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Course Information

Limitations/Risks

- The applicability and accuracy of the course content may vary by the clinical, geographical, and cultural context; you should evaluate the course accordingly.
- As healthcare is rapidly evolving, new findings may change the validity of the information presented in this course. Providers should always consult the latest research and guidelines from professional associations.
- The interventions discussed in this course may be limited in generalizability, requiring practitioners to consider specific individual and population factors.
- The course may not cover all possible risk factors, diagnostic methods, or treatment options, and complex cases may require additional considerations.
- Healthcare providers should apply cultural competence and sensitivity to ensure effective and respectful care based on their patients' diverse needs.
- Providers should always evaluate the limitations of diagnostic and screening tools, considering their potential for false results as well as any ethical implications.
- It is the responsibility of course participants to critically evaluate the evidence from multiple sources to guide professional practice.

Creating an Individualized Patient Experience

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Learning Objectives

After this course, participants will be able to:

- Describe how family-centered care impacts hearing health care
- Describe 2 methods that can demonstrate empathy during the consultation process
- Describe how Phonak technology and eSolutions can be used to manage a patient's hearing healthcare journey

Speaker Disclosures

Financial Disclosure:
Speaker is employed by Phonak US

Non-Financial Disclosure:
None

Creating a Personalized Patient Experience

Patients who feel understood and valued are more likely to engage in their hearing healthcare journey. Understanding your patient's needs and priorities can:

- Increase rapport and trust
- Help patients feel more comfortable and valued
- Inform a targeted solution
- Establish concrete goals for determining success

The individualized patient experience involves three interconnected frameworks applied across the full patient journey:

- Family-Centered Care (FCC) — from the moment of awareness through ongoing retention
- Motivational Interviewing (MI) — supporting patients through the evaluation and decision process
- Products and Solutions — tailoring the management plan to the individual

Family-Centered Care (FCC)

Hearing loss is not experienced in isolation — it affects spouses, family members, and communication partners in measurable ways. Research shows that 98% of spouses report at least a mild disability as a result of their partner's hearing loss. Impacts include reduced social participation, greater loneliness, smaller social networks, less intimate spousal relationships, and miscommunication during medical care.

Three Steps to Implement FCC

Step 1 — Invite a family member. During every booking call and reminder confirmation, ask: "Our experience is that it is very helpful if you can bring a friend or a loved one along to the appointment. Who would that be?"

Step 2 — Set up the room. Arrange chairs in a triangle formation so the family member has equal proximity to the clinician — not a seat further back that signals observer status.

