

Transition Year 9

Communication

Tactics

What is Transition?

Transition is a planned process to help you prepare for adulthood. All young people go through transition; this includes careers guidance in school and anyone who helps you to make decisions about what to do when you are sixteen. Have you thought about your options?

Transition also includes health care, as a young person it is likely your parent/guardian help you by making appointments on your behalf or reminding you to wear your hearing aids. As you get older you may need to begin to take more responsibility for your care. Within Audiology, Transition focuses on your hearing and communication needs.

Why is Transition important?

Transition is important to help you achieve your goals. It is important you are aware of the support available to you if you decide to stay at school, attend college/university or start working. Support is available and may include communication support (someone to help take notes in classes or meetings), equipment to help alongside your hearing aids and/or financial support.

What Happens next?

As you get older it is important to take more responsibility for your hearing and hearing aids. Do you change your own batteries, clean and retube your ear moulds?

Each year you will have a review of your hearing and hearing aids. At each review you will be given more information as it is needed. We will also begin encouraging you to take care of your

own hearing aids – don't worry we will show you what to do and if you ever feel unsure or worried speak to your audiologist!

When you are sixteen you will be invited to a Transition appointment with the Hearing Therapist. The Hearing Therapist will provide information and support as you begin the transition into Adult Audiology Services.

Communication

Communication is 55% non-verbal, 38% tone of voice and you may find this surprising but only 7% is the words you say! You can gain a lot of information from non-verbal communication by watching body language, facial expression, lip-reading and gestures. **Hearing aids help but they do not replace normal hearing or good communication skills!**

When responsibility for communication is shared between the speaker and listener communication works well which reduces the need for repetition. The responsibility for good communication is 50/50 between you and the other person.

When we use good communication strategies it supports our hearing and helps to reduce frustration, annoyance or upset when we have difficulty following a conversation.

Communication Environment

Here are some simple suggestions that can make communication easier!

- Make others aware that they need **to get your attention before speaking** – you need to know, so that you can give listening your full attention.
- **Make sure you can see the person speaking**. You need to see their face to pick up on the non-verbal communication.
- **Room acoustics** can make a difference, large echoey spaces are much more difficult as the sound becomes distorted from bouncing off hard surfaces. Soft furnishings such as carpets, sofas and cushions help to absorb noise.
- **Reduce the distance** between you and the person you want to hear, around 3-6 feet is an ideal distance. If you are too far away or too close lip reading can be difficult. It is important to note if you have hearing aids they will also work better within this distance, the further away someone gets the less likely you will hear them!
- A room with **good lighting** helps you make the most of facial expression, lip reading and gestures!

- Sit or stand at the **same level as the person you are talking to.**
- In a noisy environment **sit with your back to the wall** to focus you more towards what you want to hear in front of you rather than being in the middle of a noisy room with sound coming in all around you.
- In noisy environments **avoid sitting near noise sources** such as entrances, exits, kitchen areas and near speakers.

Confidence in Communication

- Be honest and **tell people you have a hearing loss**. This helps them to understand if you miss something it is because you didn't hear them rather than you were not listening or paying attention.
- Ask people to **look at you, speak clearly and steadily** if needed. Often people do not know how to help, some people for example will shout but this actually makes it harder to hear as their speech becomes distorted and its harder to lip read. Tell them what you need them to do, to hear them more clearly.
- **Tell people how they can help**. Rather than simply saying 'pardon' or 'can you repeat that' give people an idea of what would help such as 'I missed what you said as you were covering your mouth could you say it again'.
- If you have already asked for repetition and not heard the reply think about what would help – if they are in the next room, not looking at you, mumbling or covering their mouth no matter how many times they repeat themselves you are unlikely to hear causing frustration for both people involved. Make others aware you need to be at a **conversational distance**.

