. Communication is about:

- The words we use when we talk or write.
- The way our voice sounds when we say something.
- Listening carefully and responding.
- Using body language like hand waves, head nods, and facial expressions.

### Activity: My communication difficulties

Common Communication Difficulties	What this might look like:	Have you experienced any of these? Tick the box:
Difficulty Following Conversations	Struggling to keep up with fast-paced or group discussions	<input type="checkbox"/>
Misunderstanding Words	Confusing similar-sounding words & hearing the wrong one	<input type="checkbox"/>
Volume Misjudgment	Speaking too loudly or too softly	<input type="checkbox"/>
Missing Subtle Sound Cues	Difficulty picking up on the tone of a persons' voice, or other subtle voice cues.	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Core Communication Skills and Strategies

In your *ACE Your Hearing* workbook, you'll see that there are some vital skills that we call 'Core Communication Skills and Strategies.' These are special tricks and tips that help you to communicate your needs and listen better in your everyday life. We talk about things like how to ask someone to say something again if you didn't hear it the first time, or how to let people know what you need to make hearing easier.

### CORE COMMUNICATION SKILLS & STRATEGIES



#### REQUESTING CLARIFICATION

1. Verbal clarification
2. Visual cues
3. Key information focus

“Did you say that I owe you...”



#### USING COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

1. Enhancing audibility
2. Strategic positioning
3. Simplifying conversation

“Could you please speak a little slower?”



#### ADVOCATING FOR MY COMMUNICATION NEEDS

1. Disclosing your hearing loss
2. Modifying the environment
3. Preparation and anticipation

“I am having trouble hearing. Could we step outside?”

<b>Core Communication Skills &amp; Strategies</b>		
<b>Requesting clarification</b>	1. Verbal clarification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ask for a repeat: "Can you say that again, please?"</li> <li>- Confirm understanding: "Did you say [what you thought you heard]?"</li> <li>- Request a rephrase: "Could you say it differently?"</li> </ul>
	2. Visual cues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gesture and mime: Use hand signals or body language.</li> <li>- Show numbers: Indicate numbers with fingers.</li> <li>- Writing: Jot down words or phrases for clarity.</li> </ul>
	3. Key information focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Key words: "Just tell me the main point."</li> <li>- Spell it out: "Could you spell the important word/phrase?"</li> </ul>
<b>Using communication strategies</b>	4. Enhancing audibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ask the speaker to talk louder.</li> <li>- Request the speaker to slow down.</li> <li>- Use assistive listening devices/technology.</li> </ul>
	5. Strategic positioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Position your better-hearing ear towards the speaker.</li> <li>- Position yourself face-to-face with your conversation partner to help with lip reading and understanding facial expressions, gestures, and body language.</li> <li>- Arrive early to meetings to sit closer to the speaker.</li> </ul>
	6. Simplifying conversation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Confirm as you go: "Did you say...?"</li> <li>- Ask questions with limited answers (e.g., yes/no, choices of days).</li> <li>- Use reminder gestures with familiar people (e.g., hand palm down to signal 'slow down').</li> </ul>
<b>Advocating for my communication needs</b>	7. Disclosing your hearing loss & ways to help you	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Be willing to admit to a hearing problem.</li> <li>- Be willing to explain the problem to other people.</li> <li>- Be able to suggest ways they can help (e.g., speak clearly facing me, one person at a time).</li> </ul>
	8. Modifying the communication environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adjust positions for better interaction (move closer, face each other).</li> <li>- Alter the surroundings to reduce noise (close windows, move to a quieter place).</li> <li>- In groups, request visual cues for the speaker (raise hand) and minimise cross-talk.</li> <li>- Utilise technologies that can assist (e.g., close captioning on the TV)</li> </ul>
	9. Preparation and anticipation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Request information in advance (meeting agenda, written treatment details).</li> </ul>

## Being Assertive

Being assertive is essential when using communication strategies, especially if you have hearing difficulties. Often, people with hearing difficulties may feel inclined to hide their difficulties, which can lead to misunderstandings.

Assertiveness involves openly acknowledging your hearing loss and clearly stating your needs in a positive and constructive manner. For instance, you could say, "I'm sorry, I didn't catch that due to my hearing loss. Could you please speak a bit slower?" This approach is not about being aggressive; it's about being direct and respectful, ensuring you convey your needs while also being empathetic. By being assertive, you help others understand how best to communicate with you, which is crucial for effective interactions.

### Assertiveness tips:

1. **Use "I" statements:** Express yourself by starting sentences with "I" to avoid sounding accusatory and to take ownership of your emotions. E.g., "I have a hearing loss and I didn't catch what you said."
2. **Be clear and direct:** Communicate your needs and thoughts succinctly to avoid misunderstandings.
3. **Maintain a calm tone:** Keep your voice calm and steady, which helps in keeping discussions constructive, even during disagreements.
4. **Express understanding:** Before presenting your point of view or needs, start by acknowledging the other person's position. This does not mean you have to agree with them, but shows respect for their position.

## SPOT The Problem

The *ACE Your Hearing* program uses the 'SPOT The Problem' framework, a simple problem-solving process that helps participants tackle communication challenges in their daily lives. This approach guides individuals to think systematically about communication issues and find solutions. At the start of each activity, participants work through the SPOT steps: identifying the setting, pinpointing problems, exploring options, and planning to test their effectiveness. The goal is not just to solve immediate problems but to teach participants a way of thinking they can use in any setting.

	<b>S = Setting</b>	
<p>Identify the <b>who</b> and <b>where</b> of the situation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• who is involved in this conversation? e.g., my spouse, my grandchild, the bank teller.</li><li>• where is this conversation taking place? e.g., in the kitchen, in the park, in a cafe.</li></ul>		
	<b>P = Problems</b>	
<p>What are the problems and challenges in this particular conversation or situation? e.g., traffic noise outside the window, the coffee machine at a café, windy conditions in the park.</p>		
	<b>O = Options</b>	
<p>List the various options for actions you could try to fix the challenges. Remember the Core Communication Skills and Strategies e.g., closing a window to block traffic noise, moving position at the dining table.</p>		
	<b>T = Test</b>	
<p>After trying out your options, evaluate the effectiveness of the actions you used. Did they help improve communication and hearing in the situation? Reflect on what worked well and what could be adjusted for better results in the future.</p>		

This problem-solving approach is vital because it gives you a clear way to think through and tackle the communication challenges you face every day. It's like having a set of tools you can use anytime to make conversations clearer and less stressful. By learning this process in our sessions, you'll be able to use it in other parts of your life too, making every chat and catch-up a better experience.

### SPOT THE PROBLEM: ACTIVITY SHEET

**Note:** There is a **SPOT the Problem** Activity Worksheet contained within each module to guide you on how to use this process.

SETTING	
S	Who:
	Where:
PROBLEMS	
P	
OPTIONS	
O	
TEST	
T	



Activity: Communication needs analysis

# Brainstorm Now.

*"What talking and hearing difficulties do you experience in everyday life as a result of your hearing loss?"*

Six yellow sticky notes with horizontal lines, arranged in a scattered pattern. Each note is attached to a pink rectangular tab at the top. The notes are intended for users to write down their answers to the question in the speech bubble above.

## Core Module 2: Introduction to common challenging environments

Welcome to **Core Module 2: Introduction to common challenging environments**. This module will help you learn how to communicate better in noisy and busy places. By the end of this module, you will know how to handle different challenging environments and use strategies to improve your communication skills. You will build on this information in the next modules.

### Activities in this module:

Scenario 1: Backyard BBQ

Scenario 2: A busy café

Scenario 3: Visual distractions at the dinner table



## Introduction to Noisy and Group Environments

Everyone has trouble communicating in noisy and group environments, however, people with a hearing loss have more difficulty distinguishing speech sounds from other noises. Noisy environments can include restaurants, cars/public transport, shopping centres, parks, windy areas, and busy social settings. Noises can come from many sources, including talking, laughing, footsteps, moving chairs, animals, food preparation, music & traffic sounds.

### Tips for noisy environments



#### Observe

Watch people's gestures and mouth movements.

Look at facial expressions to help understand meaning and mood.



#### Change positioning

Move closer to your communication partner.

Face the person you are talking to.



#### Give clear suggestions for help

Ask the other person to speak a little louder and slower.

Ask the other person to use a technology support.



#### Change the environment

Move somewhere that is quieter if you can.

## Challenges hearing in group situations

Group situations can be particularly challenging for people with hearing loss due to:

1. Multiple people speaking at the same time
2. Rapid shifts from one speaker to another
3. Frequent changes in conversation topics

## Strategies for managing group situations



### Signal the speaker

If you know the group well, request that members signal with a finger before speaking so you know where to focus your attention.



### Designate a helper person

Designate someone to inform you when the speaker changes, the topic changes and what the new topic is.



### Think about position

Can you move closer to the front of a group presentation? Test whether sitting in the centre of the dining table or head of the table is better for you.



### Prepare & plan

For formal gatherings, such as meetings, ask for the agenda, or notes from the previous meeting in advance so you can prepare.






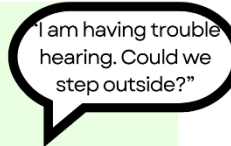
## Scenario 1: Backyard barbeque

Joe is hosting a backyard barbeque to celebrate his birthday. His three children and their families have all come and are enjoying the nice spring weather outside. The family have gone to a lot of effort to make it a great party; putting up fairy lights and setting up outside speakers for the music. Joe is seated near the barbeque and his grandson is standing next to him, telling him about his new job. But Joe can't hear him well.



Reflect on the **Core Communication Skills and Strategies**, and then complete the **SPOT The Problem: Activity Sheet** on the next page.

### CORE COMMUNICATION SKILLS & STRATEGIES

	<b>REQUESTING CLARIFICATION</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Verbal clarification</li><li>2. Visual cues</li><li>3. Key information focus</li></ol>	
	<b>USING COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Enhancing audibility</li><li>2. Strategic positioning</li><li>3. Simplifying conversation</li></ol>	
	<b>ADVOCATING FOR MY COMMUNICATION NEEDS</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Disclosing your hearing loss</li><li>2. Modifying the environment</li><li>3. Preparation and anticipation</li></ol>	



# SPOT THE PROBLEM: ACTIVITY SHEET

## SETTING



Who:

Where:

## PROBLEMS



## OPTIONS



## TEST



Can you SPOT the problem?



Can you SPOT your options?

**Take a moment to write some notes to the activities below,  
then discuss in your group.**

**Activity 1:** How might Joe have felt in this scenario when he couldn't hear what his grandson was saying?

.....  
.....  
.....

**Activity 2:** How might the grandson have felt when Joe couldn't hear what he was trying to tell him?

.....  
.....  
.....

**Activity 3:** Would the solutions you identified help to improve the emotional and social experience of both Joe and his grandson? Why/why not?

.....  
.....  
.....






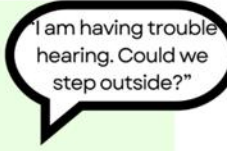
## Scenario 2: A busy cafe

You are at a café, having lunch with your partner and three other friends. After your meal, the waiter comes to ask how you would like to pay. Your group requested separate bills and the waiter is telling each of you your totals. You did not hear how much the staff member said you owed as the café is very noisy and the coffee machine nearby is making it very difficult to hear.



Reflect on the **Core Communication Skills and Strategies**, and then complete the **SPOT The Problem: Activity Sheet** on the next page.

