



Living Skillfully with Hearing Loss:

An Operating Manual for Clients

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“We shifted our goal from *hearing*
better to *communicating* better.
And that changed everything.”

—*Shari Eberts and Gael Hannan*

Influences on the Hearing Loss Journey

LIFE
EXPERIENCES

PROFESSIONAL
HEARING
HEALTH CARE

PEER
RESOURCES

Living Skillfully with Hearing Loss

- Understanding the Big Picture
 - What to expect on the hearing loss journey
 - What can be changed and improved
 - We are not alone; there is help and support
- Embracing the 3-Legged Stool of Critical Skills
 - Changing our attitudes about hearing loss with MindShifts
 - Using a broad range of technology to boost comprehension
 - Game-changing communication strategies to improve listening situations
- Putting It All Together
 - Applying these skills to all aspects of our life
 - Relationships and support networks
 - "Hearing Hacks"

The Big Picture: Understanding the Journey

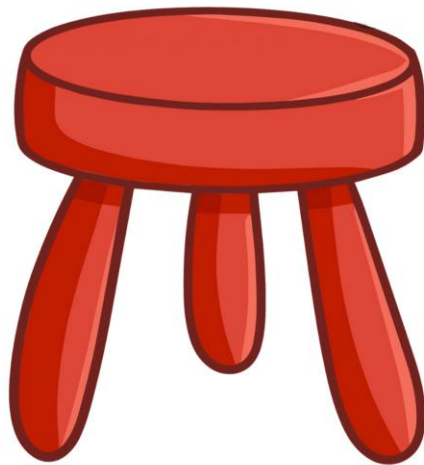
- Most people with hearing loss do not have the Big Picture
- Providers are key to setting the groundwork for success
- Hearing loss is a journey, not a problem you can ‘solve’
- Hearing aids are not a stand-alone ‘cure’
- Emotions of hearing loss need to be addressed
- While all journeys are unique, there are typical, recognizable stages

Five Stages of the Hearing Journey

Stage	Attributes
Debating with Yourself	Doubt, denial, external blame, stigma
Validating	HCP evaluation confirms hearing loss
Taking Charge	Deciding to move forward, hearing aids often a first step; adopting other strategies and skills
Living Skillfully	The ultimate goal: applying a variety of strategies for a communication-rich life
Refreshing & Restarting	Adapting to changes, adjusting as needed

The 3-Legged Stool of Critical Skills

MINDSHIFTS



TECHNOLOGY

COMMUNICATION
GAME CHANGERS

MINDSHIFTS

A New Approach to
Hearing Loss

"I HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO
CHANGE MY JOURNEY.
THE PERSON WITH THE MOST
POWER IN MY HEARING LOSS
SUCCESS IS ME."

The Attitude Selfie: Common Hearing Loss Attitudes

- Why me?
- Nobody understands what I'm going through.
- I want to hear better, the way I used to.
- I don't like to advertise my hearing loss. People will think I'm old or slow.
- My family and friends always forget about my hearing loss.
- Hearing aids are ugly, expensive, and don't always work.
- I don't want to bother anybody with my hearing loss needs.
- Who would want to hire me? Or love me? Or be my friend?
- I get angry at myself and others when we make communication mistakes.
- Everywhere I go, there is no access for people with hearing loss.

MindShifts: A New Approach to Hearing Loss

- Our attitudes towards hearing loss affect our behaviors
- Better attitudes turn into better conversations
- Transformed attitudes can help your client:
 - Take charge of their own success
 - Try new tools
 - Be more assertive in having their needs met
 - Improve their working relationship with you

MindShift Examples

Attitude	The Mindshift
Nobody understands what I'm going through.	Many people experience the same challenges as I do. I can learn from them. I'm not alone.
I want to hear better, the way I used to.	


MindShift Examples

Attitude	The Mindshift
Nobody understands what I'm going through.	Many people experience the same challenges as I do. I can learn from them. I'm not alone.
I want to hear better, the way I used to.	I want to communicate better, and it takes more than hearing aids to do this. I must use other skills and additional technology.

How To Shift Your Mind

- Optimize rather than perfect
 - The goal is to make it better, not necessarily perfect
 - Have an open mind, use different tactics and try again tomorrow
- Practice to build confidence
 - Put attitudes into action with practice, practice, practice!
- Reinforce new attitudes
 - Use mantras, such as MindShifts, to say “I’ve got this!”
- Prioritize self-care
 - Practice mindfulness, gratitude and forgiveness
 - Manage energy: eat well, sleep well, live well
 - Find the humor in hearing loss

TECHNOLOGY



Plugging Into Better Hearing

"TECHNOLOGY IS MY FRIEND.
MY DEVICES LET ME HEAR
SOUNDS I HAD FORGOTTEN OR
HAD NEVER HEARD BEFORE.
THEY CONNECT ME TO OTHER
PEOPLE AND THE WORLD."

Technology: Plugging Into Better Hearing

- Understand what technology can and cannot do
- Hearing aids often the tool of choice, but more is required
 - Branded accessories (i.e., remote mics, TV streamers)
 - Smartphone Apps: speech-to-text or amplifier
 - External accommodations like CART and hearing loops
 - OTC devices
- Our two MUST-HAVE features:
 - Telecoils to be used with loop systems (small and large)
 - Bluetooth streaming capability



COMMUNICATION GAME CHANGERS

Transforming the Conversation

“I WANT TO COMMUNICATE
BETTER, AND IT TAKES MORE
THAN TECHNOLOGY TO DO
THIS. I MUST USE SOFTER
SKILLS TOO.”

Communication Game Changers


- Don't hide, self-identify!
- Self-advocacy: knowing how to have your needs met
- No bluffing: eliminate this negative strategy
- Speechreading: visual cues
- Communication best practices: both speaker and listener
- HEAR, our favorite tool, improves any listening situation

HEAR: Improve Any Listening Situation

Step	Actions
Hearing Check	Can I understand what my communication partner is saying?
Evaluate	What do I need to improve the situation? More light? Less noise? Louder/slower speech? A different seat?
Articulate	Ask for what you need for better communication. Your communication partners will also benefit.
Revise & Remind	Adjust as needed. Remind conversation partners if they fall back into old speech habits.

Putting it All Together

- Applying what you know about the journey and 3-legged stool to all aspects of life
- Relationships: developing workable communication strategies to handle the emotional and practical impact of hearing loss
- Using “Hearing Hacks” to navigate life events and activities
- Building support networks of family/friends, colleagues, peers
- Creating a strong relationship with a hearing care professional



“The best HCPs are *communication specialists* who create personalized solutions, including both technology and non-technical strategies.”

—*Shari Eberts and Gael Hannan*



“Living *skillfully* with hearing loss
is an ongoing process...
and so, for each of us, the journey
continues.”

—*Shari Eberts and Gael Hannan*

For More Patient Perspective

Blog: LivingWithHearingLoss.com

Book: HearAndBeyond.com

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