



Making Conversation Easier

Although hearing aids have become very advanced, they cannot restore a person's hearing. Today's instruments may offer more flexibility and better sound quality than ever before, but they cannot repair a damaged hearing nerve or revive a person's ability to interpret what they hear.

There are, however, techniques that a supportive family can adopt to make it easier for a hard-of-hearing relative to follow a conversation. This booklet outlines a method of speaking that is clearly understood and easily adopted into daily life. This method is called Clear Speech.

Producing Clear Speech

By talking in a clear and concise manner, we are able to produce definite changes to the pattern of speech. We can produce sounds more completely without missing certain elements or dropping word endings. Naturally, speech becomes slower and louder and the stress on certain words or syllables becomes more obvious. Combined with the fitting of quality hearing instruments, these changes are exactly what is needed for a hard-of-hearing person to improve their ability to follow a conversation.

Clear Speech is when the speaker attempts to express every word and sentence in a precise, accurate and fully formed manner.



Clear Speech is:

- Accurate and fully formed
- Naturally slower (This happens automatically when you attempt to be clearer.)
- Naturally louder (Your voice raises automatically when you attempt to be clearer.)
- Lively, with a full range of voice intonation (tone) and stress on key words
- Characterized by pauses between all phrases and sentences.

Clear Speech is not a substitute for other well-known communication habits. You still need to reduce background noise, and avoid trying to communicate from a different room or with your back turned. You should also make sure that your face is well lit (avoid standing with your back to the light).

For more information please read "Good Communication Habits".

Instructions for Clear Speech

This section contains a series of exercises designed to take you to a point where you can confidently and spontaneously communicate in Clear Speech mode. Your hearing care professional has shown you the technique in his practice. Now take this booklet home and practice the exercises.

When practicing for Clear Speech, imagine you are speaking to your hard-of-hearing friend or relative. Speak as clearly and precisely as possible. Do not try to speak louder or more slowly. Rather, try to express each word as accurately as you can.



Exercise 1

Say the sentence:

**"The ship left on a two week
cruise"**

This is the Target Sentence -the sounds we aim to produce.

In a normal conversational speaking voice, this sentence would probably sound more like this:

"The Shiplef ona twoweecruise"

Some of the vowels are missing, the "t" at the end of "left" disappeared, and the "k" of week became merged into the "c" of "cruise".

In a Clear Speech style, the sentence would be:

**"The ship left on a two week
cruise"**

The vowels sound the way they are supposed to, the "t" at the end of "left" has reappeared, and natural pauses are inserted after "left", "two" and "week".

Exercise 2

Target sentence:

**"We were looking for a
white truck to buy"**

In conversation:

"We're lookin for a whitruck tabuy"

In Clear Speech:

**"We were looking for a white
truck to buy"**

The underlined words are the key words that need to be stressed, after which you should insert natural pauses to emphasize the natural breaks in the sentence. You will also notice that no words are merged (e.g. we're) as in the conversational version. Nor are any words or sounds dropped.

Exercise 3

In the following sentences we have underlined key words and words that you need to emphasize. By emphasizing the key words and by breaking the sentence down into natural phrases, you are more able to produce each word completely.

Each speech sound, especially the consonants, becomes very distinct. Now say the sentences in Clear Speech. Be sure to express every sound.

"Who ate the last piece of cake?"

"Please send that letter in the mail."

"The rooster ran all over the barnyard."

"The dog was waiting in the car."

"The ballerina looked lovely in a pink and white outfit."

Exercise 4

Now you should underline key words, and break the following sentences into natural phrases. Then say them in Clear Speech.

"Ice cream was all over the child's face."

"We could see the snow capped peaks in the distance."

"The sun is just coming up behind the trees."

"Father used a ladder to get on the roof."

"We held a birthday party on a sunny day in the park."

"His castle sat high upon the wooded hill."

Exercise 5

Remembering to use Clear Speech when repeating certain sentences is one thing, but the process is more difficult when thinking and speaking at the same time. However, in order for Clear Speech to become automatic in conversation with the hard-of-hearing individual, it is important to practice Clear Speech during normal conversations too.

Talk to your hard-of-hearing relative on the following topics for two or three minutes. Remember to concentrate on expressing every sound in every word. Do not rush. Use lively inflection. Keep in mind that you want every single part of your message to be understood.

- Give directions to the local library
- Describe how to make a pot of tea
- Describe the last family holiday
- Describe the different towns or homes in which you have lived

Each time, ask your relative whether all the speech was clear and easy to understand. Check that your voice sounded natural too.

Remember, Clear Speech requires concentration and effort. Being able to switch automatically to Clear Speech mode requires daily practice until it becomes natural.

Information at a click!

For more information on hearing and hearing loss please visit our Internet site: www.oticonus.com.