### CORE COMMUNICATION SKILLS & STRATEGIES

	<b>REQUESTING CLARIFICATION</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Verbal clarification</li><li>2. Visual cues</li><li>3. Key information focus</li></ol>	
	<b>USING COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Enhancing audibility</li><li>2. Strategic positioning</li><li>3. Simplifying conversation</li></ol>	
	<b>ADVOCATING FOR MY COMMUNICATION NEEDS</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Disclosing your hearing loss</li><li>2. Modifying the environment</li><li>3. Preparation and anticipation</li></ol>	



# SPOT THE PROBLEM: ACTIVITY SHEET

## SETTING



Who:

Where:

## PROBLEMS



## OPTIONS



## TEST



Can you SPOT the problem?



Can you SPOT your options?

**Take a moment to write some notes to the activities below,  
then discuss in your group.**

**Activity 1:** If you were at this café with a family member or friend, would you like them to help you in this scenario? Would you like them to intervene or not?

.....  
.....  
.....

**Activity 2:** Have you been in a similar situation before? How did you feel in that situation?

.....  
.....  
.....

**Activity 3:** Some people with hearing loss struggle in noisy environments so much that they stop wanting to go to certain places like café's and restaurants. What social and emotional difficulties might they experience if they stop attending these kinds of events with family and friends?

.....  
.....  
.....

## Lip reading and visual distractions

Many people with hearing difficulties rely on lip reading and other visual clues, like facial expressions. Therefore, visual orientation to the communication partner is very important.

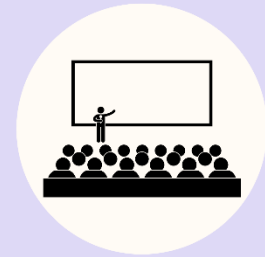
### Lip reading & picking up on visual cues can be hard if:



The speaker is difficult to see around a large table.



There is direct light facing into your eyes.



The speaker is a long distance away.

### Tips to reduce visual distractions



#### Don't face towards a bright light

Avoiding sitting directly under a bright light, and don't face towards a window. Move seats so the person talking to you doesn't have their face in shadow.



#### Reduce glare

Reduce surfaces with high glare – e.g., move a mirror or put a tablecloth over tables that reflect a lot of light.



#### Face the person speaking

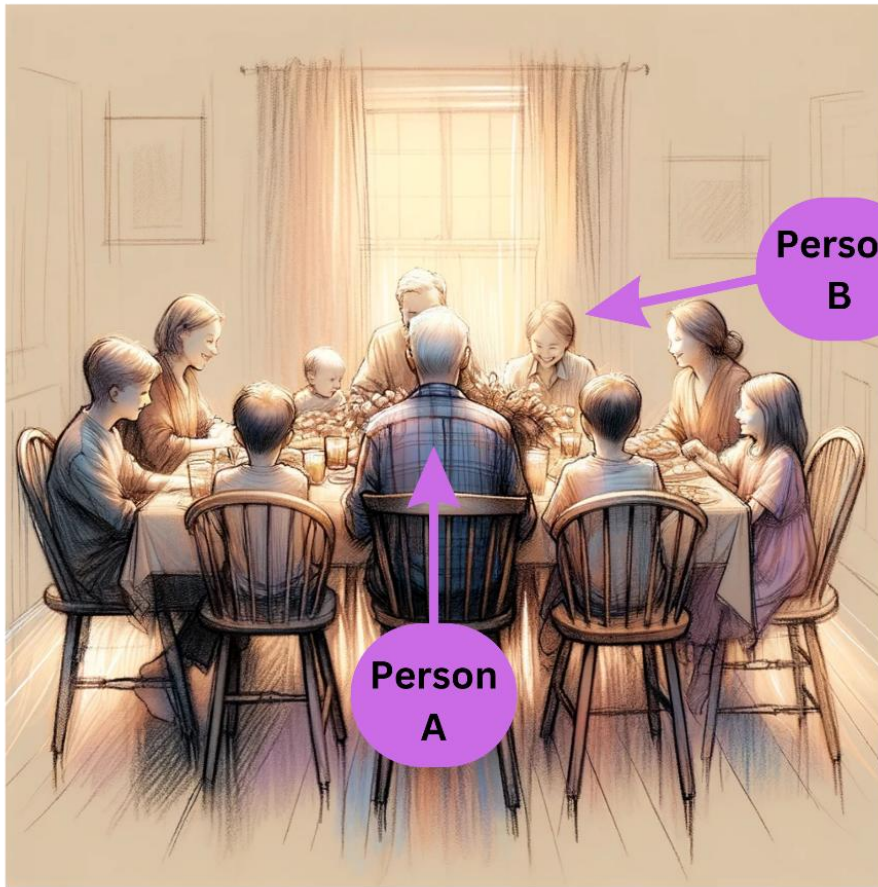
Can you move closer to the front of a group presentation? Move chairs or your position at a table so you can see the person talking clearly.



#### Think about the lighting

Use softer diffuse lighting instead of bright lights.

### Scenario 3: Lighting distractions around the dinner table

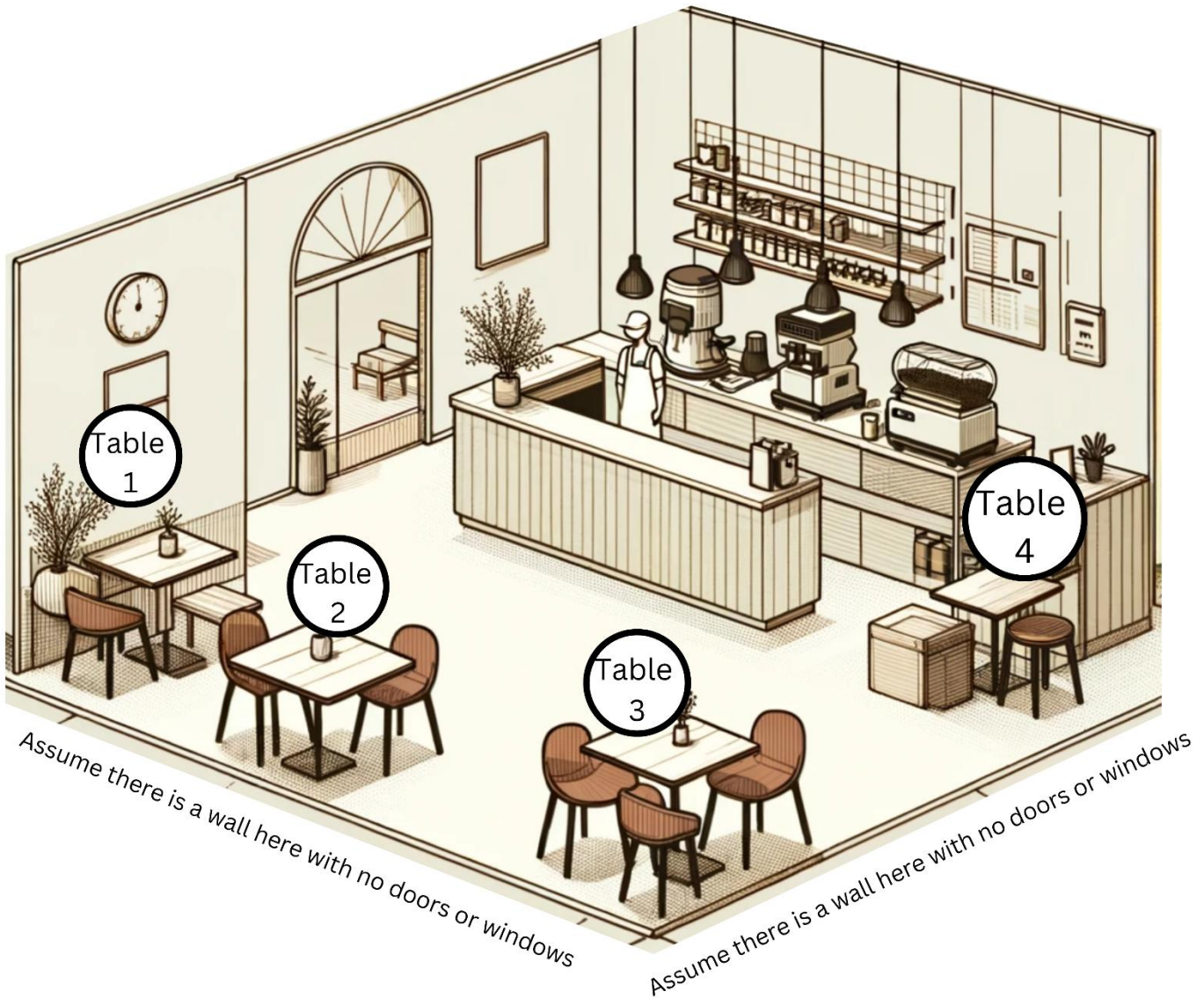


**Activity 1:** Look at Person A and Person B. Which person would have the greatest trouble seeing other members of the tables' facial expressions and lip movements?

Circle your answer:      Person A      or      Person B

Discuss why you think that person would have more trouble.

**Bonus activity:** Have a look at the table options in this café.



Which table do you think might be the noisiest to sit at? Why? Write down some notes below and then discuss with your group.

.....

.....

.....

## Bonus Information: BAD HABITS

Sometimes, people with hearing loss and also their friends or family members can develop bad habits or unhelpful strategies to manage the communication difficulties. These bad habits and unhelpful strategies can create more trouble over time and should be avoided.



### Talking too much

Because communication can be difficult, sometimes both the people with hearing loss and/or those they are talking with will dominate conversations and talk too much. They may not realise they are doing this. This usually happens because the natural back-and-forth nature of conversation is difficult when you can't hear the other person easily or they can't hear you. Be aware of how much you and the other person is talking, and make sure you both get an opportunity to speak.



### Guessing what the other person said

Sometimes, people with hearing loss will not hear what was said and instead of asking for clarification they may try to guess what was said. This may work on occasions however is not a reliable strategy. It is better to admit you did not hear and ask for them to repeat, say it a different way, write it down or use a technology aid. If you are a family member or friend of someone with a hearing loss, always check they have heard you correctly.



### Leaving a conversation & giving up

If hearing is too difficult and too tiring, both the person with hearing loss and those they are talking to may just want to give up and stop or leave a conversation. This is not helpful because the information may have been important for them to understand and they are also more likely to experience isolation, loneliness, frustration and feelings of missing out.



### Talking too loudly

Both people with hearing loss and the people they are speaking to can overcompensate and talk too loudly or yell. This may help in some situations, but is often not helpful or sustainable long term. The person yelling may develop a sore voice and become very fatigued. Often, talking slower, changing positioning and changing the environment can help more than going louder.

