

Working Closely With Your Audiologist

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If you suffer from hearing loss, you will want to find a great audiologist to care for you. All audiologists perform hearing and word recognition exams, diagnose the type of and severity of hearing loss, and troubleshoot and repair hearing aids. Some audiologists specialize in the dispensing of cochlear implants. All audiologists assess your hearing needs and the impact of hearing loss on your life.

Audiologists have either a Masters Degree, AuD, or PhD. These individuals are well versed in all types of hearing loss and usually work with aids and implants from all the major manufacturers. Most states require an audiologist to have a AuD or PhD before a license is granted to diagnose and treat hearing loss.

Note that training and degrees are only part of the picture. Personality, kindness, and caring mean everything to someone suffering from hearing loss. You should seek an audiologist who is willing to sit down and listen to your hearing needs. Look for an audiologist who is familiar with and works with hearing and peripheral devices offered from all the major hearing aid companies. You will want your hearing professional to tell you when your current hearing devices do not meet your needs. If you need or seek a cochlear implant, be certain that your audiologist is trained to dispense and troubleshoot these devices.

Be prepared to make every hearing appointment work in your favor. Come up with a hearing plan before meeting with an audiologist. Give your audiologist hearing facts, that is, a list of when your aids or implants work and when they fail to help you hear. Write down your hearing goals and issues. If you have trouble hearing in noisy environments, let your audiologist know. If you cannot hear music well enough, mention this. Same goes for hearing young children or female voices. If the performance of your hearing aids are not meeting your expectations, speak up.

Partnering with your audiologist means accepting his or her advice. Once you find the right hearing professional stick with that person to develop a relationship. I met my current audiologist when he was a AuD candidate and working with an audiologist who was retiring. My audiologist was to take over the practice and he did. I've stayed with him for over 15 years because I have confidence in him. We work together. He has made countless hearing suggestions to me. His office staff makes it easy for me to make appointments online. During the pandemic, my audiologist met with me remotely. He came up with ways for his patients to have repairs performed on their devices.

But more than that, I find that my audiologist to be empathic. He cares and listens to me. He is honest about what he cannot do. He reminds me that there are no hearing devices that will return my hearing to normal. He explains that I will have to work to hear. Yes, he can tune my hearing aids so that I might hear music better, but he tells me that it will take time, practice, and a lot of patience on my part. He tells me that if I want to hear better in noise then I will have to spend time in noise and get my brain used to to hearing in challenging environments. He patiently repeats that the latest and greatest in hearing equipment will only help me if I help myself.

I like his honesty. I like that my audiologist includes me in decision making. I know where to go when I need hearing help and advice. I trust that my audiologist is only going to sell me what I need.

It took time to build a working relationship with my audiologist, but it was time well spent. All good relations must stand the test of time before they flourish and that is true of your relationship with your hearing professionals. Find the right person to help keep your hearing in tip-top shape. Make sure that you meander through the hearing world with the best possible hearing professional.