



apd

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ASSOCIATION FOR
PERSONS WITH
DISABILITIES**
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adding
value
to
lives

Focus on...

Hearing Loss

What is hearing loss?

Someone is defined as experiencing hearing loss if they have a loss of 25 decibels on the speech band.

Factors which influence the manner in which people experience hearing loss

- Severity of the hearing loss;
- Time of onset of the hearing loss;
- Cause of hearing loss;
- Support and assistance from family and friends;
- General state of health; and
- Socio-economic circumstances.

These factors will impact on -

- The individual's acceptance of- & adjustment to the hearing loss;
- Preferred method of communication;
- Education method best suited to the individual;
- Hearing instruments & assistive devices the individual can benefit from;
- Career the individual is able to pursue; and
- Social integration

Who experiences hearing loss?

Research shows that persons experiencing hearing loss of up to 25 decibels fall into these age groups -

17 - 20	3%
21 - 30	1%
31 - 40	5%
41 - 50	10%
51 - 60	23%
61 - 70	34%
71 -	74%

Types of hearing loss

Pre-lingual hearing loss means the person experienced hearing loss before the acquisition of speech & language.

Post-lingual hearing loss means the person experienced hearing loss after the acquisition of speech & language.

What causes hearing loss?

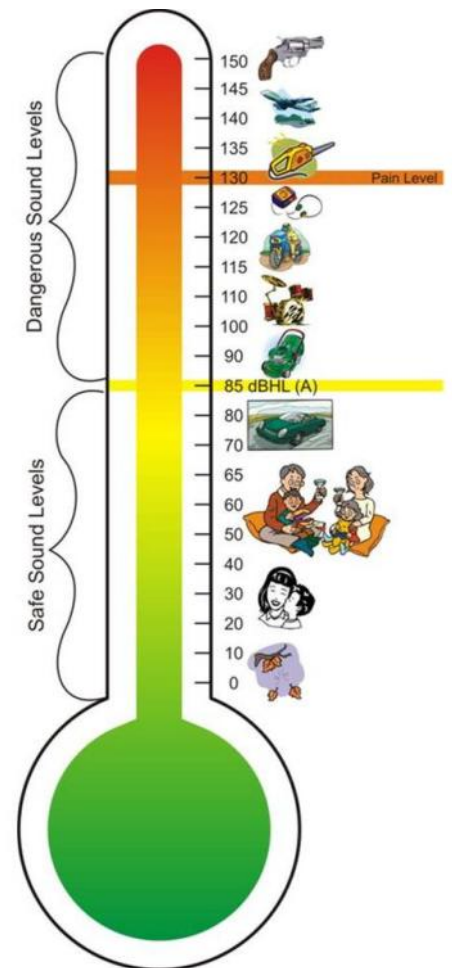
There are 3 main causes of hearing loss : genetic, illnesses (e.g. measles, viruses, antibiotics) and acoustic trauma (prolonged exposure to dangerous sound levels).

Can hearing loss be prevented?

In some cases, yes. One can obviously not prevent hearing loss caused by illness. However, by always wearing suitable protective gear when operating in a noisy environment, particularly at work, the occurrence of acoustic trauma may be reduced. For example, youth should not listen to their i-Pod for longer than 30 minutes on 50% of the volume (from 85 dBHL upwards are dangerous sound levels).

What is the difference between pre-lingual and post-lingual hearing loss?

	Pre-lingual	Post-lingual
Acquire Spoken Language	Before	After
1st Language	Sign Language	Own language with gestures
Communication Support	SL interpreter	Lip Speaker / Hearing aid



Integration into society

There are a variety of ways to facilitate the integration of those with hearing loss into society.

- Using a Sign Language interpreter, note taker or lip-speaker practitioner. This is useful in forums such as meetings, discussions, lectures or restaurants. It is important to arrange an interpreter and to ensure the most effective seating for the interpreter prior to the forum. It is important that the person with hearing loss remains informed of all happenings—planned and unforeseen.
- A verbal language may be a 2nd or 3rd language for a person with hearing loss. Many people who use Sign Language as a primary means of communication have written English as a 2nd language. This is important to take into account for presentations and handouts.
- There are a variety of assistive listening devices that are available for use at meetings, the workplace, home and society in general. These include loop systems for the TV, telephone and lecture rooms.
- Other technology such as text messaging, e-mail and fax machines can ensure accessibility for persons with hearing loss. It is important that facilities are equipped with such technology.
- Evacuation procedures must make special provision for persons with hearing loss.
- Security is important for persons with hearing loss, and armed response companies should be extra vigilant when a person with hearing loss is present in the building.