

## Hearing Assistance in Aged Care In-service Training Pack

The following resources are designed to aid staff in assisting hearing impaired clients in aged care.

### *Hearing Assistance in Aged Care video*

The video *Hearing Assistance in Aged Care* can be shown in a 30 minute in-service training session. The video can be viewed or downloaded from this website.

**Part A** of the video opens with aged care clients talking about their experience of hearing loss and how hearing impairment impacted on their quality of life. The video then looks at effective ways of speaking to someone with a hearing loss.

**Part B** demonstrates the skills needed by staff to assist aged care clients with their hearing aids and to trouble shoot commonly experienced problems.

### *Assessment of Learning from the Hearing Assistance in Aged Care video*

The **questionnaire** is designed to test essential knowledge gained from the video as an aid to learning and as a benchmark for necessary skills in this area of personal care. The questionnaire may be used by a trainer with a group of trainees or by an individual viewer.

Where the questionnaire is used it may be appropriate to show the video segment by segment (i.e. Part A, Part B Section 1 and then Section 2). At the end of each segment pause the video and complete the corresponding section of the questionnaire. Then replay the last section of the video to check answers before moving on to next segment of the video.

### *Hearing Assistance Prompt Sheets for personal carers and nurses*

These sheets are designed as a practical aid for carers and nurses in managing and trouble shooting clients hearing aids.

It is recommended that the two sheets be copied double sided on a coloured sheet of paper and then laminated. This is a pdf document. A Word version may be requested from [info@deafnessforum.org.au](mailto:info@deafnessforum.org.au) so that it can be altered to accommodate facility specific items (e.g. name of relevant records).

(These are very compact documents with tight formatting and it is highly desirable that the prompt sheets be limited to a single card.)

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The video *Hearing Assistance in Aged Care* and the accompanying *Good Practice Guide* that provides additional reference material and suggestions for establishing an effective hearing assistance program are freely available to view and download at:

[www.deafnessforum.org.au/index.php/publications/112-uncategorised/240-never-too-late-to-hear-better](http://www.deafnessforum.org.au/index.php/publications/112-uncategorised/240-never-too-late-to-hear-better)

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**Assessment of Learning from the  
*Hearing Assistance in Aged Care* video**

**PART A**

<b>Focus questions</b>	<b>Answers</b>
1. What number one enemy of hearing impaired people is likely to interfere with their easy participation in a conversation – even with a mild hearing loss?	
2. What are some of the most unfortunate side effects of hearing loss?	
3. What are some common behaviours that indicate a person may have a hearing loss?	
4. Why is getting used to a hearing aid often difficult?	
5. Is it true that the old saying “use it or lose it” applies to hearing?	

Focus questions	Answers
<p>6. What are important tactics and techniques to use to help a hearing impaired person more easily understand what you are saying?</p> <p><i>Remember: Practice is the key to applying these techniques.</i></p>	
<p>7. Are vowels or consonants more affected when high pitched speech sounds are not heard clearly?</p>	
<p>8. Are vowels or consonants more important in giving words their meaning?</p>	
<p>9. If a hearing impaired person has difficulty understanding what is said, what is the critical question to ask oneself?</p>	

## PART B - Section 1

Focus questions	Answers
10. How can you know if an aid is for the user's left ear?	
11. Before inserting an ITE aid how will you normally know that it is the right way up? <i>An aid should be turned off before it is inserted into the ear.</i>	
12. Once settled into the ear how is it turned on?	
13. If an ITE aid then whistles, what should you do to stop it whistling?	
14. After the mould of a BTE aid is inserted into the ear canal, why is it then twisted towards the back of the head before being fully fitted into the outer ear?	
15. What should be done if a BTE aid whistles after the mould has been correctly inserted into the ear?	
16. After an aid has been correctly inserted into the ear and any whistling stopped, what should be the final check to ensure that it is functioning satisfactorily?	
17. After turning a BTE aid off, how do you withdraw its mould from the ear?	

Focus questions	Answers
18. What are three things that can easily damage hearing aids?	1. 2. 3.
19. Why may it be advisable for aids be placing in a de-humidifier container when they are not in use?	
20. What are the initials used to describe the two common types of hearing aids?	1. 2.
21. What other programs are commonly available? <i>When a hearing aid is first turned on it will be on a program that is generally suitable.</i>	
22. When may “telecoils” be useful?	
23. If a BTE aid has a wheel with which to change the volume, which way is it turned to make it louder?  ..... and which way on an ITE aid?	
24. To avoid possible spread of infections, what should be done before handling someone’s hearing aid?	

Focus questions	Answers
25. When a hearing aid is not being used and is placed in its storage box or dehumidifier container, why should the battery compartment be left open (with the battery in it)?	
26. What are the brush and pick (wire loop) on a cleaning tool used for?	
27. Why must a cleaning tool, and wipes used to clean the outside of an aid, only be used for one person's aids?	
28. What is the small magnet on the end of a cleaning tool used for?	
29. Why is it important to document and report frequent removal of wax from a BTE mould or an ITE aid?	
30. What is an easy way to check if an aid is working?	
31. If an aid is not working, what are the three checks you should make first?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> </ol>
32. What are the two things about a new battery which should be checked before it is placed in an aid's battery casing?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> </ol>

## PART B - Section 2

Focus questions	Answers
33. How can corrosion be removed from battery contacts?	
34. What are the steps in washing the mould of a BTE aid and what precautions are necessary?	
35. Why should <i>only</i> the pick (wire loop) on a cleaning tool be used to remove wax from an ITE aid's sound hole?	
36. If applying lubricant to a BTE mould or an ITE aid what should be avoided?	
37. What should and should not be done if an aid gets wet?	
38. How should new tubing on a BTE aid mould be cut to the right length for the user?  <i>Note: Replacement tubing and domes for "lose fit aids" are supplied in the correct length and size for the individual user so no adjustments are necessary.</i>	

## Prompt Card: Daily Hearing Assistance from Personal Carers

### Effective communication

- Speak clearly – if necessary a little slower and louder. *Don't shout.*
- Reduce background noise – turn off TV, music etc.
- Face client at same eye level about 1m apart.
- Have light on your face and not in client's eyes.
- Keep your hands away from your face.
- If you're not understood, say the same thing differently – don't just repeat it.

