Support Programs for Older Adults with Hearing Loss

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What does a star mean?
- Probably means something important, something I want you to remember a week later

Hearing aid patients by age

AR Support Programs
- Pre-Fitting
- Fitting
- Post-Fitting
### The Importance of Pre-fitting Support

- Problem awareness
- Readiness
- Attitude
- Expectations
- Family considerations
- Self-efficacy

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### Self-monitoring

- Precontemplator
- Contemplator

Smith & Kricos, 2003

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### Hearing Loss Effects

- Physical
  - Behavioral
- Emotional
  - Cognitive

Trychin, 2001

### Physical Effects

- Muscle tension-shoulders, neck, back
- Stomach problems
- Fatigue
- Headaches
- Increased blood pressure
- Appetite changes-eat more, eat less
Hearing Loss Effects
- Physical
- Emotional
- Cognitive
- Trychin, 2001

Behavioral Effects
- Bluffing
- Withdrawing
- Blaming
- Demanding
- Dominating conversations
- Arguing

Emotional Effects
- Anger
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Embarrassment
- Frustration
- Decreased self esteem
Hearing Loss Effects

- Physical
- Emotional
- Cognitive

Cognitive & Mental Health Effects

- Can’t think straight-confused
- Hard to focus attention
- Distracting thoughts
- Difficult to remember what you did not hear clearly in the first place

Support During the HA Fitting

- Self-Efficacy
  - Tsuruoka et al. (2001) reported that low hearing aid use by older adults may be related to low-confidence of HA use/care
  - Confidence varies across task domains

Nurturing Self-Efficacy

- Mastery (avoid failures)
- Vicarious (e.g., social observations)
- Social persuasion (encouragement)
- Reduce stress associated with task

(Trychin, 2001)

(Bandura, 1986; 1989)
The Importance of Post-fitting Support

- Much to learn about hearing loss and hearing aids

Learning & Older Adults

- Often requires greater effort and time

Counseling Time With First Time Hearing Aid Owners

Modal time spent is ½ hour

Counseling Time Needed to Achieve “Blissful” Levels of Patient Satisfaction
Family Involvement Important!

“When someone in the family has a hearing loss, the entire family has a hearing problem.”
--Mark Ross

Why Is AR Support So Important?

- Lack of knowledge of sources of communication difficulty

Example

- Family dinners during holidays
Support Program Options

- Printed materials
- Consumer groups
- Internet support
- Group support programs

What kind of patient education materials could I develop?

- Brochures
- Handouts on various topics
- Guidebooks
- Internet information
- Others?

Communication Strategies: Printed Materials

- Font type
  - Avoid effects like italics
  - Do not use all capitals
  - Consistent through document
- Do use font size of 13 or 14
- Do use dark text on light background

Communication Strategies: Printed Materials

- Emphasize important information:
  - Draw attention to key information
    - In a box
    - Bold
  - Bullets, mnemonics, and summary
- Larger headings
**Communication Strategies: Printed Materials**

- At a glance:
  - Uncluttered and organized
  - White space
    - Double space
    - Two inch margins
  - Do not cram too much
    - Aim for 3-4 main points

**Visual: Print**

- Avoid slick or shiny paper
- Justify the left side
- Print
  - Clear font (Arial, Times New Roman)
  - Avoid elaborate fonts, e.g.:
    - LIKE THIS ONE, OR
    - Like this one, or
    - Like this one

**Font Choices**

This is Serif Font – Times New Roman
This is San Serif Font – Arial

**Publications: Contrast**

- CES
- CES
- CES
- CES
### Support Program Options

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### Consumer Groups

- Hearing Loss Association of America
- Say What Club
- Association for Late Deafened Adults

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**The times they are a-changin’**
Older Americans and the Internet

“Just 22% go online, but their enthusiasm for email and search may inspire their peers to take the leap.”

Susannah Fox
Director of Research
Pew Internet & American Life Project
March 25, 2004

What Attracts Seniors?

- Communication and Information
  - Sharp growth in Internet activities such as (health searches, e-shopping, and online banking)
  - 94% of wired seniors send and/or receive emails
  - 66% have done product research online
  - Online seniors as enthusiastic as younger users!

My Space, Facebook? Hold on, kids - Gram & Gramps are catching up!

