

Healthwise SVUH

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'Can you speak louder please?'... But will that help the listener to hear?

Brigid Mac Sweeney, Director, Adult Hearing Rehabilitation.

'Why does everyone mumble, nowadays?'

'I can hear you, but I don't know what you're saying.'
'I'm fine in a one-to-one conversation but I can't cope with groups of people.' *'I hear nothing in this background noise.'*
'I find it difficult to hear names and phone numbers'....

These words have come from people who are experiencing the early stages of an acquired hearing loss which has affected the inner ear known as sensorineural hearing loss.

Understanding inner ear sensorineural loss

Sensorineural loss is characterised by an increasing loss in high frequency sounds which impair the clarity of speech.

The conditions which give rise to sensorineural loss – often called 'nerve deafness' - are the ageing process, prolonged exposure to noise, ear-poisoning drugs, Ménière's Disease, Meningitis, viral infection and accidents – such as fracture of the skull or exposure to sudden explosive blasts.

The most common of these is the age-related one. It has been estimated that about 25% of 65 year olds have some degree of sensorineural loss. At ages 70 and 80 the percentages increase to 33% and 50% respectively.

Communication Breakdown

Working with patients with sensorineural loss can cause regular communication breakdown and lead to feelings of anxiety, frustration and incompetence on both sides of the communication partnership. To address this problem both patients and staff should increase their awareness and improve their communication behaviour. In a hospital setting it is not always easy to slow down, speak clearly, stop unnecessary movements and make adjustments to the communication environment (e.g. eliminate noise).

Hospital Patients & Hearing Loss

Patients with a hearing loss are particularly vulnerable in a hospital setting when important information and interpersonal communication is not accessible. Every effort should be made to tell them all they need to know regarding their medical condition, procedures, medication and all relevant hospital information.

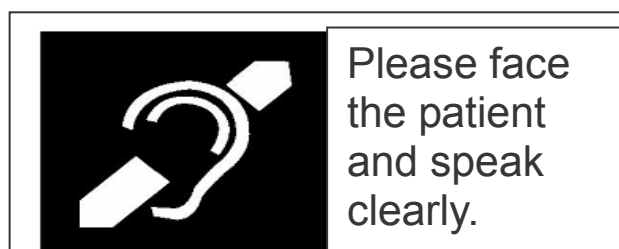
Patients should be allowed to wear their hearing aids up to the point of procedure. There should also be a policy in place to ensure the safe storage of hearing aids. If spoken communication is too difficult, it should be written down. It is difficult for hospital personnel under pressure to observe all the rules of good communication, but they should remember that spoken communication is neither seen nor heard when they are wearing surgical masks!

Aural Rehabilitation: to follow hearing aids

Aural Rehabilitation (AR), which is often called Hearing Therapy, addresses all these aspects of an acquired sensorineural hearing loss. This is a holistic support system of providing self enabling building blocks. The re-building process includes information, counselling, further assistive technology, coping strategies, assertiveness training, communication therapy which includes lip-reading and family support.

Deaf Hear Hospital Pack

DeafHear has assembled a useful Hospital Pack for patients with a hearing loss. This includes hearing loss identification stickers for patient files, communication guidelines for staff, useful hospital information for patients and storage bags for their hearing aids when removed.



The Hospital Pack has been available since Sept' 09.

DeafHear.ie

AR supports are available from all of our resource centres. For further information contact us at head office in Dublin:

DeafHear.ie, 35 North Frederick Street, Dublin 1.

Tel: (01) 8175700

Fax: (01) 8723816

Email: info@deafhear.ie Website: www.deafhear.ie

WOULD YOU LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE TO A FUTURE EDITION TO HEALTHWISE?

Contributions can be sent to Greg Conlon, Preventive Medicine: g.conlon@svuh.ie.

The Arts and Health

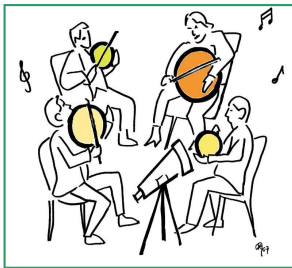
“Music...can name the unnameable
and communicate the unknowable”



Leonard Bernstein, renowned conductor and musician.

Background to the Arts & Health

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines health as a ‘state of complete psychological, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity’. This definition indicates that health services should consider ‘health’ as a wide concept that combines the medical, social, psychological, environmental and spiritual dimensions of well being. It is from this perspective that arts are used in a variety of ways with patients, to meet the needs of the whole person and as a tool to enhance individual health and well being.



There is a wealth of international experience to support the use of the arts in health. For example, the US and the UK have a long history of employing both Arts Officers and Arts Therapists in many healthcare settings. The Chelsea and

Westminster NHS Trust in London have recently completed one of the first major quantitative research projects into the arts in health. This three year study indicates that using visual art and music with women during labour can reduce labour time by two hours, whilst anxiety and depression rates in cancer patients were significantly reduced by the use of music and visual art during treatments.