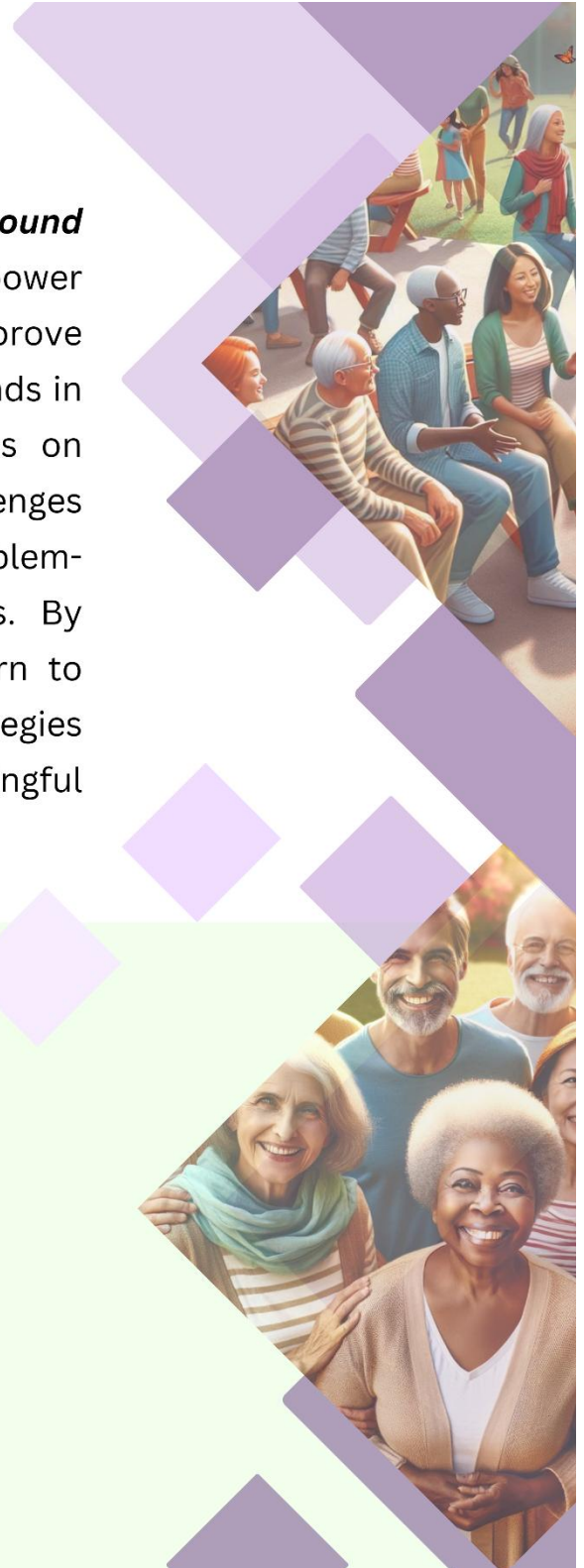
## Pick-and-Choose Module 1: Conversation around the home.

Welcome to ***P&C Module 1: Conversation around the home.*** The goal of this module is to empower you with the skills to manage and improve communication with family members and friends in various home settings. This module focuses on identifying common communication challenges around the home and employing effective problem-solving techniques to address these issues. By exploring a range of scenarios, you will learn to adapt and apply tailored communication strategies that facilitate clearer and more meaningful interactions.

### Activities in this module:

Scenario 1: Noise in the kitchen

Scenario 2: Talking in the living room



## Introduction to noise reverberation

Reverberation happens when sounds bounce off hard surfaces like walls, ceilings, and furniture. These 'echoed' sounds arrive slightly after the 'direct' sound, merging into a 'blurred' mix of the two. This overlapping sound can significantly challenge people with hearing difficulties. Noise reverberation most commonly occurs where there are hard surfaces, like metal, tiles, polished floors or glass. Common areas where you might notice reverberation in the house include kitchens, around dining tables, bathrooms and stairwells.

<h3>Floors</h3> 	<h3>Windows</h3> 	<h3>Chairs</h3> 
<p>Use rugs or carpet on floors to absorb sound.</p>	<p>Use curtains on windows and seal any openings.</p>	<p>Use upholstered chairs instead of plastic or timber.</p>
<h3>Decorations</h3> 	<h3>Artworks</h3> 	<h3>Walls</h3> 
<p>Decorate with bookshelves, placemats, plants &amp; light coverings to disrupt sound pathways.</p>	<p>Use fabric wall-hangings or artworks not covered in glass to absorb sound.</p>	<p>Cover walls in textured wallpaper or install acoustic wall panneling.</p>

## Optimising hearing in the home environment



### Soften the environment

Reduce noise by using rugs, curtains and tablecloths. In the kitchen, place a rubber mat in the bottom of the sink to reduce noise when washing up and use plastic plates and cups instead of China or glass.



### Distance from talking partner

Sitting closer to your talking partner improves sound clarity. Sitting within a meter ensures better hearing and reduces the need for shouting.



### Orientation of talking partner

Facing your talking partner directly enhances lip-reading and visual cues. Having them to your side can reduce the ability to see facial expressions and lip movements, impacting understanding.



### Identify other sources of noise

Look for additional sources of noise in the room that could interfere with your hearing. This might include background radio, music, TV's and kitchen equipment such as kettles or dishwashers.



### Height and seating level

Ensure that you and your talking partner are at the same eye level to facilitate better communication. Use adjustable seating options to achieve comfortable and effective positioning.



### Doors and windows

Keeping doors and windows closed can minimise external noise interference. Position yourself away from doors and windows to reduce outside noise. Seal around windows if high noise comes from outside.



### Size of room

Larger rooms can cause sound to disperse, making it harder to hear. Smaller rooms with soft furnishings can help absorb sound and reduce echoes.


## Scenario 1: Noise in the kitchen & dining rooms

You have your breakfast at a table in the kitchen each morning with your partner. You are having increasing trouble hearing in this room, but this morning routine is important to you. You have not tried modifying the environment to make the reverberation better. Your kitchen has polished timber floors and a lovely matching timber table.



Reflect on the *Core Communication Skills and Strategies*, and then complete the *SPOT The Problem: Activity Sheet* on the next page.


### CORE COMMUNICATION SKILLS & STRATEGIES



**REQUESTING CLARIFICATION**

1. Verbal clarification
2. Visual cues
3. Key information focus


"Did you say that I owe you...."



**USING COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES**

1. Enhancing audibility
2. Strategic positioning
3. Simplifying conversation

"Could you please speak a little slower?"



**ADVOCATING FOR MY COMMUNICATION NEEDS**

1. Disclosing your hearing loss
2. Modifying the environment
3. Preparation and anticipation

"I am having trouble hearing. Could we step outside?"



# SPOT THE PROBLEM: ACTIVITY SHEET

## SETTING



Who:

Where:

## PROBLEMS



## OPTIONS



## TEST



Can you SPOT the problem?



Can you SPOT your options?

**Take a moment to write some notes to the activities below,  
then discuss in your group.**

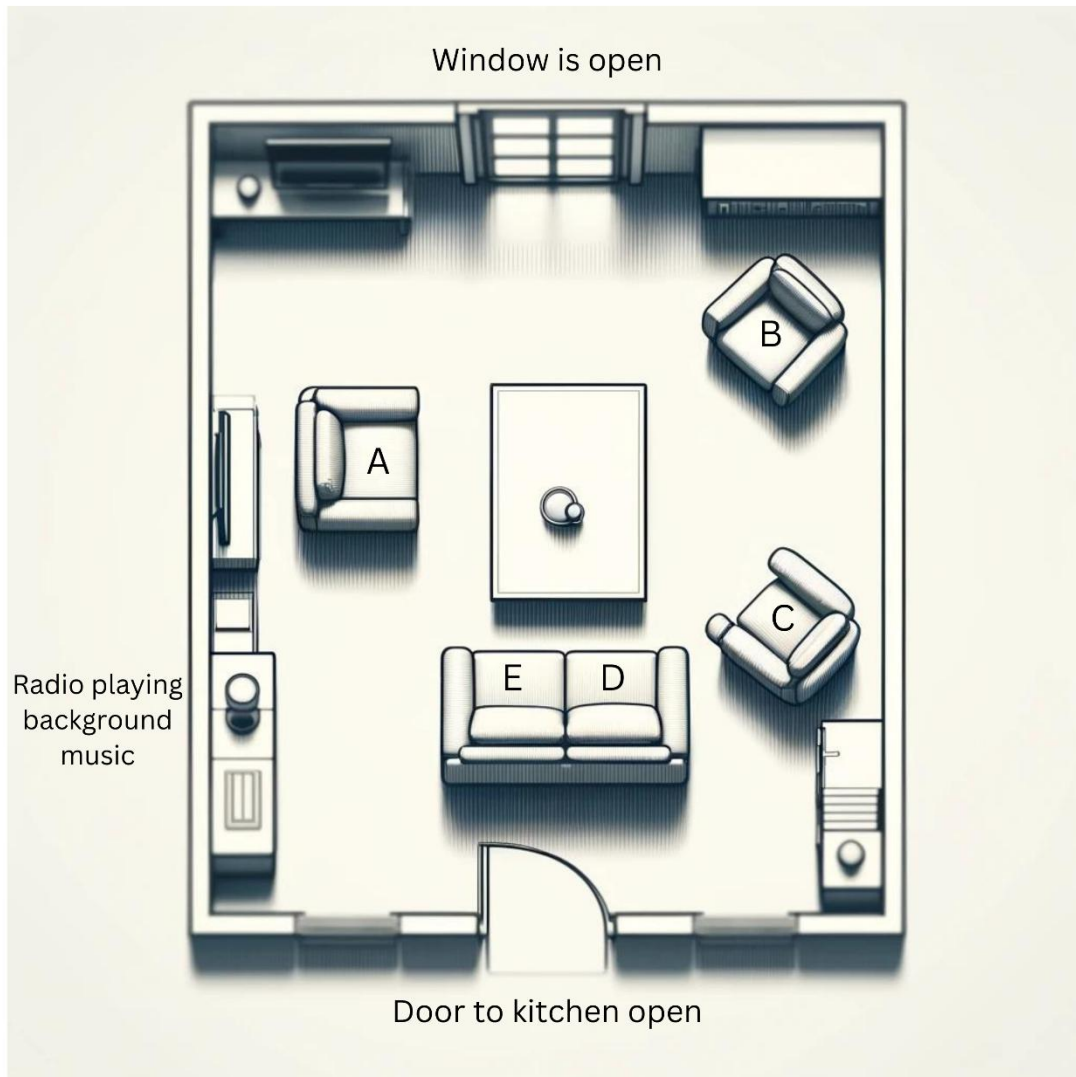
**Activity 1:** You have also noticed that the road outside your kitchen window is getting busier every year and the traffic noise is also reverberating around your kitchen. What is a simple solution you could trial to help with this?

.....  
.....  
.....

**Activity 2:** You start a conversation while sitting at the table, your partner gets up, turns the kettle on and then starts doing the dishes whilst trying to continue the conversation. You cannot follow the conversation anymore. How might you feel in this moment?

.....  
.....  
.....

## Scenario 2: Talking in the living room



**The Scenario:** You are sitting in position E with a group of people at a friend's house. You are having difficulty hearing and communicating because of the amount of noise in the room.

**Activity 1:** Identify the likely sources of noise in this room.

.....  
.....  
.....

**Activity 2:** What could you change in this environment to make it easier for you to hear?

.....  
.....  
.....

**Activity 3:** You want to have a conversation with the person sitting in seat C. Which seat do you think would be best for you to sit in? How could you ask to change places in a way that is respectful but assertive? Why?

.....  
.....  
.....

**Activity 4:** How could you ask to change places in a way that is respectful but assertive?

.....  
.....  
.....

## Pick-and-Choose Module 2: Enhancing conversations with diverse speakers

Welcome to ***P&C Module 2: Enhancing conversations with diverse speakers***. The goal of this module is to help you understand and communicate better with different types of speakers, like those with soft voices, people who mumble, and those with accents. You will learn practical strategies and techniques to improve your listening and comprehension in these situations. Through targeted activities, you will develop your listening skills, adapt your communication methods, and become more confident when talking to speakers who present unique challenges.

### Activities in this module:

- Scenario 1: Unclear and muffled voices
- Scenario 2: Talking to people with accents
- Scenario 3: Talking to children



## Diverse and difficult speakers

Many people with hearing loss have difficulty understanding people who speak differently or don't speak clearly. For example:

- people with accents.
- softly spoken people.
- people who speak quickly.
- people wearing face masks.
- people with high-pitched voices, such as children.
- people with very low voices, typically older men.
- People with certain medical conditions or disabilities.

The strategies you can use to help you to better understand people with diverse and/or difficult speech will be the same strategies introduced earlier. So always remember: 1) Clarify, 2) Strategy, and 3) Advocate.

