

Sarasota Memorial on Clark Road



Aural Rehabilitation Program



Sarasota Memorial Health Care System

Marilyn Neil, M.A. CCC-SLP

5880 Rand Blvd, Suite 104, Sarasota, FL 34238

PH: 941-917-7600

Fax: 941-917-7603

Email: Marilyn-neil@smh.com



Aural Rehabilitation

What is it and does it work?

- Hearing loss acquired in adult life can have a serious impact on quality of life. This impact results primarily from deficits in the activities of speech perception and communication and the limitations imposed by these deficits on participation in social interactions, in employment, in leisure pursuits, and in the enjoyment of sound.

Adult Aural Rehabilitation:

What is it?

- Adult aural rehabilitation is defined holistically as the reduction of hearing-loss-induced deficits of function, activity, participation, and quality of life through a combination of sensory management, instruction, perceptual training, and counseling.
- Aural rehabilitation uses strategies to improve communication of people with hearing loss



Adult Aural Rehabilitation: What is it and Does it Work?

- Components of Aural Rehabilitation
 - Sensory Management- To target and enhance auditory function (hearing aids and CI's)
 - Instruction – To increase the probability of positive outcome from sensory management (Often done by your ENT or hearing aid dispenser)
 - Perceptual training-To target activity, by supplementing the learning opportunities provided by everyday communication. Done by the SLP during AR Sessions.
 - Counseling-To target issues of participation and quality of life that result from residual deficits of function and activity. Done by your SLP and often a counselor.

Who will benefit from Aural Rehabilitation?

- Any individual with hearing loss that is noticing difficulty communicating may be a good candidate for aural rehabilitation. If you find yourself withdrawing from activities that you used to enjoy because it is too hard to hear or stay involved in conversations, aural rehabilitation may be of benefit. If you often feel frustrated when trying to listen, aural rehabilitation may be able to help.