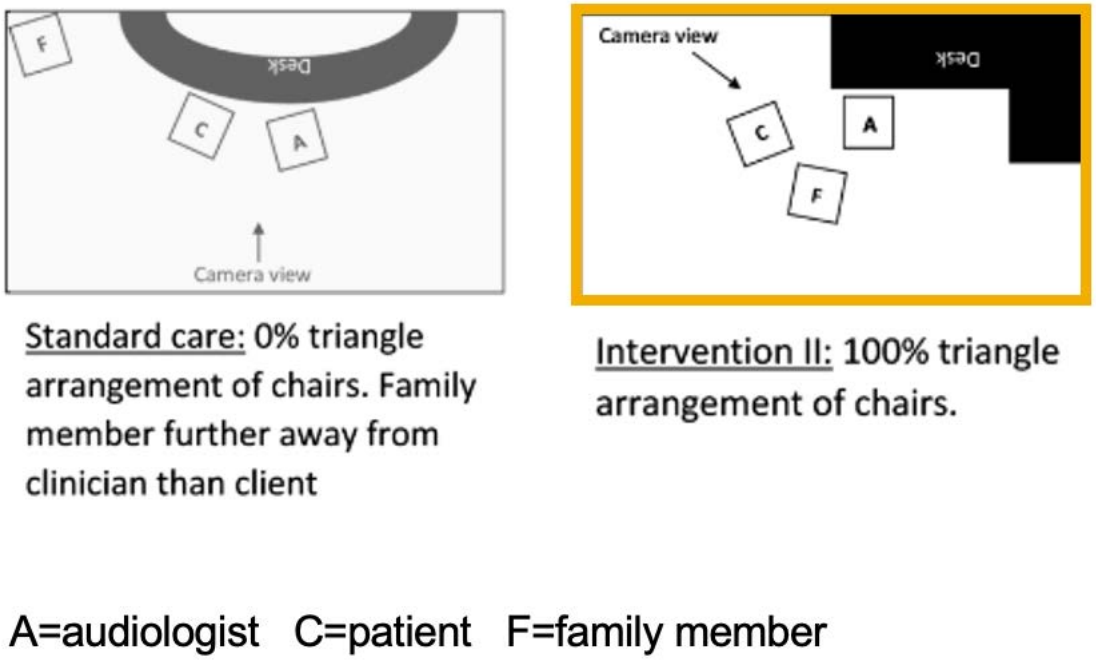

Figure 1. Standard care (left): family member is positioned further from clinician. Intervention II (right): triangle arrangement gives family member equal access. A=audiologist, C=patient, F=family member. (Ekberg et al., 2022)

Step 3 — Set an agenda. Listen to attain an integrated understanding of the patient's and family's physical, social, and emotional needs. Encourage input from both the patient and the family member throughout the appointment.

Impact on Client Satisfaction

A feasibility study by Ekberg and colleagues (2022) demonstrated a dramatic improvement in Net Promoter Score (patient satisfaction) when FCC practices were implemented:

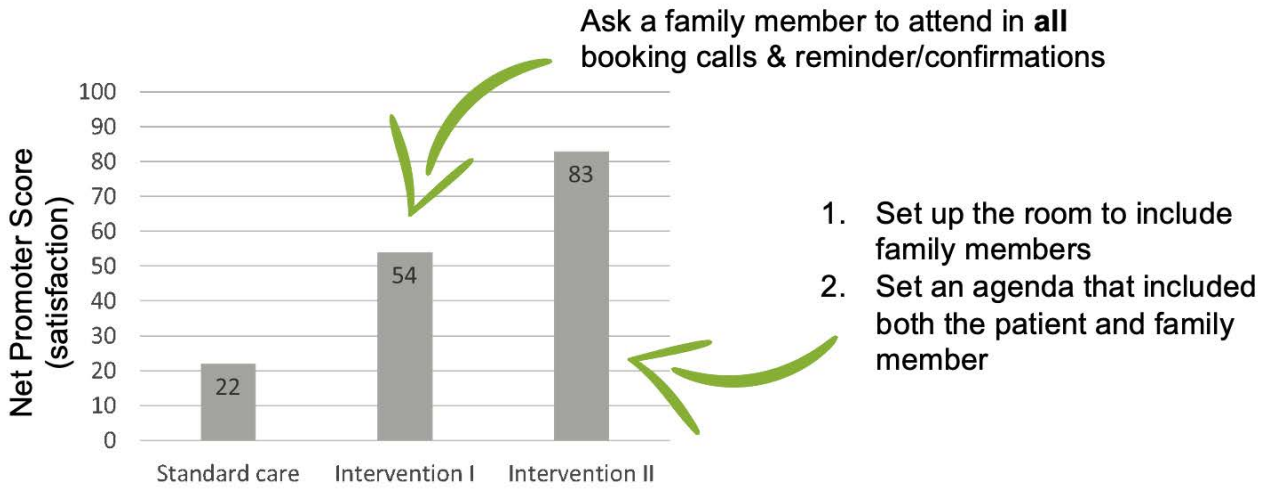

Figure 2. Net Promoter Scores: Standard care = 22; Intervention I (invitation to bring family member) = 54; Intervention II (invitation + triangle seating + agenda-setting) = 83. (Ekberg et al., 2022)

Q1

Quiz Hint

- When a significant other is present at the appointment, hearing aid adoption rate increases from 50.6% to 63.8%
- Involving family members also increases number of hearing aids purchased and lowers the return rate
- Time between purchasing new hearing aids is NOT affected by whether the patient comes alone or with someone

