



Dr. Will

Ask Dr. Will

"How can I help a loved one with hearing loss"?

Other Questions? Call (865) 973-9511

There are many ways you can help! For most everyone, very simple techniques and behaviors can be easily adopted to provide effective, less-stressful communication. Since everyone's hearing is unique, it is recommended to undergo a personalized program of communication strategy. Some measures, though, are universally helpful for most hearing impaired individuals, whether hearing aids are used or not. Here are just a few tips:

First, **get their attention!** Unlike the normal hearing individual who interprets speech spontaneously and effortlessly, the hearing impaired individual requires that a significant degree of mental processing be active and ready to interpret your speech sounds. Simply calling their name before initiating a new conversation will often prevent missing the first few words which could destroy the entire sentence.

After you have their attention, let them **see your lips** if possible. Then begin by **articulating and separating** your words. There should be an ongoing effort to refine these important skills. Clear, separated speech works much better than raising your voice!

Be aware of noise and other **acoustic conditions** which are likely to undermine your efforts to communicate. **Know** your loved one's **effective range of hearing**, and position yourself within that distance. Avoid speaking from another room, when your back is turned, when your mouth is covered, or when you are chewing food.

THI offers a **Communication Strategy Assessment & Consultation** which **customizes** a program of specific steps and parameters established for your highest communication potential. All hearing impaired along with their close family members are encouraged to begin this program.

Dr. Will Smith is Director of Audiology at Tennessee Hearing Instruments in Knoxville, Tennessee, East Tennessee's choice for quality hearing care for more than 45 years.



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