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A Cheat Sheet of What People with Hearing Loss Need from Their Audiologist

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You're a trained hearing care professional – you know this stuff.

But your clients know this stuff too. Eventually, but too many of us have learned it the old-fashioned, trial-and-error way, when we don't flourish with our first hearing care professionals. (You and your colleagues and staff don't want to fall into the ***error*** category.)

What We Need From Our Audiologist

- A **safe place** offering **peace of mind** that our hearing loss, communication needs, and hearing wellness are understood and professionally treated.
- Staff with superior communication skills:
  - All spoken exchanges are face forward, using **clear speech** (moderately paced with adequate volume and facial expressions that match words), even if it's just a few words such as *thank you,* or *have a seat.* The fewer times we have to say *pardon* in your office, the better we will feel.
- A compassionate hearing care professional with SUPER-superior communication skills who:
  - Asks questions
  - Invites questions
  - Listens to the answers
  - Offers answers
- Hearing assessment that offers:
  - A basic understanding of how the sense of hearing works and possible or probable causes of our hearing loss
  - Explanation of the assessment process, every time.
  - Awareness of our possible emotional stress while in sound booth
  - Explanation of results: A written analysis of the audiogram, in plain language, helps us understand a chart that, while crystal-clear to you, may still be mud-clear to us.
- Follow-up to the hearing assessment:
  - Discussion of hearing technology that meets *our* needs, not only the degree/type of hearing loss but financial and aesthetic issues, but *why* this is being recommended.

    - Skill at creating ear molds, hearing aid fitting and never resting or losing patience until we are happy with the end-game fit and sound. (Is this too much to ask?)

- Recommendation of crucial strategic bookends to hearing technology:
    - Instill and strengthen the belief in your clients that we have the right to participate, to hear *and* be heard.
    - Promote self-advocacy skills, which may require some role play
    - Offer family sessions to establish good communication practices for relationships.
    - Resources: books, peer support groups, social media accounts
    - Self-care practices, including mindfulness and meditation, that improve sleep, fitness, and stress reduction

- Referral to other professional services when necessary:
    - Mental or medical health care
    - Tinnitus specialists

- A communication-friendly practice and front office:
    - A warm welcome at the first visit – and every appointment thereafter
    - Willingness to communicate by email
    - Virtual appointments
    - Tablet with speech-to-text at front of house
    - Hearing-related reading material in waiting area
    - Written synopsis of visit for clients who would benefit

When people with hearing loss feel supported with the above conditions, we know we are in the right clinic with the right hearing care professional.