- Rather than asking people to repeat try **asking questions** or ask for the speaker to **rephrase** if necessary – you may get more information when put another way.
- If you heard part of a sentence repeat back the part you did hear and **ask them to fill in the blanks** rather than getting someone to repeat the whole sentence.
- Ask people to speak one at a time.
- **Reduce background noise** or move to a quieter room. For example turn off the TV, radio or stop the kettle boiling while someone is trying to talk to you.
- Ask a friend or family member to act as a ‘communication partner’ and give you key words to cue you into a conversation if you have missed something.
- **Relax** so you can focus your attention on listening. Try not to become anxious or stressed- you won’t be able to hear so well!

Tips for school

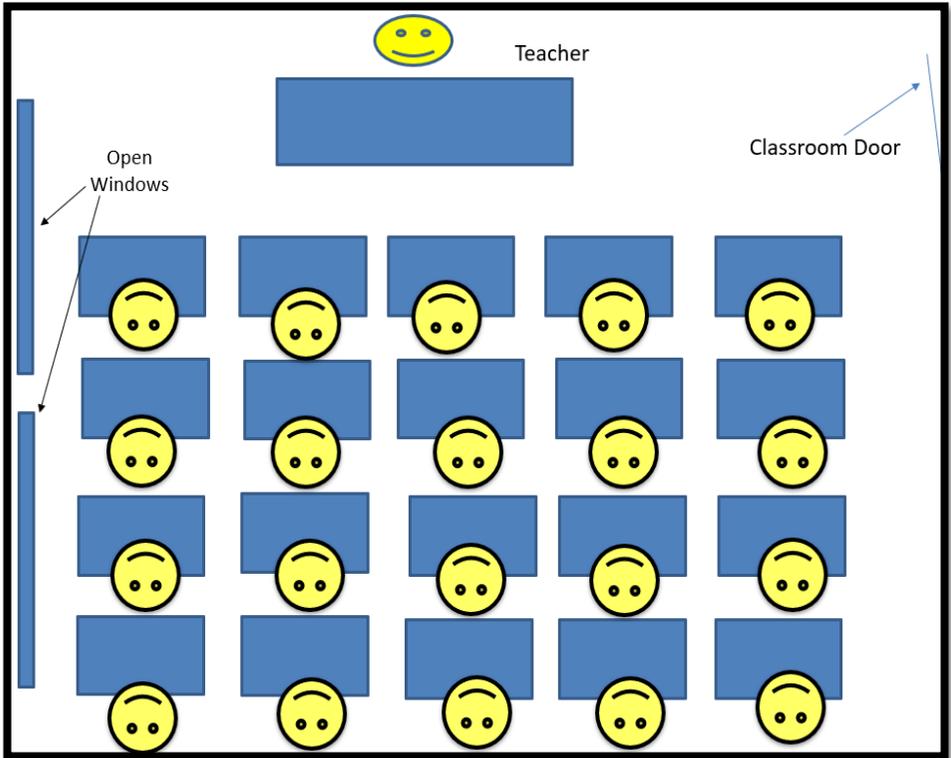
- **Make sure all your teachers are aware of your hearing loss.** If your teachers are aware of your hearing loss they can try to talk whilst facing the class rather than looking in the opposite direction – for example talking whilst writing on the blackboard/whiteboard.
- If you have missed something in a lesson either raise your hand and inform your teacher or **ask the teacher** at the end of the lesson.
- Having a **guideline of the topic/s to be covered** in each lesson can be helpful, perhaps ask for handouts in advance or for a brief lesson plan to be written on the board.
- Request homework to be **written down** rather than given verbally. Or perhaps ask the teacher to check what you have written in your homework journal.
- **Choose the best seat** which reduces the distance between you and the teacher as much as possible and will also give you a good view of the teacher so you can pick up on body language/gestures/lip reading.

- During discussions or group work, **chairs arranged in a circle** may be helpful, so you can see the people speaking and lipread. You could also ask for a quieter room to work in or alternatively request that your group is able to sit in a quieter area of the room with distance between your group and others.
- **Tell friends what they could do to help**, for example speak one a time, get your attention before speaking or perhaps move to a quieter area away from background noise.