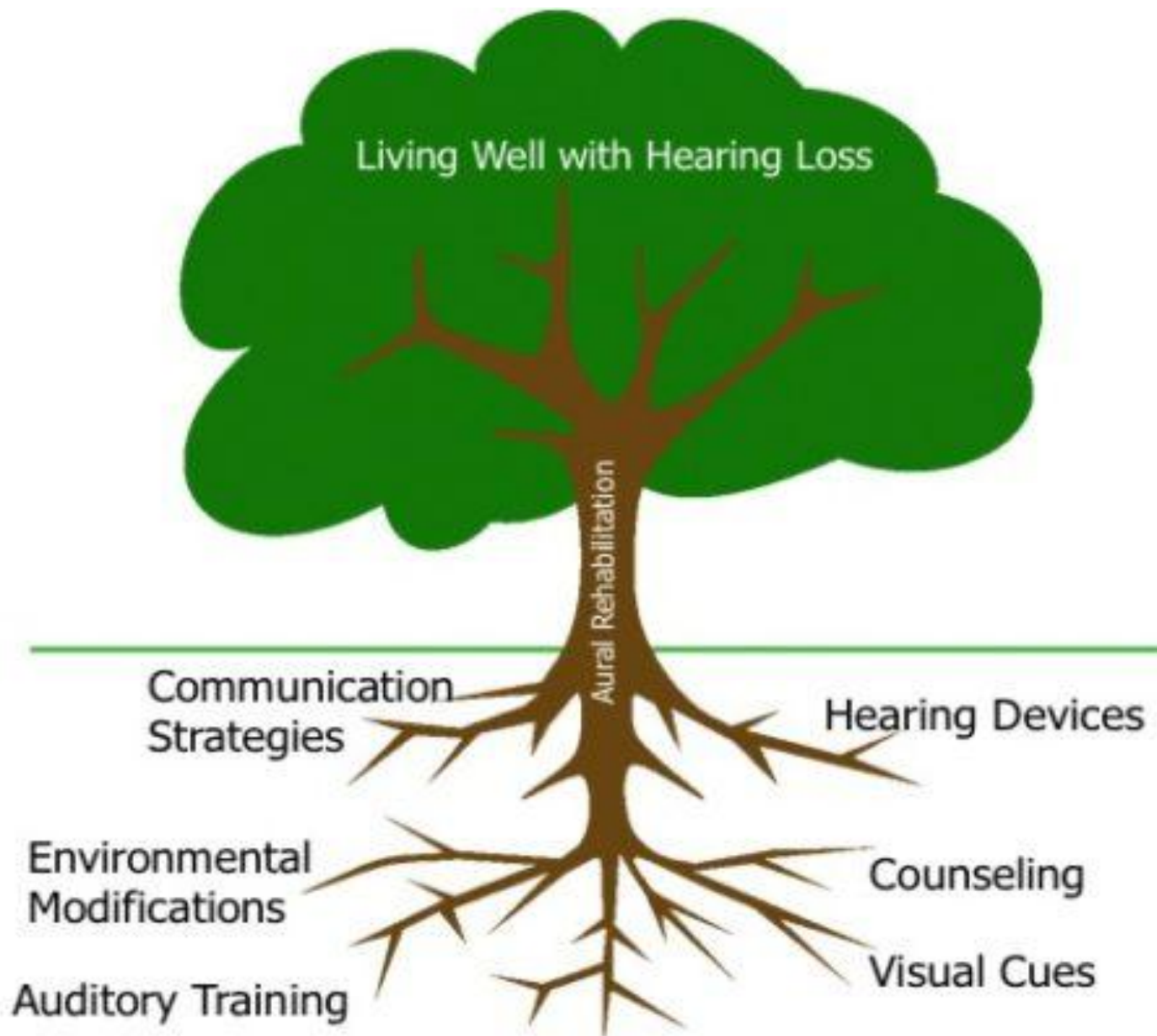
SMH Aural Rehabilitation Program

Program Goal: To improve conversational ability and reduce limitations caused by hearing loss, improving quality of life.

•Sessions will be conducted by a Speech-Language Pathologist and will include the following:

- Assistive Technology (Bluetooth streaming, TV headsets, and closed captions)
- Alerting Devices (flashing doorbell ringer, vibrating alarm clock)
- Communication Strategies & tips
- Auditory Training to increase speech perception and communication including:
 - * Sound awareness, discrimination, identification and comprehension.
 - * Listening Skills
- Sustained Attention
- Relaxation Techniques / Stress Management
- Support Groups / Community Resources





Communication Strategies



- **Avoid saying “What?” or “Huh?”** Instead, try to make a specific clarification request. Be specific about what you did and did not understand. If the speaker mumbles or speaks in a quiet voice, ask them to please speak more clearly or louder. Ask the person talking to slow down and take breaks between thoughts (but not draaawwww ouuuuutttt woooooorrrds). Encourage people you are talking to not to cover their mouth with their hand when they speak.
- **Let them know when there is trouble.** Your difficulty hearing and likely your hearing aids are not visible to the people you converse with. They may forget to speak in a manner helpful to you. One way to overcome this is to explain that you are really interested in hearing what they have to say and that you would like to use a cue, like tapping your ear or your mouth, to remind them of the best ways to communicate with you.
- **Reduce background noise.** Background noise (music, people talking, dishes clanking, television, etc) can create greater difficulty for people with hearing loss and/or hearing aids to understand speech. You might choose quieter restaurants with soft furnishings and high-back booths, move the social gathering out of the kitchen into the carpeted den, or mute TV and music to have a conversation. Anticipate difficult listening situations and think about your communication strategy. Your audiologist can help you with these strategies.

Communication Strategies

- **Face the person.** Tell your family, coworkers, doctors, and friends that you communicate most easily if you can see their face. They should look at you when speaking and not talk from behind you or another room.
- **Attention is key.** It is not uncommon to misunderstand what someone says if your attention is on something else, like an email or a TV show. Remind people to get your attention first by saying your name or tapping you on the shoulder so you can be ready to listen.
- **It takes two.** Communication takes two people. Yes, many people mumble, speak too fast, cover their mouths, and/or drop the volume of their voices at the end of sentences. If you are using hearing aids and paying attention, you are fulfilling your end of the effort to communicate effectively, and you can feel good about that! Keep in mind that communication habits are hard to change. You may need to remind people you speak with regularly the best ways to communicate with you. They will likely find these strategies helpful when talking with anyone, not just someone with hearing loss!

Environmental Modifications

- Reduce background noise. Background noise (music, people talking, dishes clanking, television, etc) can create greater difficulty for people with hearing loss and/or hearing aids to understand speech.
- You might choose quieter restaurants with soft furnishings and high-back booths, move the social gathering out of the kitchen into the carpeted den, or mute TV and music to have a conversation.
- In your home, use lots of fabrics and carpet or large area rugs to create a better sound environment.
- Create a small, intimate seating arrangement for conversations.
- When in a restaurant, sit with your back to a wall or choose a booth.
- Maximize lighting in your home and choose well lit outing locations when possible. (Outdoors or in a very well-lit restaurant).



Auditory Training



- * **Sound awareness:** (the awareness of what sounds are and how they come together to make words or what an environmental sound communicates)
- * **Sound Discrimination** (differentiating between similar sounds).
- * **Sound identification** (recognizing phonetic and environmental sounds)
- * **Sound comprehension** (attaching meanings to sounds.
- * **Listening Skills** (the ability to accurately receive and interpret messages in the communication process.

Visual cues

- Using your eyes to provide hints as to what is being discussed by looking at facial expressions and body language.
- Speechreading – Also known as lip reading, involves formal training on how to recognize sounds and how these sounds “look” when speaking.