### Inserting hearing aid into ear

1. Wash hands or wipe with antibacterial gel.
2. Wipe aid with tissue and brush away any wax from mould, using client's **own** wax brush.
3. Close battery casing carefully then cup hand around aid. It should whistle. (If necessary hold close to your ear to check for a quiet whistle.)
  - *If no whistle* - open battery casing and check that battery has been inserted correctly then fully close battery door and cup hand check again for whistle.
  - *If still no whistle* - change battery.
  - *If still no whistle* - **personal carer should advise supervisor promptly.**
4. Insert mould carefully and snugly into correct ear (Red - Right, blue –left).  
With a behind the ear aid, ensure that tubing is not twisted or pinched and that aid sits comfortably behind ear.
  - *If an aid continues to whistle after insertion* - ensure mould is sitting snugly in the correct ear and if volume can be adjusted try turning it down.
  - *If whistling continues* - **personal carer should advise supervisor promptly.**
5. Ask client one or two straight forward questions in a normal voice.
  - *If not understood and volume can be adjusted* - try turning it up.
  - *If still not understood* - **personal carer should advise supervisor promptly.**

Personal care note: Do not use hairspray or dryer/blower near hearing aids. Turn off, and preferably remove aids while face shaving with electric razor.

### Removing and storing aids

(Normally undertaken at bedtime or if aid is malfunctioning.

If aid is not in the client's ear or storage container look for it before it is lost!)

1. Open battery casing with thumb nail.
2. Gently withdraw mould from ear and place in storage container ensuring battery door is partly open and battery remains in the casing.

### Changing a battery

(If battery lost or fails between routine changes)

1. Open battery casing carefully with thumb nail.
2. Remove and discard battery, if possible using magnetic tip of wax brush to lift it out.
3. Check battery size and use by date.
4. Peel new battery off vinyl tab in packet and insert into casing with flat side (marked +) facing upwards, then gently close battery door fully.
5. Cup hand check for whistle.

**To perform basic trouble shooting see over page.**

## Prompt Card: Basic Trouble Shooting

### Routine weekly assistance

- Clean aids with an alco wipe and moulds/tubing with brush or pick. If necessary wash moulds and tubing.
- Order replacement batteries for clients needing this assistance.
- Update records.

### Trouble shooting

Trouble shooting is often carried out in conjunction with the **routine (normally weekly) battery change** undertaken on the same day each week (or more frequently if necessary).

### Washing mould and tubing

Washing mould and tubing of a behind the ear aid where wax cannot be removed with client's wax cleaning brush, hook or a blue wire. Wash one mould at a time to ensure moulds are attached to correct aids.

1. Disconnect tubing from aid (holding the hook, not body of the aid). Keep aid away from water.
2. Place mould and tubing in a container, e.g. a small tea strainer or cup. Flow warm water through the tubing and mould until clear of wax. If necessary use soapy water and rinse thoroughly afterwards. Blow moisture from tubing and mould with a small puffer until completely dry. (Otherwise shake firmly and drain overnight in a secure place with a note.)

### No sound

- Does battery need to be changed?
- Open then close battery door to re-set to start program (in case T-switch on).
- Is battery fitted correctly and battery door fully closed?
- Is mould and/or tubing blocked by wax and/or moisture? If unsure, *carefully* disconnect tubing from aid (holding the hook, not body of the aid). If aid then whistles there is a blockage in the mould or tubing.

### Whistling

- Is mould fitted correctly in the ear?
- If volume can be adjusted, is it too high?
- Is the mould too loose? Sometimes a light smear of ear lubricant on sides of the mould will stop the whistling.
- An old mould or tubing may have shrunk or cracked. If so, send to hearing services provider for replacement.
- Is ear canal blocked by wax?

### Sound weak

- Does battery need changing?
- If volume can be adjusted, is it too low?
- Is mould and/or tubing partly blocked by wax or moisture?
- Is tubing twisted, pinched or shrunk with age? If necessary send to hearing services provider for replacement.
- Is there too much wax in the ear canal?
- If none of the above, client's hearing may have deteriorated and need reassessment.

### If trouble shooting is unsuccessful

- Contact the client's hearing services provider.
- If aid needs repair mail to hearing services provider in a rigid container.
- Ear canals must be reasonably clear of **WAX** before hearing can be assessed or hearing aids fitted. Wax can also cause temporary hearing loss and cause aids to whistle. Arrange for ear drops and if necessary syringing to clear wax.

### Monitor all clients for signs of hearing loss

If necessary arrange hearing assessments and assist eligible clients to apply for a Hearing Services Voucher – starting with obtaining the prescribed Medical Certificate.

**Some common indicators of hearing loss** - any one of which could indicate the need for testing:

- Repetition frequently requested
- Loud volume of TV or radio
- Difficulty understanding conversation in groups or noise
- Watches speaker's face and gestures intently
- Misses what is said, especially if speaker is not facing them
- Difficulty hearing phone 'rings' and / or hearing a speaker on the phone
- Responds only to loud speech or sounds and responses sometimes inconsistent with conversation
- Withdrawing from social activities