What Can an Audiologist Do for YOU?  Dr. D. Enrique Sanchez, CCC-A, FAAA
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This handout briefly summarizes a presentation of 60 slides shown in a presentation on March 10, 2020, to members of the Association of Retired Rice University Faculty. If you have questions or would like a fuller understanding of a point, please contact Dr. Sanchez via the phone number above or check the website or use his private email address: Drsanmac33@gmail.com.

What Can an Audiologist do for you? (presentation plan)
1. Help you live longer and better
2. Analyze causes and types of hearing loss
3. Identify devices for different hearing losses
4. Monitor hearing and communication solutions

1. Help you live longer and better
Remember that hearing loss is an invisible disability, not seen unless a hearing aid is used. Hearing impaired people may appear careless or inattentive because they hear but don’t understand, and gradually they retreat from talking, going to social events and conversations at work. Other cognitive and health problems may increase, leading to earlier death. An audiologist wants to improve hearing to increase life expectancy and especially quality of life.

2. Analyze causes and types of hearing loss
After an examination by an otolaryngologist who treats congenital defects or injuries, an audiologist examines the ears to detect problems with hearing. Ears are fascinating three-part anatomical structures. Each part or cavity has a different function. Together they detect sounds, process them, and send them to the brain.
Viewing this video, “Auditory Transduction,” will help you visualize and discuss with the audiologist how your hearing functions (skip the ads by clicking in the lower right corner):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PeTriGTENoc

A person sits in a soundproof room; the audiologist uses calibrated equipment designed to measure that person’s responses to sound (pure tones) and speech (words) discrimination. These results become the basis of an assessment of hearing loss, vertigo, tinnitus, and other communication problems. Normal audiology shows lines (blue/left ear; red/right ear) high on the chart, indicating that the person can hear high pitches to low pitches at soft as well as loud volumes. But over five years, the person’s ability to hear high pitches deteriorated:
3. **Identify devices to address different types of hearing losses**

Adult hearing loss may be the result of multiple causes: Long-term exposure to noise, heredity, illness, reactions to medications, foods, treatments, and so on; injury, noise, and guns; ear wax and aging. These may point to social and psychological consequences: missing phone calls, feeling depressed, lack of mobility, not enjoying TV or any other shows, feeling one must avoid meetings, parties, theater, social interactions, outdoor activities. Hearing loss makes a person less able to use new technologies, such as social media, cell phones, Facebook, or LinkedIn. It makes you less able to connect with younger members of your family, as these sites discuss:

- https://youtube/sLm-F7qHvXw

Different devices with different settings can improve hearing in different situations. Intervention may include the use of hearing aids, Bluetooth devices, microphones, and even cochlear implants (requires surgery). Now many hearing aids can connect to wireless devices, TV transmitters, cell phones, remote microphones. Many can be adjusted to provide the wearer with clear communication in noisy places such as restaurants, with different settings for other acoustic environments. Recent legislation allows purchase of hearing assistive devices without a diagnosis by an audiologist, but a patient who has a recent examination will be better able to make appropriate independent choices if he or she has a diagnosis of each ear’s problems.

4. **Monitor hearing and communication solutions**

Better hearing and better living aren’t a “one and done” matter. As we age, our accumulated experiences affect hearing (Your days of playing with your rock band in the garage may catch up with you). We are best served by having a relationship to our audiologist, a licensed specialist in hearing and balance testing and rehabilitation. The audiologist will monitor our hearing regularly to determine the severity of our hearing loss, which ear is affected, and whether the loss is sudden or progressive. An annual checkup can make sure our devices match our needs. This way, we can constantly be at our best to communicate with others and be an engaged social person as we live into our 80s, 90s, and beyond.

**COMMUNICATION TIP SHEET**

***If your partner has hearing loss or hearing aids***

- Call their attention first
- Turn down noise sources
- Be in the same room
- Face them
- Make eye contact,
- Speak slowly and clearly
- Raise your voice slightly but don’t shout

***If YOU have hearing loss***

- Avoid noisy spots, crowded places etc.
- Pay Attention: let people finish talking.
- Say, “I can hear you better if I see your face”
- Make eye contact, be in the same room
- Ask people to speak slowly and clearly
- Take notes in meetings, key words
- Turn down noise sources, for example: Carl!

You are invited to contact Dr. Sanchez to ask questions or to request more information about any matters covered briefly in this summary at 713 664 5050 or Drsanmac33@gmail.com