- www.eldr.com
- Eons
  http://www.eons.com/
- BoomerTown.com
- The Ageless Project
  http://jenett.org/ageless/
- www.cranky.com

Senior Friendly Web Sites

- Type Size: 12 or 14 point
- Type Weight: Medium or bold face type
- Capital and lowercase letters
- Caps and italics in headlines only
- Reserve underlining for links
- Physical Spacing: Double space all body text
- Justification: Left is best for older adults
Senior Friendly Web Sites

- Color: Avoid yellow and blue and green, especially in close proximity
- Big buttons for links
- Backgrounds:
  - Dark type or graphics against light background, or vice versa
  - Avoid patterned backgrounds

Example of a Senior Friendly Web Site

- See www.nihseniorhealth.gov for example of a web site developed in accordance with these guidelines

Example of informative private practice audiology website

- www.milehighhearing.com

Support Program Options

- Printed materials
- Consumer groups
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Who benefits from AR support groups?

- The person with hearing loss
- Significant Others
- The audiologist

Evidence-based Research

- Preminger, 2003
- Hickson, Worrall, & Scarinci, 2007
- Chisolm, Abrams, & McArdle, 2004
- Hawkins, 2005

Group Versus Individual: Personal observations

- Fun!
- Effective
- Helpful to families and friends
- Participants perceive benefits of helping others
- Variability among patients

Class 1 Agenda

- Coping With Hearing Loss
- Suggestions for rotating topics
- Question/Answers?

Homework: Communication Problem Situations
Class 2 Agenda

- 1000 Ways to Say “Huh?”
- Review homework: Communication problems

Specific vs. Non-Specific Clarification Strategies

- Non-specific clarification requests:
  - most commonly used by adults with hearing loss
  - least helpful in repairing a communication breakdown

Difficulty: Fast Talker

- Non-specific: “I didn’t quite get that.”
- Specific request:
  - “Could you slow down a bit for me, please?”

Class 2

- Homework: Plan ahead: at & outside home
Class 3 Agenda

- Handling difficult listening situations
- Review homework

First, Identify the SOURCE(S) of the Difficulty

- Talker?
- Listener?
- Environment?

Class 3 Homework

- Homework: Fifteen Possible Solutions

Class 4 Agenda

- What other help is there?
  - Review homework
  - Clear speech
  - HAT
  - Alerting and warning devices
  - Telecommunication devices
  - Assistive listening devices
- Program evaluation

- Homework: please tell your friends about this program!
AR Support Group Techniques

- Group discussion
- Homework
- Written information
- Internet resources

What Is a Facilitator?

Hints for Successful Groups

- Inform group of goals & purpose of group
- Distribute guidelines for group participation
- Strive for balanced group
- Establish ground rules
- ENJOY!

Hints for Successful Facilitation

- Cultivate desirable skills
- Use questions & suggestions, rather than giving advice
- Draw out the group, rather than “tell” the group
- Be prepared
I don’t have time!!!

Can’t offer weekly group program?

- More Options!
  - One-to-one support
  - Home program
  - Monthly program
  - Large single session option

Montgomery’s WATCH (Brief Auditory Rehabilitation)

- W - watch the talker’s mouth, not his eyes
- A - ask specific questions
- T - talk about your hearing loss
- C - change the situation
- H - healthcare knowledge

Monthly Model

Welcome and overview of session
Ear anatomy & SN hearing loss
Effects of hearing loss
Realistic expectations for hearing aids
Communication strategies
Rotating topic plus Q & A

(Warner-Czyz, 2000)
The Key?

- Information exchange and a focus on the person’s priorities

To learn more about Audiologic Rehabilitation:

The Academy of Rehabilitative Audiology
Audiology’s Best Kept Secret (and Bargain!)

For More Information about ARA
- http://www.audrehab.org/
- Ask me for a brochure!
- Join us for the 2008 ARA Institute in Portland, OR on September 11th and 12th 2008
  - Keynote Speaker: Robert Sweetow Ph.D. of University of California at San Francisco
  - Preceded by a workshop on hearing aid output at Frye Electronics
  - Followed by a workshop on Tinnitus Treatment at the NCRAR taught by Jim Henry Ph.D. and Tara Zaugg Au.D.

Questions? Suggestions?