

INTRODUCTION

Older people often do not like to admit that they are experiencing hearing loss, either to themselves or others. Having a hearing loss varies for many from mild to severe. Hearing aids can help by amplifying any sounds received but it is the experience of being cut off from people and social situations that is the most difficult to overcome and this can lead to self-imposed exile. In addition, it is very difficult for people with hearing loss to hear anything when there is extraneous noise around them, i.e. in group situations where more than one person is talking at a time.

ADVICE - LARGE MEETINGS

- **VENUE**
 - Try to use a venue with a loop system.
 - Encourage those who are hard of hearing to sit nearest the speaker and consider reserved seating.
 - Always check that everyone can hear what is happening.
- **SPEAKER - VIEW**
 - Position the speaker away from a direct light source so that people can lip read.
 - Keep the background plain.
 - Do not have the speaker placed too high up which makes lip reading more difficult.
 - Ask a speaker if a text copy could be provided or at least a précis of the main points either as a hand-out or on a flip chart.
 - If the speaker needs lighting to be reduced for a power point presentation, try to ensure there is a lectern light so that the face can be seen.
- **SPEAKER - SOUND**
 - Ensure that the speaker uses a microphone and preferably a lapel microphone. If it has to be hand held, remind the speaker to keep it away from the mouth so that lips can be read.
 - Ask the speaker to speak slowly and distinctly and not to look away and talk.

ADVICE - SMALL MEETINGS

- Use a portable loop system where possible.
- Lay out the room so that the participants can all see one another's lips - boardroom or horseshoe.
- Participants should be encouraged to only speak one at a time.
- If someone wants to speak encourage use of a hand signal of some sort to attract attention.
- Make notes available as soon as possible.

EQUIPMENT TO CONSIDER

- **U3A**
 - Portable Loop Systems – approx £1200.
 - Infrared Systems - approx £3000.
 - Loophear - approx £135.
 - Clipboard with internal induction loop and integral microphone - approx £175.
- **U3A MEMBERS**
 - Personal enhancers – approx £60.
 - Digital personal listeners – approx £70.
 - Elite listeners – approx £350.

EQUIPMENT ADVICE AND SUPPLY

- Action on Hearing Loss (formerly RNID) have a brochure of quality products called Solutions which can be ordered online (<http://www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk>), downloaded from <http://www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/shop-support-pages/download-our-catalogue.aspx> or you can telephone 01733 361199, textphone 01733 238020 or email solutions@hearingloss.org.uk
- Sarabec Limited – <http://www.sarabec.com>. Telephone 01642 247789. Textphone 01642 244148. Email mail@sarabec.co.uk

OTHER USEFUL CONTACTS/RESOURCES

- National Association Of Deafened People – <http://www.nadp.org.uk> and its factsheet <http://www.nadp.org.uk/factsheets/fs01.htm>
- British Deaf Association – <http://www.bda.org.uk>
- Hearing Link – <http://www.hearinglink.org>
- Deafness Research UK – <http://www.deafnessresearch.org.uk>
- United Kingdom Council on Deafness – <http://www.deafcouncil.org.uk>

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