Sustained Attention

- Sustained attention is "**the ability to direct and focus cognitive activity on specific stimuli.**" In order to complete any cognitively planned activity, any sequenced action, or any thought one must use sustained attention. An example is the act of reading a newspaper article or carrying on a conversation.

Relaxation Techniques

- *Maintaining a meditation practice
- *Participation in a weekly Yoga class to support relaxation and physical well-being
- *Learning effective approaches to asking for modification in the speech of the speaker to whom you are listening.
- *Breathing exercises to self calm when in a stressful listening situation (4-7-8- breathing)
- *

Create a Hearing Loss Management Plan

- **Behavioral Strategies:** What adjustments will you make to be responsible for improving your hearing success?
- **Technological Steps:** using assistive listening devices like a Roger's Pen (a wireless microphone that is used in combination with your hearing aids or CI) to help you hear your Spouse, Yoga instruction, Minister or Members of your book or poker club.
- **Preventative Steps:** Create a list of quiet restaurants using the mobile app "iHearU".
- **Restorative Steps:** Make a contract with oneself or your partner that it's OK to leave a noisy party early and go home to relax or read a book if the environment is too overwhelming (and it's OK if your partner wants to stay).

Adult Aural Rehabilitation: What is it and Does it Work?

- **Does it work?** How well do the processes meet the goals of restoring function, activity, participation and quality of life?
- Outcome at each level is influenced by numerous factors that may be beyond the control of the rehabilitative personnel. EX:
 - Motivation -Sense of entitlement
 - Readiness -Personality -Resources
 - Expectations -Adaptability -Support from others
 - Perceived locus of control -Lifestyle -Auditory ecology
 - Function in areas such as cognition, tactile & visual perception

What can you do NOW at home to improve your own hearing success?

- **Do Auditory Listening Programs:**
 - **Angel Sound**
<http://angelsound.tigerspeech.com>
 - **Customized Learning Exercises for Aural Rehab**
<https://www.clearworks4ears.com>
 - **LACE (Listening and Communication Enhancement): Therapy for the Brain**
<https://laceauditorytraining.com>
 - **Posit Science: Brain Fitness Program**
PositScience.com
- **Listening Programs for CI's**
 - **Advanced Bionics**
thelisteningroom.com
 - **Cochlear Americas**
hope.cochlearamericas.com/listening-tools/self-auditory-rehabilitation-web-sites
 - **MED-EL**
medel.com/us/max-listening-and-com-auditory-rehabilitation

What can you do NOW at home to improve your own hearing success?

- **Read out loud for 15-20 minutes EVERY DAY!**

This is one of the easiest and most effective ways to increase your speech understanding. Why? Because reading out loud allows you to simultaneously say, hear and see the words you are reading. This process remaps sounds on the brain faster than simply hearing the same words.

- Your audience and reading material can vary, so have fun with it! Readout loud to yourself, your pet, grandchildren or others. Try to follow a daily reading plan. For example, choose a magazine article, newspaper or even a book for pleasure reading. The important thing is to commit to making this a part of every day.

- **Practice listening in a noisy environment**

- After your first six weeks of reading out loud, you may want to add an additional challenge. Turn your stereo or television on at a low volume. Continue to read out loud, focusing on what you say, hear and see. This will simulate conversations in more challenging environments. Continue to practice with this soft background noise for an additional six weeks. This should improve your overall speech and understanding in environments with slight background noises.

What you can do at home

- **Converse in an active listening position being focused and proactive.**

At this point you have practiced diligently for 12 weeks. You may have noticed an improvement in your ability to understand speech both in quiet and slightly noisy environments. Now you are ready to practice focused conversations with friends and family. For this aural rehabilitation exercise, you must be in the same room as your conversation partner. Sit facing each other approximately 5 feet apart. Become aware of sounds that could become a distraction and try to tune those sounds out. Focus on the conversation. If you are having trouble understanding the other person, be proactive. Honestly share what you need from them. For example, let them know it would be helpful for you if they spoke just a bit slower or let you know when they are changing subjects. The important points of this experience are to be in a good listening position, focus on the conversation and be proactive.

Listen to Audio Books as often as possible

- **Practice good Listening Skills.** Don't Multi-task especially during important conversations.



Adult Aural Rehabilitation: What is it and Does it Work?

Cost

- Aural Rehabilitation services are covered by Medicare and many other insurance providers in outpatient hospital- based therapy clinics.
- Services must be provided by a qualified Speech-Language Pathologist

Questions?





Marilyn Neil, M.A. CCC-SLP
5880 Rand Blvd, Suite 104, Sarasota, FL 34238
PH: 941-917-7600 Fax: 941-917-7603
Email: Marilyn-neil@smh.com