The Role of Others in Hearing Aid Adoption

Data from 60,964 patients (Singh & Launer, 2016) shows that hearing aid adoption is significantly higher when a significant other accompanies the patient. This effect holds across all degrees of hearing loss:

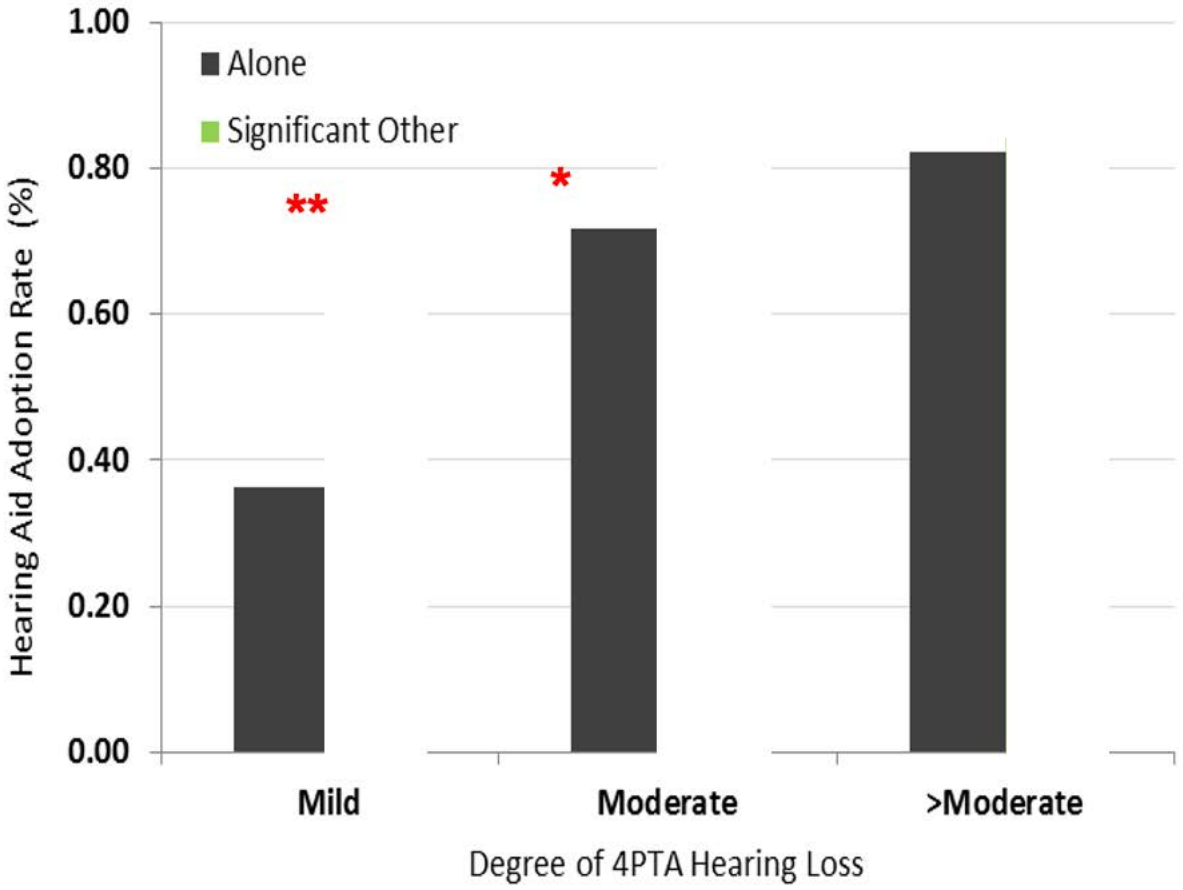

Figure 3. Hearing aid adoption rate by degree of 4PTA hearing loss when patients come alone vs. with a significant other (Singh & Launer, 2016). Note: the Significant Other bars are not visible above the Alone bars due to the consistently higher adoption rate with a significant other present at all severity levels.