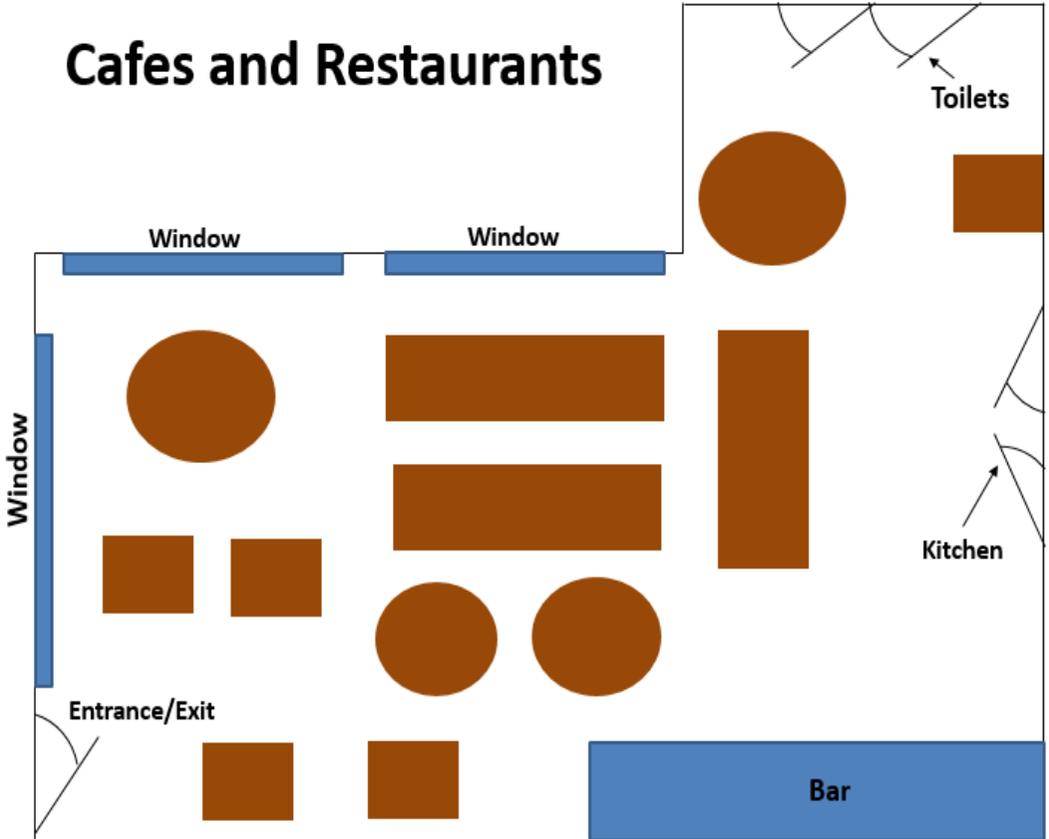
Think about the situations you find difficult...perhaps at school, with friends or when with your family. Can you think of anything that might help you to hear in these situations? For example could you reduce background noise by turning down the TV to hear conversation or could you choose a different seat in school so you are nearer the teacher?

Activity: Using what you have learned about communication tactics from this leaflet, where would you sit? What would you do to improve your hearing in these situations?

School



Cafes and Restaurants



Websites you may find helpful:

<https://www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/live-well/communicate-well/communication-tips/>

<https://www.ndcs.org.uk/information-and-support/being-deaf-friendly/>

<https://www.buzz.org.uk/looksmilechat/>

<https://www.hearinglink.org/living/lipreading-communicating/>

Reference: Successful transitions to adulthood for deaf young people in England. Published by the National Deaf Children's Society © March 2016

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Chime provides NHS Audiology Services for NHS Devon - Mid, East and Exeter areas. From 1st May 2011 the existing audiology department including staff and equipment transferred to Chime - the new Social Enterprise Company. Chime is located at the RD&E Foundation Trust (but is separately managed).