

TechSAge Tips

Considerations for Improving Communication between Clinicians and Older Adults with Hearing Loss

Overview

Aging Concerns, Challenges, and Everyday Solution Strategies (ACCESS) is a mixed-method study that explores the everyday challenges faced by older adults with long-term disabilities, including a subsample of late-deafened older adults. During the interview, participants detailed their unmet needs. A common theme was that healthcare professionals need more information and guidance on interacting with people with hearing loss. The participants also offered their strategies to handling daily challenges. Based on their insights, this tip sheet includes recommendations to educate clinicians on improving communication with older adults with hearing loss. By considering these tips, clinicians can make clients more aware of challenges they may encounter and share effective communication strategies.



Common Challenges Reported

- Listening environment (e.g., background noise, reverberant room, large distance from speaker, competing sounds/conversations, too many people talking at once to keep up).
- Lack of available external assistive technology/assistive technology is defective (e.g., closed captioning, FM loops, Roger Pen, Mini Mic).

- Communication partners not facing the person with hearing loss or having their mouths covered, hindering their ability to lip read.

Common Strategies Utilized by Older Adults with Hearing Loss

- External assistive technology (e.g., speech-to-text, remote microphones, hearing aids with T-coils), particularly when communicating with more than one person.
- Amplification devices (e.g., hearing aid, cochlear implant) to aid in noisy environments.
- Adaptive communication methods (e.g., typing, writing, lip-reading) to repair communication breakdowns.
- Disclosure of hearing loss and self-advocacy of communication needs and preferences

Additional Ways Clinicians Can Support Patients with Hearing Loss:

- Provide information and resources about the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) so they can know and understand their rights.
- Educate about communication repair strategies in aural rehabilitation and/or handouts.

Additional Resources

- [TechSAge User Needs Project](#)
- [Communication Challenges and Response Strategies of Older Adults](#)
- [The Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#)



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