### CORE COMMUNICATION SKILLS & STRATEGIES



#### REQUESTING CLARIFICATION

1. Verbal clarification
2. Visual cues
3. Key information focus

"Did you say that I owe you...."



#### USING COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

1. Enhancing audibility
2. Strategic positioning
3. Simplifying conversation

"Could you please speak a little slower?"



#### ADVOCATING FOR MY COMMUNICATION NEEDS

1. Disclosing your hearing loss
2. Modifying the environment
3. Preparation and anticipation

"I am having trouble hearing. Could we step outside?"

## For example:

### REQUESTING CLARIFICATION



**1) Ask for repetition:** Politely ask the speaker to repeat themselves. Phrases like, "Could you please say that again?" can be helpful.

**2) Clarify and confirm:** Repeat back what you think you heard to confirm understanding. "Did you say [repeat what you heard]?"

### USING COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES



**3) Face the speaker:** Position yourself so you can see their face.

**4) Request slower speech:** Ask the speaker to slow down slightly. Phrases like, "Can you speak a bit slower, please?" can make a big difference.

**5) Use Simple Questions:** Ask the speaker simple, yes/no questions or questions that require short answers to make it easier to follow.

**6) Utilise Assistive Listening Devices:** Use a smartphone app that transcribes voice to text.

**7) Request Written Communication:** Ask the speaker to write down important information, especially if it's complex or detailed.

### ADVOCATING FOR MY COMMUNICATION NEEDS



**8) Inform the Speaker:** Let the speaker know you have hearing loss and might need them to adjust their speech for better understanding.

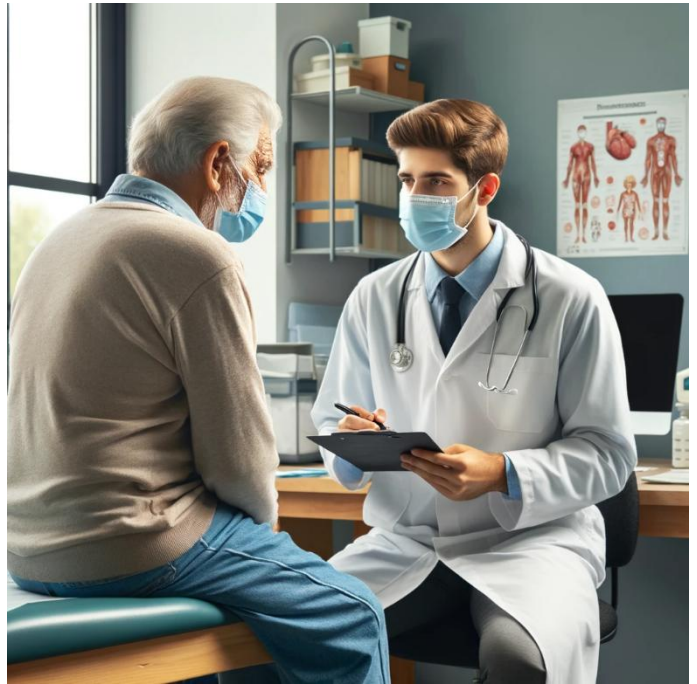
**9) Suggest ways they can help you:** You can suggest a change in environment, position, ways to make their speech clearer etc.



*"Express Understanding. Before presenting your point of view or needs, start by acknowledging the other person's position. This does not mean you have to agree with them, but shows respect for their position. They may be trying very hard to talk with you and want to make the conversation work."*






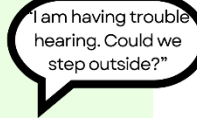
## Scenario 1: Unclear and muffled voices

**The scenario:** You are at the doctor's office with a friend. The doctor is telling you about treatment options for you following tests you completed a week ago. The doctor is wearing a face mask and his speech is very muffled.



**Activity:** Complete the *SPOT the Problem* activity sheet on the next page to explore this scenario further.

### CORE COMMUNICATION SKILLS & STRATEGIES

	<b>REQUESTING CLARIFICATION</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Verbal clarification</li><li>2. Visual cues</li><li>3. Key information focus</li></ol>	
	<b>USING COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Enhancing audibility</li><li>2. Strategic positioning</li><li>3. Simplifying conversation</li></ol>	
	<b>ADVOCATING FOR MY COMMUNICATION NEEDS</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Disclosing your hearing loss</li><li>2. Modifying the environment</li><li>3. Preparation and anticipation</li></ol>	

*Remember to use your core communication skills and strategies!*



# SPOT THE PROBLEM: ACTIVITY SHEET

## SETTING



Who:

Where:

## PROBLEMS



## OPTIONS



## TEST



Can you SPOT the problem?



Can you SPOT your options?

**Activity:** You knew that you would be discussing results and treatment plans with your doctor today from a recent knee scan. Is there anything you could have done before the appointment to better prepare for this scenario?

.....  
.....  
.....

**Activity:** Have you experienced difficulties like in this scenario? Did you get the information needed to make a decision about your health and care?

.....  
.....  
.....

**Activity:** How would you, or how did you, feel in this scenario?

.....  
.....  
.....

**Activity:** We assume that medical professionals would have a good understanding of hearing loss, however, sometimes they may not. In this scenario, how could a family or friend help you?

.....  
.....  
.....

## Scenario 2: Talking to people with accents

**The scenario:** Susan is at a friend's house and has been introduced to a new acquaintance who has an accent and is softly spoken. The combination of the soft voice and accent is making it very difficult for Susan to hear what she is talking about and she is only catching every few words. The new acquaintance has recently moved to Australia and she is trying hard to speak English which is her second language.



**Activity:** Complete the *SPOT the Problem* activity sheet on the next page to explore this scenario further. Remember your skills and strategies.

### CORE COMMUNICATION SKILLS & STRATEGIES

	<b>REQUESTING CLARIFICATION</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Verbal clarification</li><li>2. Visual cues</li><li>3. Key information focus</li></ol>	
	<b>USING COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Enhancing audibility</li><li>2. Strategic positioning</li><li>3. Simplifying conversation</li></ol>	
	<b>ADVOCATING FOR MY COMMUNICATION NEEDS</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Disclosing your hearing loss</li><li>2. Modifying the environment</li><li>3. Preparation and anticipation</li></ol>	

*Remember to use your core communication skills and strategies!*



# SPOT THE PROBLEM: ACTIVITY SHEET

## SETTING



Who:

Where:

## PROBLEMS



## OPTIONS



## TEST



Can you SPOT the problem?



Can you SPOT your options?

**Activity:** How do you feel when you struggle to understand someone because of their soft voice and/or accent? Describe any emotions you experience and how this situation affects your ability to engage socially.

.....  
.....  
.....

**Activity:** How do you think the person with the accent feels trying to talk in another language and trying to help with your communication needs? What kind of feelings might they have?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**Activity:** Would your solutions in ***SPOT the Problem*** be different if this acquaintance had lived in Australia for many years, instead of newly immigrated?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....



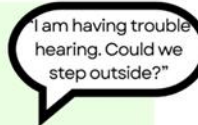
### Scenario 3: Talking to children

**The scenario:** Talking to children in your home. Your daughter has come to visit you and has brought along your grandchildren. You ask your youngest grandchild how school is going but she has a very soft voice, and you cannot hear her when she is sitting on the floor playing with her toys.



**Activity:** Complete the *SPOT the Problem* activity sheet on the next page to explore this scenario further. Remember your skills and strategies.

#### CORE COMMUNICATION SKILLS & STRATEGIES

	<b>REQUESTING CLARIFICATION</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Verbal clarification</li><li>2. Visual cues</li><li>3. Key information focus</li></ol>	
	<b>USING COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Enhancing audibility</li><li>2. Strategic positioning</li><li>3. Simplifying conversation</li></ol>	
	<b>ADVOCATING FOR MY COMMUNICATION NEEDS</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Disclosing your hearing loss</li><li>2. Modifying the environment</li><li>3. Preparation and anticipation</li></ol>	



# SPOT THE PROBLEM: ACTIVITY SHEET

## SETTING



Who:

Where:

## PROBLEMS



## OPTIONS



## TEST



Can you SPOT the problem?



Can you SPOT your options?

**Activity:** How could you explain to a child how hearing is difficult for you?

.....  
.....  
.....

**Activity:** How could you suggest ways that the child could help you to hear better?

.....  
.....  
.....

**Activity:** Describe the feelings you might have in this situation, if you are unable to effectively communicate with your family?

.....  
.....  
.....

**Activity:** Describe the feelings your family members might have in this situation, if they are unable to effectively communicate with you?

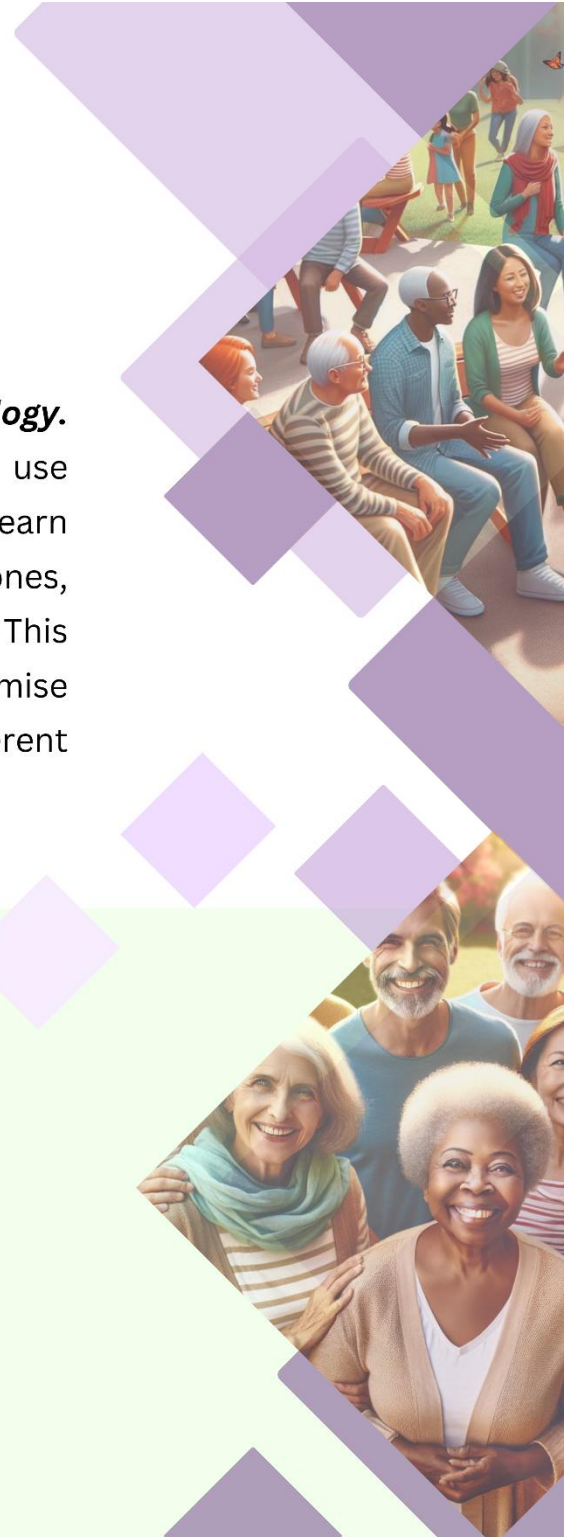
.....  
.....  
.....