Leading Irish examples of the use of the arts in health include the Coronary Care Unit here in SVUH which plays music during rest times for patients. The Waterford Healing Arts Trust and the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast also organise programmes. The HSE recently published ‘The Practice of Arts in Healthcare’ to give guidelines to health services when introducing arts programmes.

Why the arts in a healthcare environment?

The ability to respond to sound and pitch is one of the earliest responses in infants and is often retained despite disability or brain damage. Just as we respond to music in our own lives, so too in a hospital music can be used to positive effect. It can be used to ease anxiety for patients, motivate patients when completing exercise and as a social activity, to aid relaxation and reduce agitation.

Benefits of using the arts in health

The Arts Council publication ‘The Arts and Health Handbook’ summarises some of the benefits of the arts in healthcare as follows:

To the health organisation:

- Reduction in stress within the environment
- More positive experience of the healthcare environment for staff, service users and visitors
- Improved perceptions of the organisation
- More attractive to potential clients

To service users:

- Enhanced recovery
- Sense of ownership of the environment
- Enhanced relationships with staff
- More positive experience of health service
- Increased well-being and self-confidence
- Increased capacity for creative and critical thinking skills
- Some participants develop a latent talent

To staff:

- Improved working environment
- Stronger sense of community
- Enhanced awareness and appreciation of both service users and staff as individuals



References

The Arts and Health, A Practical Guide, published by The Arts Council, Dublin, 2003.

A Study of the Effects of the Visual and Performing Arts in Healthcare, (unpublished) Available from the Chelsea and Westminster Hospital Arts, London.

The Practice of Arts in Healthcare, published by The Eastern Regional Health Authority, Dublin, 2003.

“The way we communicate with others and with ourselves ultimately determines the quality of our lives”

Anthony Robbins, self help author and motivational speaker.

WHAT WE NEED FOR GOOD COMMUNICATION

DO

Be brief



Keep still.

Have good light on your face.



Have eye contact.

Speak one at a time.



Place yourself at an easy distance.

Stick to one point at a time.

1

O.K.?

Ask if you are communicating O.K.

Be ready to take your time



Use writing if stuck

Make your point clear.

TALKING ABOUT.....



Speak clearly.

DON'T

SHOUT!



Place yourself too far away.



Smoke.



MM...MMM
...MMM.....

Mutter...

And...and...
and...and....

Rattle on
and on.

Eat while
talking

CHOMPI!
CHOMPI!



Be in a hurry.

Obscure
your mouth



Look down
or away.

Be embarrassed.



GABBLE
GABBLE

Talk too fast.



Change the subject
without warning.

Give up.





International Patient Safety Goals



- Goal 1 Identify Patients Correctly
- Goal 2 Improve Effective Communication
- Goal 3 Improve the Safety of High-Alert Medications
- Goal 4 Ensure Correct-Site, Correct-Procedure, Correct Patient Surgery
- Goal 5 Reduce the Risk of Health Care-Associated Infections
- Goal 6 Reduce the Risk of Patient Harm Resulting from Falls

Reference: Joint Commission International



Patient Safety Goal 2: Improve Effective Communication

Key Points:

- Patient safety is enhanced by standardising verbal communication wherever possible
- Verbal communication is improved by using "read-backs"/ "closed-loop" communication and timely documentation
- Staff should use check-lists to support verbal communications and handovers
- Document urgent verbal results on receipt

Where can I find more information?

Ref to SVUH Policy: Policy to promote efficient verbal and telephone orders relating to patient care. Test results and patient handover.



South Dublin Healthy Reading

South Dublin County Libraries and Tallaght Adult Mental Health Service have worked together to produce the **South Dublin Healthy Reading Scheme**. The **South Dublin Healthy Reading Scheme** is available in two leaflets concerned with general mental health issues for adults and families.

One leaflet addresses issues for **Adults** including depression, anxiety, stress, anger, low self-esteem, addiction and more.

The second leaflet addresses issues for **Families and Children**. Topics addressed by the books in this scheme include bullying, self-esteem, parenting issues, bereavement, eating disorders and more.

Both leaflets are available from all South Dublin County Libraries and from the website www.southdublinlibraries.ie. The leaflets have also been sent to South Dublin County GP surgeries, pharmacies and health centres. For more information contact libdevoff@sdblincoco.ie

The South Dublin Healthy Reading Scheme complements the national bibliotherapy programme launched by the Irish College of General Practitioners (ICGP), the HSE, An Chomhairle Leabharlanna and public library authorities around the country. "**Bibliotherapy: The Power of Words**" is a list of 30 books which were selected by a group of HSE psychologists. This list has been incorporated into the South Dublin Healthy Reading Scheme comprehensive list of 60 titles for adults, families, teens and children.