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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** **Contact: (Name)**

**(Phone, Email)**

**Adults With Hearing Loss Report That Stigmas Take a Significant Toll on Their Daily Lives**

*(City)-Based Audiologist Stresses Simple Steps That Everyone Can Take to Mitigate Stigmas for People With Hearing Loss in the Community*

*May Is Recognized as National Speech-Language-Hearing Month*

**(City, State – Date)** Hearing loss is one of the most common chronic conditions that people in the United States experience. Unfortunately, many adults with hearing difficulties regularly encounter stigmas that negatively impact their daily lives.

This May, which is recognized as *National Speech-Language-Hearing Month,* (city)-based audiologist (full name, credentials, job title/place of employment) is encouraging residents to take some simple steps to improve this reality for their family, friends, neighbors, and colleagues with hearing loss.

“Most if not all of us know someone with hearing loss—because it affects 1 in 7 of us,” says (last name). “Despite its high prevalence, hearing loss is often misunderstood. People also hold inaccurate perceptions and even stereotypes about those with hearing difficulties. Although these perceptions may be unintentional, they nevertheless can be very damaging.”

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) commissioned a [**2024 poll**](https://www.asha.org/siteassets/nslhm/2024/communication-disorders-and-stigmas-report.pdf) of more than 1,000 adults with speech, language, or hearing challenges to assess the impact of these difficulties on their daily lives and relationships. The poll, which was conducted by YouGov, found that over half (58%) of adults with hearing difficulties experience at least one of the following forms of stigma at least sometimes:

* feeling like an outcast
* feeling “less than”
* being talked down to
* feeling judged

Over half of respondents (a) say that there needs to be more awareness about hearing difficulties, (b) wish that people were more willing to make accommodations for people with hearing difficulties, and (c) find social gatherings or events to be stressful due to their hearing difficulties.

**How To Help: Effective Communication Strategies**

First and foremost, (last name) stresses the importance of extending simple courtesy and patience to people who are hard of hearing. “Understand that the person with hearing loss may be similarly frustrated with any communication breakdowns that are occurring. Communication is a two-way street, so do your part to ensure a successful interaction.”

(He/she/they) (cites/cite) the ASHA–YouGov poll: When asked what could help improve their lives, people with hearing loss most often said greater public knowledge about how to communicate effectively with someone who has difficulty hearing (such as facing the person as you talk). According to (last name), other ways to foster effective communication include the following:

* **Speak clearly** and in your regular tone of voice.
* **Don’t shout.** Shouting just makes it harder for the person with hearing loss to understand you.
* **Get the person’s attention** before speaking.
* **Wait until you are in the same room** to have a conversation. Face the person as you speak.
* Stand or sit **3–6 feet from the listener.**
* **Don’t block your mouth** when speaking.
* **Talk in quieter places.** Eliminate background noise, such as sounds from the TV.
* When possible, **turn on more lights** in the room—or move to a room with good lighting.
* **Say the phrase or message in a different way** if it appears that a person is having difficulty understanding you.
* **Build “breaks” into your conversation.** People with hearing loss expend extra effort listening, which can cause fatigue. Intentionally create breaks in your conversation.
* **Turn on captioning** when watching TV or talking over video platforms such as Zoom.

**Hearing Loss 101: Diagnosis and Treatment**

Hearing loss can occur at any age. Left undetected and unaddressed, it is associated with increased risk of other medical problems, social isolation and depression, cognitive decline, and safety issues such as falls. (Last name) encourages (city/town) residents to learn the [signs of hearing loss](https://identifythesigns.org/signs-of-hearing-loss/) and to get a full evaluation from an audiologist if they have any concerns. Most hearing evaluations are covered by insurance. An audiologist can explain the numerous treatment options if they do detect any degree of hearing loss.

For more information about hearing loss, visit [www.asha.org/public](http://www.asha.org/public). To schedule a hearing evaluation, contact (name/practice name) at (phone number or email address).

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