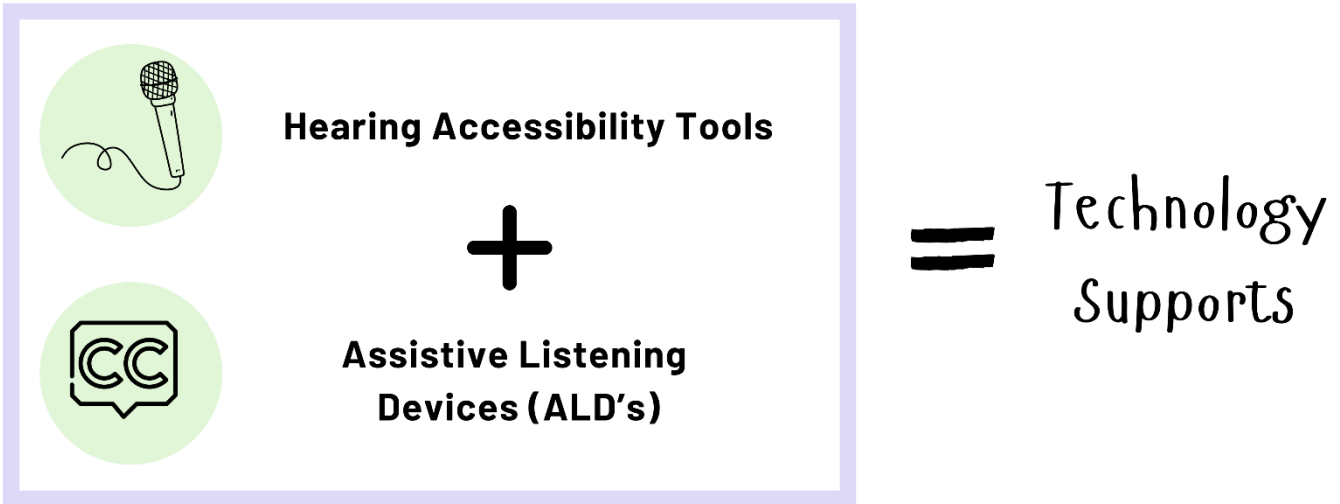
## Pick-and-Choose Module 3: Tuning in to Technology - TV, Phones, Computers and Public Address Systems

Welcome to ***P&C Module 3: Tuning into technology.*** The goal of this module is to help you use technology to improve communication. You'll learn how to work with different devices like TVs, phones, computers, and public address systems. This module will teach you how to adjust and optimise these devices so you can hear better in different settings.

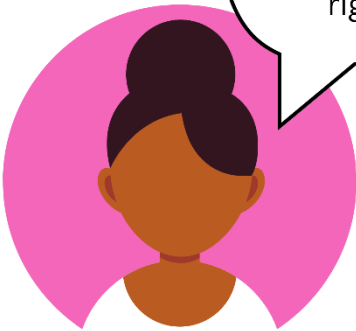
### Activities in this module:

- Scenario 1: Watching television
- Scenario 2: Attending a public talk
- Scenario 3: Attending an exercise class





Hearing accessibility tools and assistive listening devices (ALDs) help people with hearing loss communicate, but they have different roles. ALDs, like hearing loops and FM systems, amplify sound and reduce background noise for hearing aid users. Accessibility tools, such as closed captioning and visual alerts, provide visual or tactile alternatives to sound. Knowing the differences helps in choosing the right support to improve communication in different settings.



		<b>Earphones</b>	<b>Microphones</b>
	<b>Visual alert systems</b>	<b>Hearing loops/ induction loops</b>	<b>Speech-to-text Apps</b>
<b>Closed captioning</b>	<b>Amplified phones</b>	<b>Sound recognition Apps</b>	<b>Bluetooth devices &amp; Auracast</b>

## Technology Supports

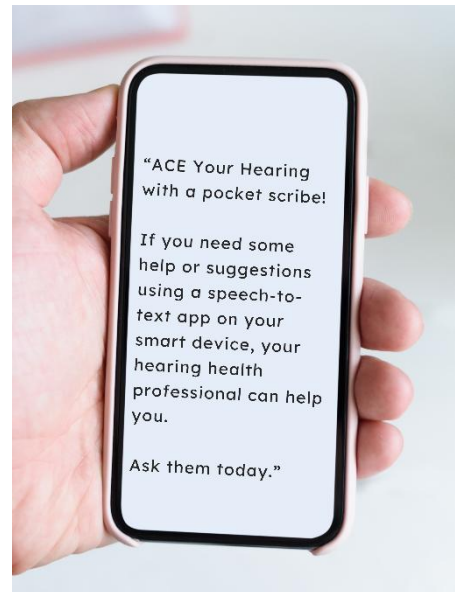
1. **Vibrating Alerts:** Devices that use vibration to signal incoming phone calls, doorbells, alarms, or emergency warnings.
2. **Visual Alert Systems:** Systems that use flashing lights to indicate events such as a ringing telephone, a baby crying, or a smoke alarm activation.
3. **Hearing Loops (Induction Loops):** These systems transmit audio directly to a hearing aid with a telecoil (T-coil) receiver, commonly used in public venues such as a public transport and museums.
4. **Closed Captioning:** Communication Access Realtime Translation services provide immediate transcription of spoken words into text during live events, which can be displayed on various devices.



5. **Amplified Phones/earphones:** Telephones and earphones specifically designed with increased volume and adjustable tone settings to accommodate varying degrees of hearing loss.

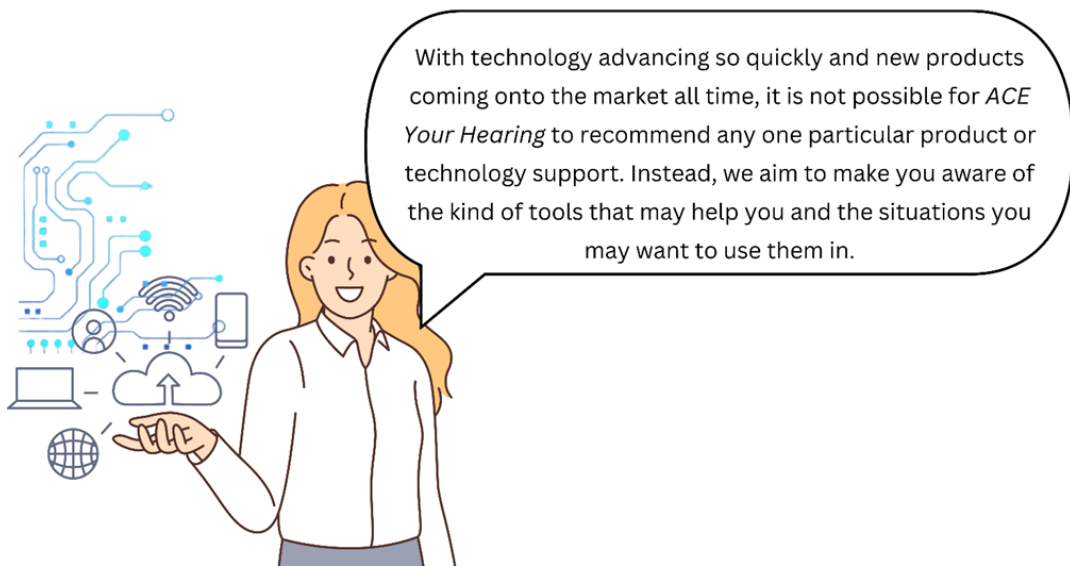
**6. Mobile Apps for Sound Recognition:** Apps that notify the user about specific sounds in their environment, such as doorbells, smoke alarms, or even someone calling their name.

**7. Speech-to-Text Devices:** Devices or software applications that convert spoken words into digital text displayed on a screen.



**8. Mobile Apps for Sound Recognition:** Apps that notify the user about specific sounds in their environment, such as doorbells, smoke alarms, or even someone calling their name.

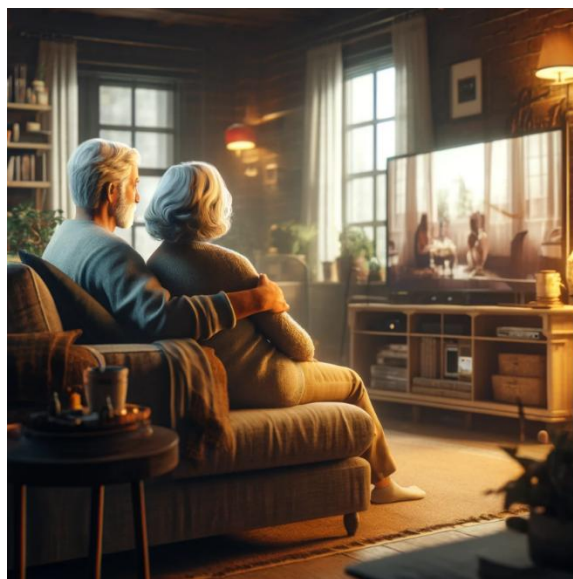
**9. Microphones:** Handheld or clip on microphones can amplify sound through a speaker or may use technology like Bluetooth/Auracast to transmit sound directly to a hearing device.



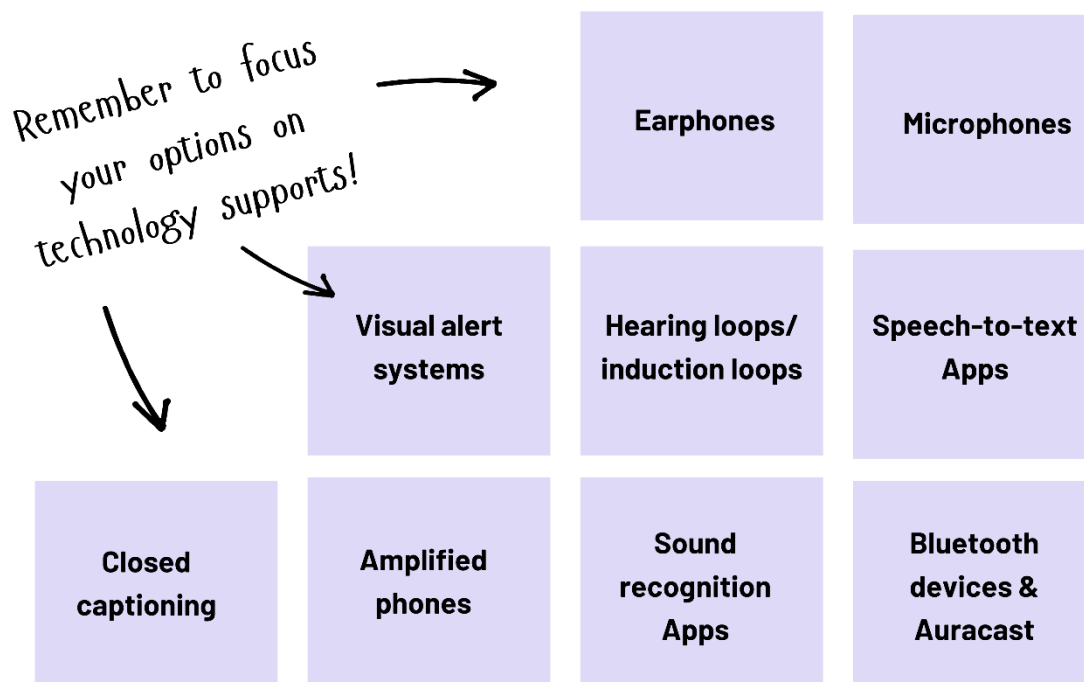
If you feel a technology support would help you, we recommend speaking with your hearing health professional. Alternatively, hearing support organisations and hearing loss non-profit organisations may also be able to help you with this.

## Scenario 1: Watching television

**The scenario:** Bob and Alice enjoy their evening TV shows together. Bob has worn hearing aids for a few years but has not tried to use any accessibility tools or assistive listening devices. Even though Bob wears hearing aids to watch TV, he has always had some trouble hearing people talking on the shows. Recently, Alice has had trouble hearing the dialogue too, even when the volume is up and increasing the volume too high makes the hearing aids uncomfortable for Bob.



