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Hearing Success at HearingSuccess.com

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Advertorial

Imagine for a moment you had recently had knee replacement surgery. When being discharged you were armed with some exercises to follow from the physiotherapist who had worked with you post-op. At your surgical follow-up the surgeon removed your stitches and tested the range of movement in your knee. They enquired as to how you were managing with the exercises.

Now imagine this same scenario, without the physiotherapy. Can you? If you had the surgery but no follow-up rehabilitation plan would you be satisfied with your management?

You know where I am going with this.

We all want the same thing. For those that seek our care with their hearing impairment to have the best possible outcomes, in the widest range of listening environments possible. While the advances in technology continue to make real differences in the quality of sound people experience, the hearing devices are not a complete management plan.

Thinking about some of your recent hearing aid fitting sessions, how much time was taken up with Bluetooth pairing, app and multifunction button explanations?

Many of those seeking your help with their hearing and listening have had the loss for some years. Applying the best fitted devices to aid them is essential for providing stimulation for that impoverished auditory system. However, is there not more we can do to help them in acclimatizing to the renewed auditory stimulation, to maximize the benefit from the devices that have been fitted?

Phonak and Advanced Bionics have partnered together to offer some Auditory Skills Training (AST) Tools, available to clinicians and clients alike (link to: https://hearingsuccess.com/intro).

HearingSuccess.com is a suite of free Auditory Skills Training resources that can provide additional support to those you have recently fitted with hearing technology. Before reviewing some of the tools, let us review some common questions asked about Auditory Skills Training.

What is Auditory Skills Training?

Auditory Training is the classic term referring to what we describe as Auditory Skills Training. It is the practice of improving auditory skills through structured, repetitive listening exercises. In

particular, Auditory Skills Training uses active listening exercises to train the brain to interpret auditory stimuli in order to understand spoken language with greater accuracy and less effort.

The 2021 World Health Organization (WHO) Report on Hearing acknowledged the importance of auditory training in hearing healthcare saying that “auditory training helps people better use hearing in all situations.”[1]

Furthermore literature underlying auditory plasticity also suggests that auditory training is useful to train the brain to interpret auditory information [2,3,4] . Just because someone starts to use hearing technology doesn’t mean their brain will immediately learn to make sense of the input it now receives.

As audiologists you aim to provide comprehensive hearing healthcare to help your clients hear and communicate better. You routinely offer diagnostic assessment, comprehensive case history taking, needs assessment and the recommendation, fitting and counseling on the technology applied.

However, Auditory Skills Training (AST) is often the missing piece in hearing healthcare.[5] It is estimated that less than 10% of Audiologists offer AST to their clients.[6]

Common barriers to offering AST are the following:

a. Reimbursement issues
b. Clear standards and evidence
c. Time
d. Accessibility to the clinic for additional appointments
e. The client’s lack of a daily communication partner

The **HearingSuccess.com** portal can overcome all of the above. Let us first look at what else AST can offer you and your clients.

What benefits does Auditory Skills Training offer?



In a nutshell, AST can provide your clients with the above benefits; and for you, a satisfied client who has received holistic and comprehensive hearing healthcare.

A study by Olson et al, 2013 showed that both new and experienced hearing aid users benefit from auditory training to improve their ability to understand speech in quiet and noise. However, new users demonstrated greater benefit, especially when the training was provided early in the hearing

aid fitting process. They found that sentence recognition improved by 16-20% when the AST was provided within the first few weeks after a hearing aid fitting.[7] This also included an improvement in speech in noise. Other studies have shown greater word recognition in various SNRs, with reduced effort. While the jury is still out on how robust these responses are over time and how readily they transfer into day to day communication, they do increase the client's confidence and adjustment to their technology. This has been found to increase wearing time and reduce returns.[8]

How can you incorporate Speech Training in your day to day hearing aid fittings?

To address some of the potential barriers listed earlier, one solution could be providing AST to your clients via an online program. The **HearingSuccess** program is completely online, and incurs no cost to your clinic or to your client. Clients can do the training at their own pace, in their own home. And for those who live alone and lack a daily conversation partner, it gives them a chance to practice listening with their new hearing aids on a regular basis. As a clinician you have free access to and can choose to review your client's results.

Tell me more about HearingSuccess.com:

To support you and your clients, Phonak and Advanced Bionics have come together to offer the **HearingSuccess portal**, a comprehensive online resource for children and adults. For adults, the portal (HearingSuccess.com) is a comprehensive online resource that contains AST tools that your clients can use independently. Registration is free and can easily be set up at your fitting appointment should they have their tablet, computer or phone with them.



Offering AT through the **HearingSuccess** portal will allow you to:

- differentiate your services
- promote individualized care
- strengthen clinical outcomes for your clients

You may also be able to increase adoption and satisfaction with the services you offer and further improve the quality of lifeof the clients you serve. Once your client is registered at

HearingSuccess.com, resources are automatically tailored based on the registrant's age (child, adult) and type of hearing technology used (CI, hearing aid).

As a professional, you can also register and use HearingSuccess as a resource directory to guide in-clinic or at-home practice recommendations for your clients. You will have access to the suite of digital resources in one place, regardless of your clients' needs and their technology.