Q2

Quiz Hint

- FCC is currently observed less than 30% of the time in clinical practice (based on observational studies)
- Despite strong evidence for its impact, FCC remains underutilized — a significant opportunity for practice improvement

Motivational Interviewing (MI)

Motivational Interviewing is a person-centered, goal-oriented counseling method for helping people change by working through ambivalence. Rather than pushing recommendations on patients, MI helps the clinician discover the patient's own reasons for change.

Understanding Ambivalence

Patients rarely come to appointments fully committed to change. They may simultaneously hold reasons for change and reasons to stay with the status quo. The goal of MI is to help patients explore and resolve this ambivalence — not to argue for change on their behalf.

Q3

Quiz Hint

- The goal of motivational interviewing is to help people change by working through ambivalence
- MI is person-centered and goal-oriented — it never forces or imposes change on the patient
- Maintaining the status quo is the opposite of what MI aims to achieve

Barriers to Empathy

Before building rapport, clinicians must recognize the internal barriers that block genuine empathy:

- Habituation — thinking 'I've heard this before' and disengaging
- Generalization — assuming all patients with this loss have the same experience
- Comparing — comparing to what the last patient said
- Being right — already having a solution in mind; feeling the need to correct the patient
- Multi-tasking — being distracted by other thoughts or actions during the conversation

Building Rapport

When rapport is established, three important outcomes become possible:

- Discover the patient's own reasons for change
- Minimize communication breakdowns
- Earn the right to give a recommendation

As Rollnick, Miller, and Butler (2008) note: "A patient who is active in the consultation, thinking out loud about the why and how of change, is more likely to do something about this afterwards."

Reflections

Reflections are statements — not questions — that demonstrate active listening and give patients the opportunity to elaborate. They always take the form of a statement: "You are wondering if...", "You are feeling...", "It sounds like you..."

There are three types of reflections:

- Simple — Uses words close to what the patient said. Marks important emotions without going far beyond the original intent.
- Complex — Goes beyond the patient's words to include more depth, affect, or direction. Adds to the patient's self-understanding.
- Double-sided — Highlights ambivalence. Starts with the element favoring the status quo, then ends with the dimension favoring change.

Example — Patient says:

"I know I don't hear everything, but why does she always have to yell when she wants me to do something. I'm not deaf!"

Simple reflection:

"You miss things sometimes."

Complex reflection:

"It bothers you when she shouts at you."

Double-sided reflection:

"It feels like she is coming down pretty hard on you for not hearing her, and, at the same time, you know that hearing better would help."

Q4

Quiz Hint

- To make people feel heard, use a reflection statement — a statement (not a question) that mirrors back what they said
- Immediately asking a follow-up question, moving on, or taking notes are not substitutes for demonstrating that you heard the patient

Affirmations

Affirmations are statements used to recognize patients' strengths, successes, and efforts to change. Effective affirmations:

- Are statements of appreciation for the patient and their strengths
- Take the form of clear words of understanding and appreciation
- Focus on specific behaviors
- Avoid "I" statements (compliments are not affirmations)

Examples of genuine affirmations:

- "It takes courage to face such a difficult situation."
- "Wearing the hearing aids four hours a day is a lot more than you were doing just a couple of months ago."
- "You made it in, even in the bad weather."

Products and Solutions: Crafting an Individual Management Plan

After using FCC and MI to understand the patient's goals and priorities, the clinician builds a four-component management plan tailored to the individual:

- Style — Physical requirements of the device: power needs, aesthetics, dexterity considerations
- Technology — Guided by listening priorities: feature availability and connectivity needs

- Accessories and eSolutions — Round out the solution plan: patient control, media streaming, and solutions beyond the hearing aid
- Ongoing Support — Rehabilitation and follow-up: online resources, remote support, measuring outcomes

Technology Level

The Phonak Audeo Infinio Sphere platform uses Spheric Speech Clarity technology. Technology levels range from 90 (full Spheric Speech Clarity) to 30 Essential, with features such as AutoSense OS 8.0, SmartSpeech Technology, Roger Technology, and streaming capabilities varying by tier. Listening goals — including speech in noise, group conversation, and quiet environments — should guide the selection of technology level.