**Activity:** Complete the *SPOT The Problem* activity sheet on the next page to explore this scenario further, keeping in mind both Bob and Alice's needs, **and focus on technology solutions.**



# SPOT THE PROBLEM: ACTIVITY SHEET

## SETTING



Who:

Where:

## PROBLEMS



## OPTIONS



## TEST



Can you SPOT the problem?



Can you SPOT your options?

**Activity:** How might Bob feel when he struggles to hear the dialogue on TV despite wearing his hearing aids?

.....

.....

.....

**Activity:** What feelings might Alice experience when she has to ask for the volume to be turned up, knowing it might make Bob uncomfortable?

.....

.....

.....

.....

**Activity:** What might be the social and emotional benefits for both Bob and Alice if they explore and implement additional hearing solutions like technology supports?

.....

.....

.....

.....

## Scenario 2 – Attending a public talk

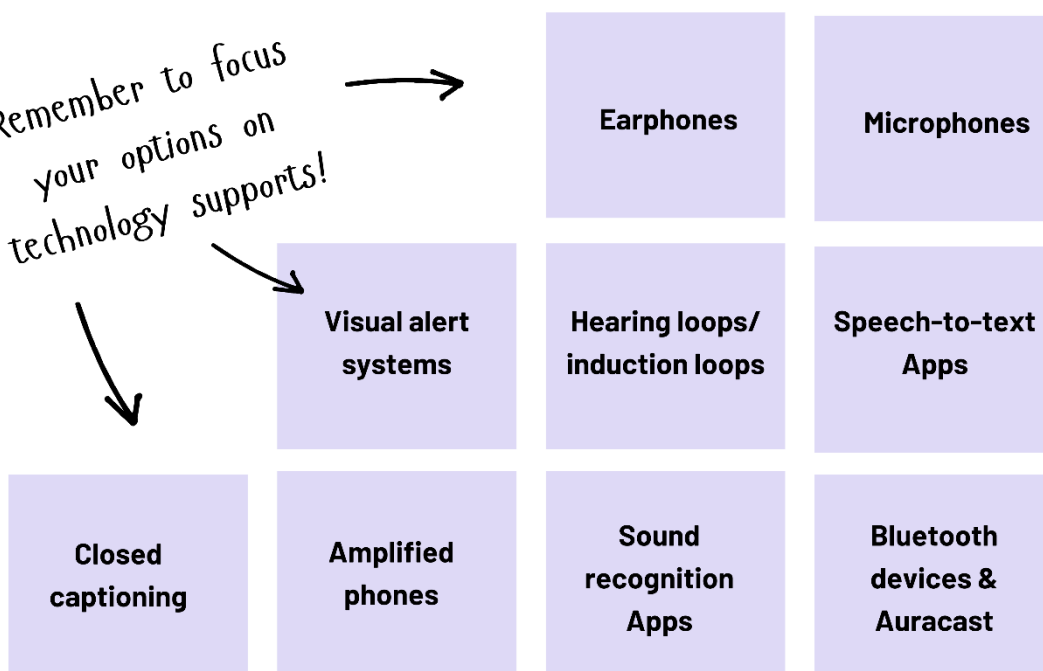
Jane, an art enthusiast with moderate hearing loss, has always liked going to talks held at the art gallery. As her hearing has worsened and the sessions become busier with more people shuffling around and talking, she has noticed she can no longer hear the speaker properly. Her friend mentioned that public venues often have some technology tools to help and has seen



other people ask for them in the past, but she's not sure what they are or how they work. Unsure of the best way to address her needs, she feels anxious about missing important details and fully engaging with the presentation.

**Activity:** Complete the *SPOT The Problem* activity sheet on the next page to explore this scenario further, **and focus on assistive technology solutions.**

Remember to focus  
your options on  
technology supports!



# SPOT THE PROBLEM: ACTIVITY SHEET

## SETTING

S

Who:

Where:

## PROBLEMS

P

## OPTIONS

O

## TEST

T

Can you SPOT the problem?



Can you SPOT your options?

**Activity:** How do you think Jane felt about asking for assistive listening devices before the talk?

.....  
.....  
.....

**Activity:** How do you think the use of ALDs might affect Jane’s ability to engage with the presentation?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**Activity:** In what ways might a positive experience in this situation influence her attendance at future public events?

.....  
.....  
.....

**Activity:** In what ways might a negative experience in this situation influence her attendance at future public events?

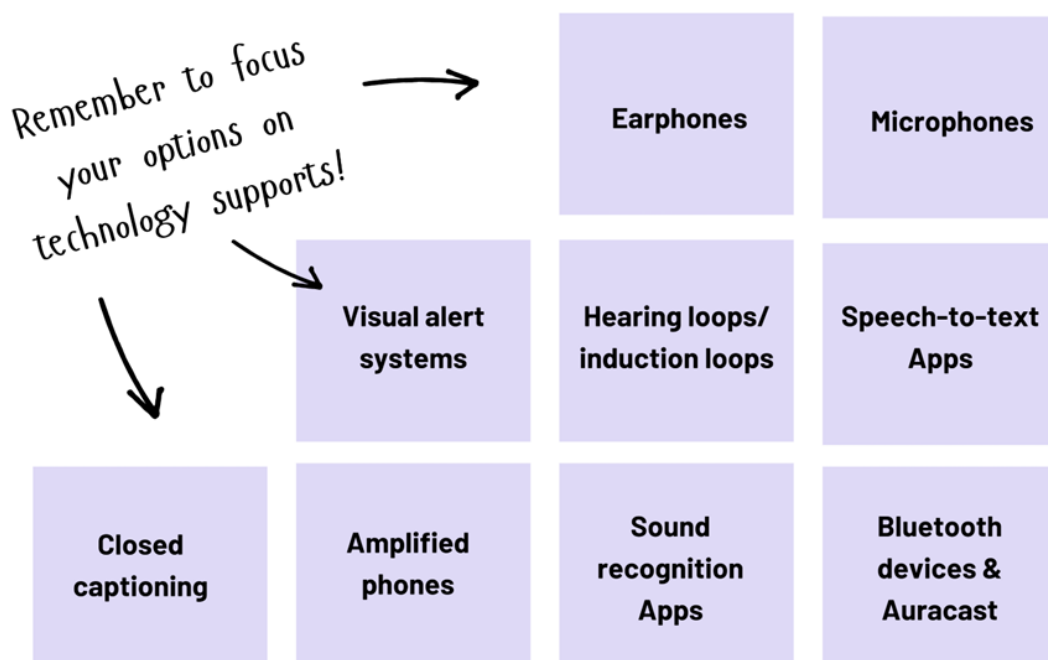
.....  
.....  
.....

### Scenario 3 – Attending an exercise class

**The scenario:** You eagerly attend a weekly exercise class at the local community centre but often struggle to hear the instructor due to background music and chatter. You often miss important instructions, forcing you to wait and watch other people to copy what they are doing. This leaves you feeling embarrassed, frustrated and isolated. You wonder if a technology support could help you hear better during the class.



**Activity:** Complete the *SPOT The Problem* activity sheet on the next page to explore this scenario further, **and focus on assistive technology solutions.**



# SPOT THE PROBLEM: ACTIVITY SHEET

## SETTING



Who:

Where:

## PROBLEMS



## OPTIONS



## TEST



Can you SPOT the problem?



Can you SPOT your options?

**Activity:** What emotions arise when you miss important instructions from others (whether in an exercise class or elsewhere)?

.....  
.....  
.....

**Activity:** Have you ever felt embarrassed or self-conscious about asking for help or clarifications in group situations like this?

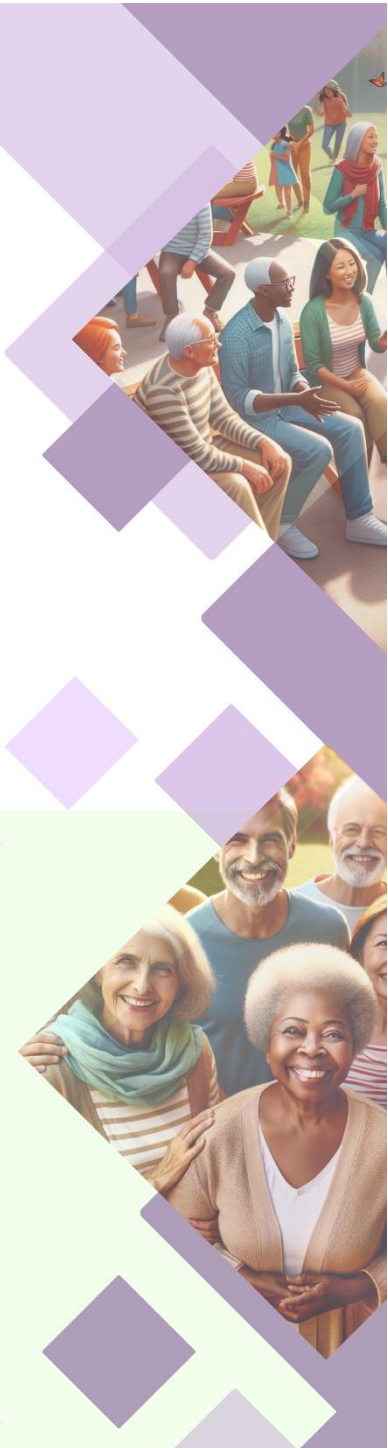
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

# Pick-and-Choose Module 4: Communication Strategies to Support Hearing Aid Use

Welcome to ***P&C Module 4: Communication strategies to support hearing aid use.*** The goal of this module is to help you improve your use of communication strategies alongside your hearing aids. This module will teach you how to optimise your hearing aid use and apply practical strategies to enhance your overall communication effectiveness, ensuring you feel confident engaging in daily activities. This module is not intended to teach you how to manage the hearing aid or specific features of individual hearing aids; instead, it focuses on providing general communication tips to help enhance their use.

## Activities in this module:

- Scenario 1: Talking outdoors with hearing aids
- Scenario 2: Family birthday party
- Scenario 3: Using hearing aids in a workplace



**Hearing aids are a great tool! *But they are not the whole solution.***

Many people expect that hearing aids will solve all their hearing difficulties, but this is not the case. Hearing aids are a valuable tool that can significantly improve hearing, but they are not a complete solution on their own. To maximise the success of hearing aids, it is important to use additional strategies such as positioning yourself optimally in conversations, making changes to the environment to reduce background noise, and using additional technology supports when necessary. Combining these strategies with the use of hearing aids can greatly enhance your hearing experience.

When using hearing aids, it is still important to remember your Core Communication Skills and Strategies to improve your ability to communicate. By thinking about how you can clarify, use strategy and advocate for your hearing needs, you will improve the ability of your hearing aids to help you hear.



*If you are wearing your hearing aids and still having trouble hearing a conversation, always think of what options you have. Can you move to a quieter spot? Can you sit closer? Can you ask the person to slow down? Do you need to move out of a windy spot?*

## Tips to enhance your hearing aid experience:



### Regular maintenance

Ensure that hearing aids are regularly cleaned and maintained – wax build up will make good communication more difficult. Check batteries and replace or recharge them as needed to ensure optimal performance.



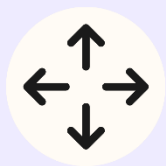
### Volume adjustment

Adjust the volume settings on the hearing aids according to the environment to better capture the sounds around you.



### Think about positioning

Position yourself strategically in group settings or noisy environments to maximise the effectiveness of your hearing aids. Try to face the speaker and try sitting with your back to a noise source.



