

Coping with Hearing Loss at Christmas

Christmas time is almost upon us. Families wanting to enjoy one another's company, Enjoy the closeness, catch up with news, listen and make jokes, all those funny stories.

Whilst we all chatter away, talk across one another, listen to two conversations at once, and appreciate all these delights of a gathering. Stop awhile and think of the person who might be in your midst who cannot hear. Yes, they might be suffering from hearing loss. They might not admit to their hearing loss, but they are deaf. One poor isolated soul, who by no fault of their own cannot communicate in the same way.

The person who thinks I don't really understand what they are saying, what they are laughing at. The person who is in our midst, who appears to others as perhaps unappreciative, unsocial, awkward, or just plain not with it, they might even feel this!

What is it like to be isolated from the group happily communicating with one another? What might they be thinking to themselves? I wish I could understand, I wish they could understand, why do they have to talk all at once? Why do I feel isolated? Why do I feel depressed and unfriendly? wishing that it could all be over soon." Withdrawal from it all too soon becomes automatic, thinking they are daft not deaf is accepted not only by them, but also by others around.

You might be able to help. Ask that person whom you know or suspect suffers from hearing loss, if they cannot hear too well. Do not shout, the louder you shout the less they understand. Do not isolate them because of this. Understand how best they might be able to communicate. Use short and simple sentences. Do not get angry if they have misunderstood. Even write down beforehand who might be coming. Show them what you intend eating. Perhaps even give a history of events that family members and guests might want to talk about. There is a way to approach this with understanding and subtlety.

Yes, that person could be helping their self. They could own up to not hearing so well. They could be more observant, assertive and interested in all who come along. They could even ask to be placed where they know it is best to hear. This is a big ask, but the one thing for sure is to not allow them to become isolated.

To many, communication is taken for granted. As one gets older physical ability, eyesight, hearing, quick thinking, alertness and much more become weaker. There is a form of communication Lipreading jigsaw puzzle of communication; it is a complex skill that involves far more than simply trying to hear.

A hearing loss person must above all be kind with their self. Have a sense of self-esteem and confidence. Have a sense of humour; know the situation, perhaps even the context of what might be said, mental agility, memory and concentration. Facial expressions, body language, speech movements, gestures, and yes guesswork. However funny it might seem to others and not to be put off.

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Please give them a thought.