Accessories and Apps

Phonak accessories and smartphone apps extend the function of hearing aids in three categories:

- User control and personalization — myPhonak app, myPhonak Junior app, RemoteControl
- Streaming media — Bluetooth devices, TV Connector
- Over distance and in noise — Roger microphone system, PartnerMic

Research shows that smartphone-connected listening devices can address stigma, provide a greater sense of autonomy and empowerment, and help patients feel more in control of their hearing loss (Maidment et al., 2019).

	MPA	MPJr
Volume change	Yes	Yes
Speech focus	Yes	Yes
Noise reduction	Yes	Yes
Equalizer control	Yes	
Health tracking	Yes	
Wear time tracking	Yes	Yes
Custom programs	Yes	Yes
Battery life	Yes	Yes
Remote Support	Yes	Yes

Figure 4. myPhonak (MPA) and myPhonak Junior (MPJr) app feature comparison.

Roger: Speech Enhancement in Noise

31% of hearing aid wearers report they continue to have challenges hearing in background noise (MarkeTrak IX, 2015). When hearing aids need additional help, the Roger microphone system improves speech understanding in a group conversation by 61% (Thibodeau, 2020). Roger offers flexibility across listening environments including group dinners, exercise classes, TV, classrooms, open offices, driving, and counter conversations.

Q5

Quiz Hint

- According to MarkeTrak data, 31% of hearing aid wearers continue to struggle with understanding speech in noise
- Understanding in quiet, TV, or from a distance are not the primary challenge identified — noise is the key concern

Serenity Choice Hearing Protection

Hearing protection offered by the hearing care specialist rounds out the full product portfolio. Serenity Choice is available in custom (Serenity Choice Plus) and universal (Serenity Choice) options for activities including music, shooting and hunting, motorsport, work, comfort, sleep, fly and travel, and swimming. Unique mesh and membrane filters provide protection while maintaining breathability.

Ongoing Support and eSolutions

The fourth component of the individual management plan — ongoing support — encompasses post-fitting resources, remote support, and outcome measurement.

HearingSuccess

Phonak's HearingSuccess platform provides immediate help to improve everyday communication. Resources, tips, strategies, activities, and communities are available for parents, adults, and professionals.

Remote Support

Phonak Remote Support enables real-time hearing aid adjustments via the myPhonak or myPhonak Junior app connected to Phonak Target software on the clinician's computer. Compatible with wireless Infinio, Lumity, Paradise, and Marvel devices. Requires iOS 15+ or Android OS 8+.

Remote Support allows clinicians to perform the following adjustments remotely:

- Datalogging review
- Gain changes
- Manage programs

- Program Options adjustments
- Tinnitus Balance
- Button options
- Feedback test (Infinio Ultra)

Evidence for Remote Support

Research consistently shows strong patient and provider acceptance of telehealth and remote sessions:

Patient satisfaction with Remote Support	**88% very high satisfaction**
HCPs who value eSessions with patients	**92%**
Teens who prefer remote sessions	**89%**
Parents rating Remote Support as extremely/very convenient	**94%**
Patients age 55-64 comfortable with technology	**96%**
Patients age 65+ who value loyalty to provider	**88%**

Measuring Outcomes

Outcome measurement closes the loop on the management plan agreed upon by the patient and family member. Validated tools include:

- Family Oriented Communication Assessment and Solutions (FOCAS) — measures shared goals and outcomes for both patient and family member
- International Outcome Inventory for Hearing Aids (IOI-HA and IOI-HA-SO) — measures hearing aid benefit, residual activity limitations, and quality of life impact

Key Takeaways

- Family-Centered Care increases hearing aid adoption, satisfaction, and the number of devices purchased, while reducing return rates.
- Invite a family member to every appointment — ask at booking, arrange the room in a triangle, and set a shared agenda.
- Motivational Interviewing uses reflections, affirmations, and active listening to help patients work through ambivalence and discover their own reasons for change.
- Craft an individual management plan across four dimensions: style, technology level, accessories/eSolutions, and ongoing support.
- Phonak eSolutions — including the myPhonak app, Roger, and Remote Support — extend the patient's care beyond the clinic visit and support long-term retention.

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Notes

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