### Does your hearing aid have directional sound?

Some hearing aids have microphones that pick-up sound from certain directions better. Ask your hearing professional how your hearing aids pick up directional sound and how you can use this in conversations.



### Use your data

Some hearing aids provide information on how they are working or could be improved. This can be used to tweak settings or make adjustments. Ask your hearing professional if your hearing aid has this feature.



### Use with technology supports

Some hearing aids can be used with technology supports such as clip-on microphones or Bluetooth for watching TV. Ask your hearing professional what other technology supports you could trial.



### Get a check-up

Schedule regular check-ups with your hearing health professional to ensure your hearing aids are properly tuned to your current hearing needs and working properly.


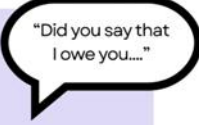



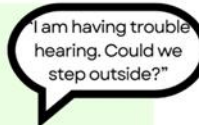
## Scenario 1: Talking outdoors with hearing aids

**The Scenario:** Imagine you are at a lovely outdoor park, catching up with a group of close friends. The weather is pleasant, but there is a steady breeze blowing. You wear hearing aids, which usually help you engage in conversations with ease. However, today, the wind is causing significant noise interference in your hearing aids, making it difficult to hear your friends clearly.



**Activity:** Complete the ***SPOT the Problem*** activity sheet on the next page to explore this scenario further. Remember your skills and strategies.

### CORE COMMUNICATION SKILLS & STRATEGIES

	<b>REQUESTING CLARIFICATION</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Verbal clarification</li><li>2. Visual cues</li><li>3. Key information focus</li></ol>	
	<b>USING COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Enhancing audibility</li><li>2. Strategic positioning</li><li>3. Simplifying conversation</li></ol>	
	<b>ADVOCATING FOR MY COMMUNICATION NEEDS</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Disclosing your hearing loss</li><li>2. Modifying the environment</li><li>3. Preparation and anticipation</li></ol>	



# SPOT THE PROBLEM: ACTIVITY SHEET

## SETTING

S

Who:

Where:

## PROBLEMS

P

## OPTIONS

O

## TEST

T

Can you SPOT the problem?



Can you SPOT your options?

**Activity:** Do you know of the different functions that your hearing aids have that could help in these scenarios? Describe the ones you know:

.....  
.....  
.....

**Activity:** If you do wear hearing aids, have you experienced difficulties hearing, even though you do wear them to talk to others? How do you feel about this?

.....  
.....  
.....

**Activity:** If you do not wear hearing aids, what is your understanding of how they can or cannot help to hear better?

.....  
.....  
.....

**Activity:** What advice would you give to others who express difficulties hearing even though they do wear their hearing aids?

.....  
.....  
.....

## Scenario 2: Family birthday party






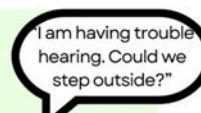
**The scenario:** Tom is at a lively family birthday party. The room is filled with chatter and the clinking of dishes as everyone enjoys the celebration. Tom wears hearing aids, which generally help him hear better in social settings. His hearing aids have directional microphones designed to focus on sounds coming from in front of him



while reducing noise from other directions. Someone speaks to Tom from his side, and their voice is not clear because his hearing aids are not optimised to capture sounds from side directions. What could he do in this scenario?

**Activity:** Complete the *SPOT the Problem* activity sheet on the next page to explore this scenario further. Remember your skills and strategies.

### CORE COMMUNICATION SKILLS & STRATEGIES

	<b>REQUESTING CLARIFICATION</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Verbal clarification</li><li>2. Visual cues</li><li>3. Key information focus</li></ol>	
	<b>USING COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Enhancing audibility</li><li>2. Strategic positioning</li><li>3. Simplifying conversation</li></ol>	
	<b>ADVOCATING FOR MY COMMUNICATION NEEDS</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Disclosing your hearing loss</li><li>2. Modifying the environment</li><li>3. Preparation and anticipation</li></ol>	

*Remember to use your core communication skills and strategies!*



# SPOT THE PROBLEM: ACTIVITY SHEET

## SETTING

S

Who:

Where:

## PROBLEMS

P

## OPTIONS

O

## TEST

T

Can you SPOT the problem?



Can you SPOT your options?

**Activity:** How do you feel when you struggle to hear properly at family gatherings?

.....  
.....  
.....

**Activity:** In what ways could this experience influence your participation in future family gatherings?

.....  
.....  
.....

**Activity:** What adjustments can you make to your hearing aids or the settings to improve their effectiveness in noisy, crowded environments?

.....  
.....  
.....

**Activity:** Tom’s family know he wears hearing aids, but they do not realise how directional sound or positioning impacts how well they work. What could Tom do to address this so his family are better able to support him?

.....  
.....  
.....

### Scenario 3 – Using hearing aids in a workplace


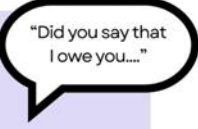



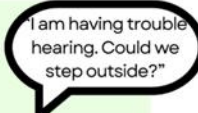
Samira, a volunteer coordinator with moderate hearing loss, faces significant challenges in the office environment despite wearing hearing aids. During meetings, she is able to hear the person at the front presenting quite well if she faces them directly. However, when another person to her side or at the back of the



room speaks, she struggles to hear. Samira gets a lot of enjoyment from volunteering, but she feels embarrassed having to ask people to repeat all the time and is wondering if she should stop volunteering as she feels like her presence is now causing more trouble than its worth.

**Activity:** Complete the *SPOT the Problem* activity sheet on the next page to explore this scenario further. Remember your skills and strategies.

#### CORE COMMUNICATION SKILLS & STRATEGIES

	<b>REQUESTING CLARIFICATION</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Verbal clarification</li><li>2. Visual cues</li><li>3. Key information focus</li></ol>	
	<b>USING COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Enhancing audibility</li><li>2. Strategic positioning</li><li>3. Simplifying conversation</li></ol>	
	<b>ADVOCATING FOR MY COMMUNICATION NEEDS</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Disclosing your hearing loss</li><li>2. Modifying the environment</li><li>3. Preparation and anticipation</li></ol>	

A large, stylized speech bubble with a black outline and a drop shadow. Inside, the text reads: "Remember to use your core communication skills and strategies!".



# SPOT THE PROBLEM: ACTIVITY SHEET

## SETTING

S

Who:

Where:

## PROBLEMS

P

## OPTIONS

O

## TEST

T

Can you SPOT the problem?



Can you SPOT your options?

**Activity:** How do you think Samira feels when she has to ask colleagues to repeat themselves frequently?

.....  
.....  
.....

**Activity:** If you were in a situation like Samira, would you feel comfortable discussing your hearing challenges with your supervisor or colleagues?  
Why/why not?

.....  
.....  
.....

**Activity:** What kind of support or resources do you think could help improve Samira's (or your own) hearing experience at work or volunteering?

.....  
.....  
.....

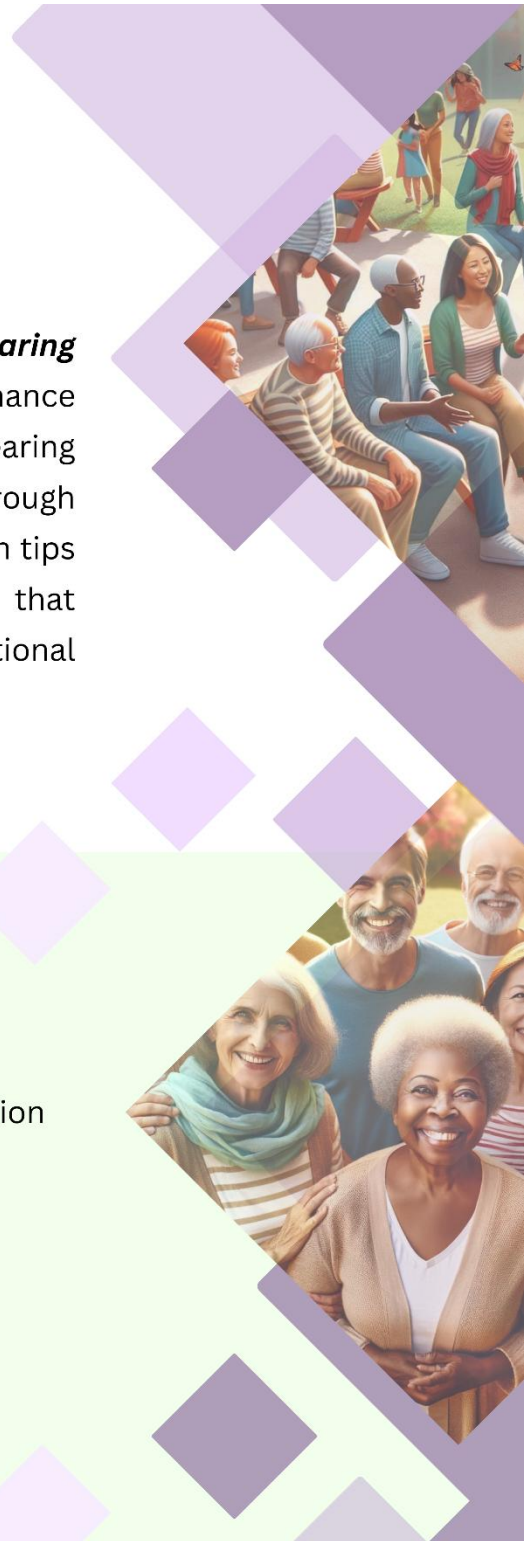
## Pick-and-Choose Module 5: Wellbeing with Hearing Loss

Welcome to ***P&C Module 5: Wellbeing with hearing loss***. The goal of this module is to help you enhance your overall well-being by exploring how hearing loss can affect your mind and body. Through education and interactive activities, you'll learn tips on how to maintain a balanced lifestyle that supports both your hearing health and emotional resilience.

### Activities in this module:

Scenario 1: An overwhelming social gathering

Scenario 2: Hearing challenges and social isolation



## Possible Physical, Social and Emotional Impacts of Hearing Loss



### Physical Health

- 1 Decreased physical activity
- 2 Stress & it's associated impact on physical health
- 3 Hearing loss is associated with changes in cognition
- 4 Difficulty managing chronic conditions



### Social & Emotional

- 1 Social isolation & withdrawal
- 2 Fatigue with communication
- 3 Stress & it's associated impact on emotional health
- 4 Feeling strong emotions like anger, frustration, sadness.

**Note:** These are just some ways hearing loss can impact your health and wellbeing, but there are many other ways it can impact you too. It will also be different for everyone.

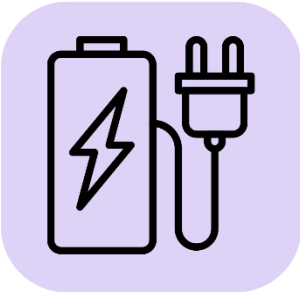
Hearing loss extends beyond just difficulties with hearing; it can have profound effects on both physical and mental health. Physically, hearing loss can lead to balance issues, increasing the risk of falls and injuries, and has been associated with changes in cognition and memory. Hearing troubles can also make talking with your doctors about other health conditions difficult. Socially and emotionally, the challenges of hearing loss can cause social isolation, stress, frustration, anger, confusion and sadness. The struggle to communicate effectively can also result in fatigue and reduced self-esteem, further impacting a person's overall wellbeing. Understanding these connections shows the importance of addressing all the ways hearing loss can impact on your life to improve social, emotional and physical health outcomes.

## Listening Fatigue



Listening fatigue occurs when the effort required to listen and understand speech becomes overwhelming, leading to exhaustion. This fatigue results from constantly straining to hear and process sounds. Common symptoms of listening fatigue include feeling unusually tired, experiencing headaches, and having difficulty concentrating.