But wait…there is more!

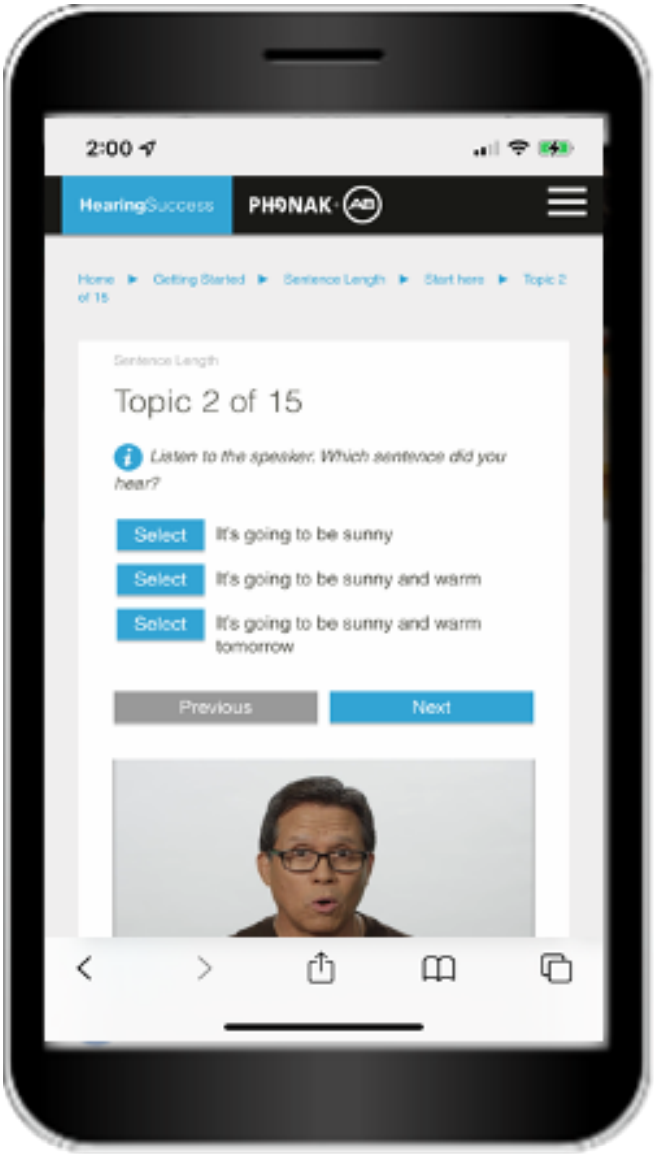
The portal includes other resources , such as educational pieces to learn more about hearing aids, cochlear implants and other hearing assistive technologies and links to online communities for those whose lives have been touched by hearing loss.

Inside the HearingSuccess portal, two programs are specifically designed to provide AST for adults: **Word**Success™ and **Sound**Success™. Each of these can be used by adults at home independently or with you as a listening coach.

WordSuccess is a **mobile app available for iOS and Android** designed to provide practice with word and phrase discrimination in quiet and noise. Once the app is downloaded, there are over 2,300 recorded stimuli. It offers increasing levels of difficulty, including live voice, recorded voice and noise, allowing users to progress at their own pace. It can be used at home or on the go, and as soon as hearing technology is discussed. The app automatically tracks progress of the client and this can be shared with you.



SoundSuccess is an online listening program that contains functional exercises to practice the ability to perceive and understand spoken language. It allows the user to individualize the program with increasing levels of complexity: using speech-reading and listening, listening alone, adding different levels of noise, and choosing between six different speakers with different dialects. It is web-based, allowing listening skills to be practiced at home.



The program provides immediate feedback, allowing the listener to build confidence as they progress through the hierarchy of exercises.

Inside the HearingSuccess portal there are a further free tools that are specifically designed to foster language-rich interactions to support the development of listening and spoken language in children with hearing loss, at home:

- **BabyBeats™ early intervention resource**
- **The Listening Room™**

BabyBeats is an app that guides professionals and parents in using musical activities to assist with developing early listening skills and developing the hearing centres in the brain responsible for listening, language and learning. Parents and babies will bond, play and learn together.



The Listening Room includes hundreds of **fun, interactive activities to support the development of listening and spoken language** in very young and school age children.



So getting your clients started on AST is as easy as Introducing **HearingSuccess** early in the aural rehabilitation process. You can:

- Help your patients **register** for HearingSuccess.com
- **Review t**he resources available at HearingSuccess.com
- **Demonstrate** HearingSuccess.com to your client
- **Recommend** HearingSuccess.com to your clients verbally and in your evaluation report

Interested in learning more? Visit *Phonak AudiologyBlog* for interesting articles about Auditory Skills Training and many other topics:

- https://audiologyblog.phonakpro.com/
- https://audiologyblog.phonakpro.com/auditory-skills-training-anytime-anywhere/
- https://audiologyblog.phonakpro.com/what-does-the-world-report-on-hearing-tell-us-about-the-future-of-hearing-healthcare/
- https://audiologyblog.phonakpro.com/more-than-just-technology/

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