## Take Steps to Manage Listening Fatigue



To manage listening fatigue, it's important to incorporate rest and recovery strategies into your daily routine. Take scheduled breaks during conversations or listening activities to give your ears and brain a chance to rest. Additionally, find a quiet place to relax and recover after periods of intense listening. This quiet time helps reduce stress and allows you to recharge.

## Attention Strategies to Help Fatigue



To reduce listening strain, employ effective attention strategies. Focus on one speaker at a time to minimise confusion and enhance comprehension. Additionally, use visual cues such as lip-reading, gestures, and facial expressions to aid understanding. These techniques help you follow conversations more easily and reduce the mental effort required.

## Use Communication Strategies



Incorporate the communication strategies learned in earlier modules. Reduce background noise by turning off unnecessary devices or moving to quieter areas. Optimise room layout by facing furniture toward the speaker. Practice clear communication by encouraging slow, distinct speech, and ask for repetition or rephrasing when needed. Confirm understanding by summarizing conversations.

# STIGMA & HEARING LOSS

Stigma surrounding hearing loss in older adults is a significant issue, with many experiencing fear of judgment and subsequent social isolation, which can impact self-esteem. Fear of stigma can make people less likely to want to tell others about their hearing difficulties, making it more difficult for them to be able to help and support the conversation.

**40-60%** ADULTS WITH HEARING LOSS REPORT FEELING STIGMA



Stigma is commonly felt by adults with hearing loss. Rates of stigma can vary by age, cultural background and personal experiences.



**FEAR OF JUDGMENT:** Adults with hearing loss may worry about being perceived as less capable or less intelligent if they mishear. Fear of embarrassing themselves if they mishear is common.



**RELUCTANCE TO DISCLOSE:** Many older adults worry about telling other people about their hearing loss or asking them to repeat themselves. Using humour to disclose is a common tactic used.



**IMPACT ON SELF-ESTEEM:** The perception of hearing loss as a sign of aging can negatively affect self-esteem, leading to feelings of inadequacy and decreased confidence.



Increasing awareness and understanding about hearing loss in the community can help reduce stigma and encourage more open discussions and support.

## Scenario 1: An overwhelming social gathering

Emily, a 68-year-old with moderate hearing loss, is attending a family reunion. She wears hearing aids, which help her manage everyday conversations well, but large gatherings can still be challenging. The reunion is held in a bustling restaurant, filled with the sounds of chatter, clinking glasses, and background music.



As the evening progresses, Emily finds herself straining to follow conversations. She has to focus intensely to distinguish words from the surrounding noise, often asking people to repeat themselves. This constant effort to hear and understand is mentally exhausting. After a couple of hours, Emily feels overwhelmed and fatigued. She has developed a headache, feels like her blood pressure is going up and she becomes increasingly anxious as she misses parts of the conversation.

**Activity:** During a conversation, Emily mishears a comment and responds inappropriately, leading to an awkward moment. She feels silly and embarrassed. Trying to lighten the mood, one of the guests makes a joke about the situation, but it only adds to the embarrassment and makes Emily feel worse. Emily has had enough, she decides to leave the party early. Complete the ***SPOT The Problem*** activity sheet on what went wrong in this scenario and what could be done in the future to avoid a similar situation.

# SPOT THE PROBLEM: ACTIVITY SHEET

## SETTING



Who:

Where:

## PROBLEMS



## OPTIONS



## TEST



Can you SPOT the problem?



Can you SPOT your options?

**Activity:** Emily is experiencing both physical and emotional symptoms in this scenario. List the symptoms you have identified Emily is experiencing.

.....

.....

.....

.....

**Activity:** Have you experienced these kinds of symptoms due to your hearing loss? List which feelings you have experienced like Emily.

.....

.....

.....

.....

**Activity:** What would you like your family and friends to do in this kind of situation to help you out?

.....

.....

.....

.....






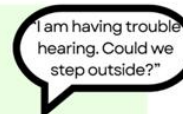
## Scenario 2: Hearing challenges and social isolation

**The Scenario:** Tom has always been an active and social person. However, as his hearing difficulties have increased, he is finding it harder to follow conversations in noisy environments. Because of this, he has started avoiding social outings, preferring to stay home where it's quieter. This change has contributed to tension in his relationship with his partner, who remains very social and enjoys going out. His partner often expresses concern, saying, "I worry about you because you're alone so much now." Tom feels disconnected from others as a result of not participating in social situations, but the effort required to hear and understand others in these settings feels overwhelming.



**Activity:** complete the *SPOT the Problem* activity, focusing on how this situation made you feel and what you could do next.

### CORE COMMUNICATION SKILLS & STRATEGIES

	<b>REQUESTING CLARIFICATION</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Verbal clarification</li><li>2. Visual cues</li><li>3. Key information focus</li></ol>	
	<b>USING COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Enhancing audibility</li><li>2. Strategic positioning</li><li>3. Simplifying conversation</li></ol>	
	<b>ADVOCATING FOR MY COMMUNICATION NEEDS</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Disclosing your hearing loss</li><li>2. Modifying the environment</li><li>3. Preparation and anticipation</li></ol>	



# SPOT THE PROBLEM: ACTIVITY SHEET

## SETTING

S

Who:

Where:

## PROBLEMS

P

## OPTIONS

O

## TEST

T

Can you SPOT the problem?



Can you SPOT your options?

**Activity:** How do you think Tom feels when he decides to stay home instead of joining social outings?

.....  
.....  
.....

**Activity:** How might this change his relationship with his partner, family or friends?

.....  
.....  
.....

**Activity:** How do you think spending more time alone affects overall physical and emotional wellbeing for a person?

.....  
.....  
.....



*It's important to talk to your partner, family, and friends about how your hearing difficulties are impacting your social life. Openly sharing your struggles can help them understand your experience and the emotional toll it takes on you. By advocating for your needs, you can work together to find ways to make social outings more enjoyable and manageable.*

## Extension Module: Revision and Reflection

Welcome to the ***Extension Module: Revision and reflection***. The goal of this module is to reinforce and deepen participants' understanding and skills acquired in prior modules through revision and additional activities. This module provides an opportunity for participants to review key concepts and strategies from earlier sessions and reflect on what they have learned. This module is only to be completed in the 4-session format of the program once all other content modules have been covered.

### Activities in this module:

This module focuses on revision questions and reflection rather than new scenarios. It helps participants review and consolidate the strategies and techniques they've learned.

Activity 1: Revision questions

Activity 2: Personal reflection questions



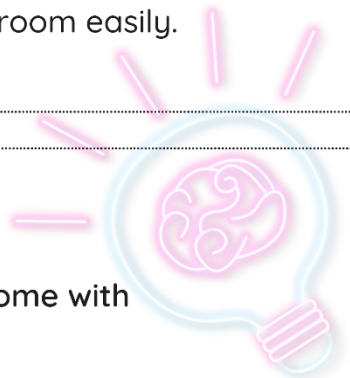
# ACE THE QUIZ

## Core Module 2: Introduction to common challenging environments

- 1** Select what would be an effective strategy for managing conversations in noisy environments?
  - a) Ask the person talking to you to yell above the noise so you can hear.
  - b) Use visual cues such as lip-reading and gestures.
  - c) Ask the person talking to you to slow down and speak clearly.
  - d) Ignore background noise.
  
- 2** Which of the following can help reduce distractions during conversations?
  - a) Turn off the TV and other background sources of noise.
  - b) Move to a quieter area.
  - c) Sit far away from the speaker so you can see more of the room easily.
  - d) Speak at the same time as others.

## P&C Module 1: Conversation around the home

- 3** What is a good approach to improving communication at home with family members?
  - a) Only talk in the evenings when everyone is finished for the day and relaxed.
  - b) Use hand signals exclusively.
  - c) Establish a quiet, designated space for important conversations.
  - d) Reduce noise reverberation by using tablecloths, floor rugs and curtains.
  
- 4** How can family members support someone with hearing loss at home?
  - a) Speak to them from their side so you're closer to one of their ears.
  - b) Face them directly when speaking.
  - c) Stop other activities, like washing the dishes, and focus directly on them.
  - d) Avoid using visual cues as they are distracting.



# ACE THE QUIZ

## P&C Module 2: Enhancing conversations with diverse speakers

- 1** How can you better understand someone with a soft voice or accent?
  - a) Ask them to stop mumbling.
  - b) Request that they write down their key words.
  - c) Position yourself face-to-face and ask them to speak clearly.
  - d) Avoid asking for clarification.
  
- 2** What should you do if you don't understand what someone with an accent said?
  - a) Nod and pretend you understood to save time.
  - b) Politely ask them to repeat or rephrase what they said.
  - c) Tell them you have hearing difficulties and let them know how they can help you.
  - d) Interrupt them immediately and tell them to stop.

## P&C Module 3: Tuning into technology

- 3** Which technology support could help you hear talking on the TV better if you have hearing loss?
  - a) Regular headphones.
  - b) Audio feeding directly into hearing aids for individual volume adjustments.
  - c) Increasing the volume to maximum, your partner doesn't mind.
  - d) Use closed captioning text to help you understand.
  
- 4** How can technology assist with phone conversations for someone with hearing loss?
  - a) Use a regular phone without any adaptations.
  - b) Use a captioned phone or amplified phone.
  - c) Hand your phone to your partner for all calls.
  - d) Avoid phone conversations and ask people to text or email instead.



# ACE THE QUIZ

## P&C Module 4: Communication strategies to support hearing aid use

- 1** What is a key communication strategy to use with hearing aids?
  - a) Only use hearing aids occasionally for conversations that you like.
  - b) Ensure the hearing aids are well-fitted and regularly maintained.
  - c) Rely solely on hearing aids without other strategies.
  - d) Use the directionality function to optimise conversations.
  
- 2** How can you improve your communication when using hearing aids?
  - a) Speak without considering the hearing aid user, the hearing aid will work.
  - b) Use clear speech and maintain eye contact.
  - c) Avoid using any other communication aids.
  - d) Think about your environment and avoid windy areas or areas with lots of noise reverberation.

## P&C Module 5: Wellbeing with hearing loss

- 3** How can social interactions impact individuals with hearing loss?
  - a) It has no effect on their emotional state.
  - b) It causes physical tiredness.
  - c) It can cause feelings of embarrassment and isolation if not managed well.
  - d) It makes them hear better automatically through more practice.
  
- 4** How can hearing loss impact relationships between people with hearing loss and their family and friends?
  - a) It has no impact on relationships, it only affects the person with hearing loss.
  - b) It can put strain on relationships and cause stress for everyone.
  - c) It makes relationships easier to manage.
  - d) Family and friends of people with hearing loss can also experience feelings of loneliness, sadness, frustration, and anger.

## Personal reflection questions for ACE Your Hearing

Let's reflect on what you've learned from the ACE Your Hearing program. Here, you'll find open-ended questions designed to help you think about what you have found most useful and impactful, what strategies you have successfully tried, and which ones have been less successful. Please take a few minutes to write down your thoughts and notes on each question. Afterward, we will discuss your reflections as a group.

1. What has been the most meaningful aspect of this program for you, and why?

.....  
.....  
.....

2. Which strategies or techniques introduced in the program have you tried that worked well for you?

.....  
.....  
.....

3. Which strategies or techniques have you tried that did not work as well for you?

.....  
.....  
.....

4. How has the program affected your relationships with your partner, family, or friends?

.....  
.....  
.....

5. Can you share an example of how you have effectively advocated and communicated your needs to others since starting the program?

.....  
.....  
.....

6. How has participating in the program impacted your emotional and social wellbeing?

.....  
.....  
.....

7. What are your goals moving forward in terms of managing your hearing loss?

.....  
.....  
.....