

Counseling Patients to Support their Hearing Health Literacy



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oticon
life-changing technology

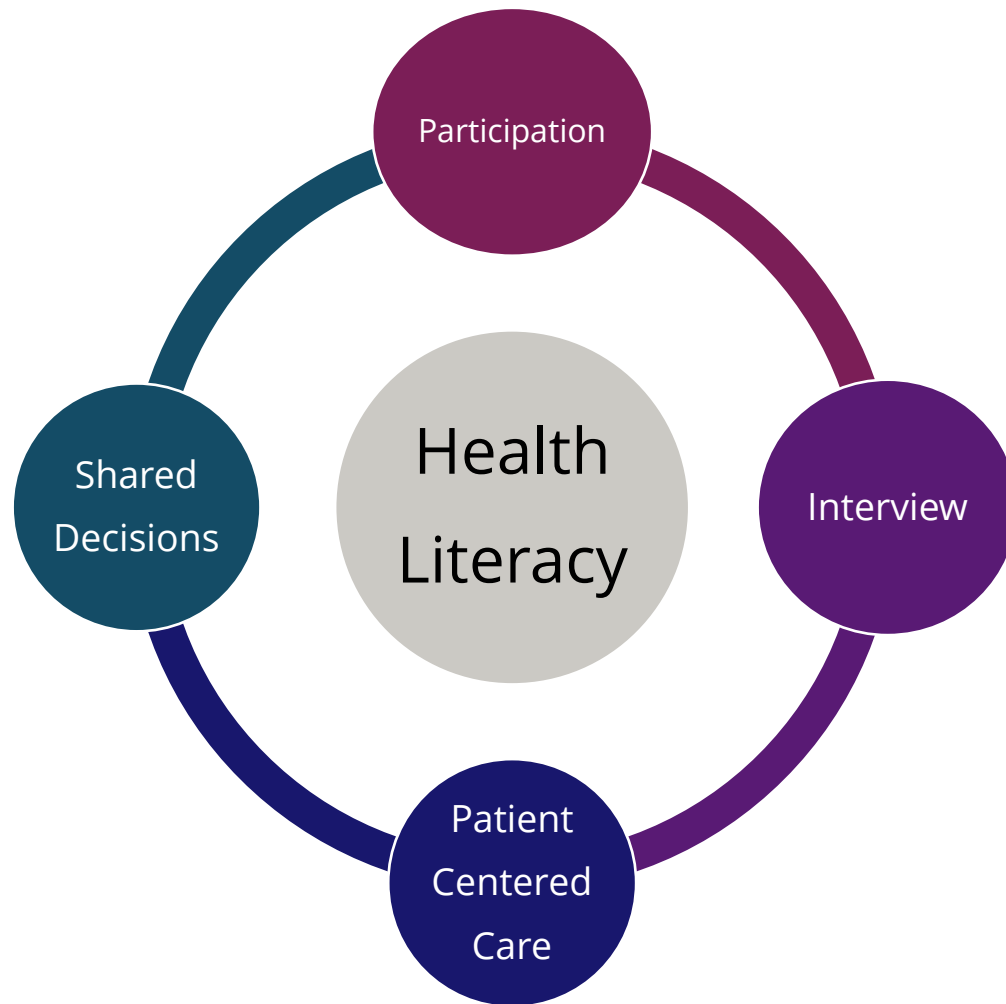
Agenda

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- 1. Introduction to patient health literacy.**
 - 2. Research study.**
 - 3. Inclusive counseling to support hearing health literacy.**
 - 4. Questions/Discussion**

What is patient health literacy?

Health literacy is people's knowledge, motivation and competences to access, understand, and use health information to make decisions concerning their health care.





Research suggests that good health literacy is a stronger predictor of health status than socio-economic status, age, or cultural background.



When we have high patient health literacy, we see positive outcomes in:

- Patient satisfaction
- Adherence to care (e.g. following audiologist's recommendations)
- Quality of care
- Clinical efficiency
- Patient keeping their appointments

Poor patient outcomes with low health literacy

Higher rates of hospitalization and longer stays in hospital (Berkman et al 2011).

Less ability to recall information after a clinic visit (Kessels 2003).

Are more likely to make errors with medication and technology (Lenahan et al 2013).

Have less knowledge of their management (Schillinger et al 2002)

Discontinue treatment (Howard et al 2005).

Health literacy: Parents and caregivers



Parent health literacy

- The ability for a parent to obtain, process, and understand, information provided to them and feel they can make decisions based upon that information.
- 1 in 4 parents have low health literacy, impacting their ability to make decisions for their child.



The context of counseling in audiology clinical practice

- Traditional office/clinic layout.
- Roles and responsibilities.
- Time is a valuable and scarce resource.



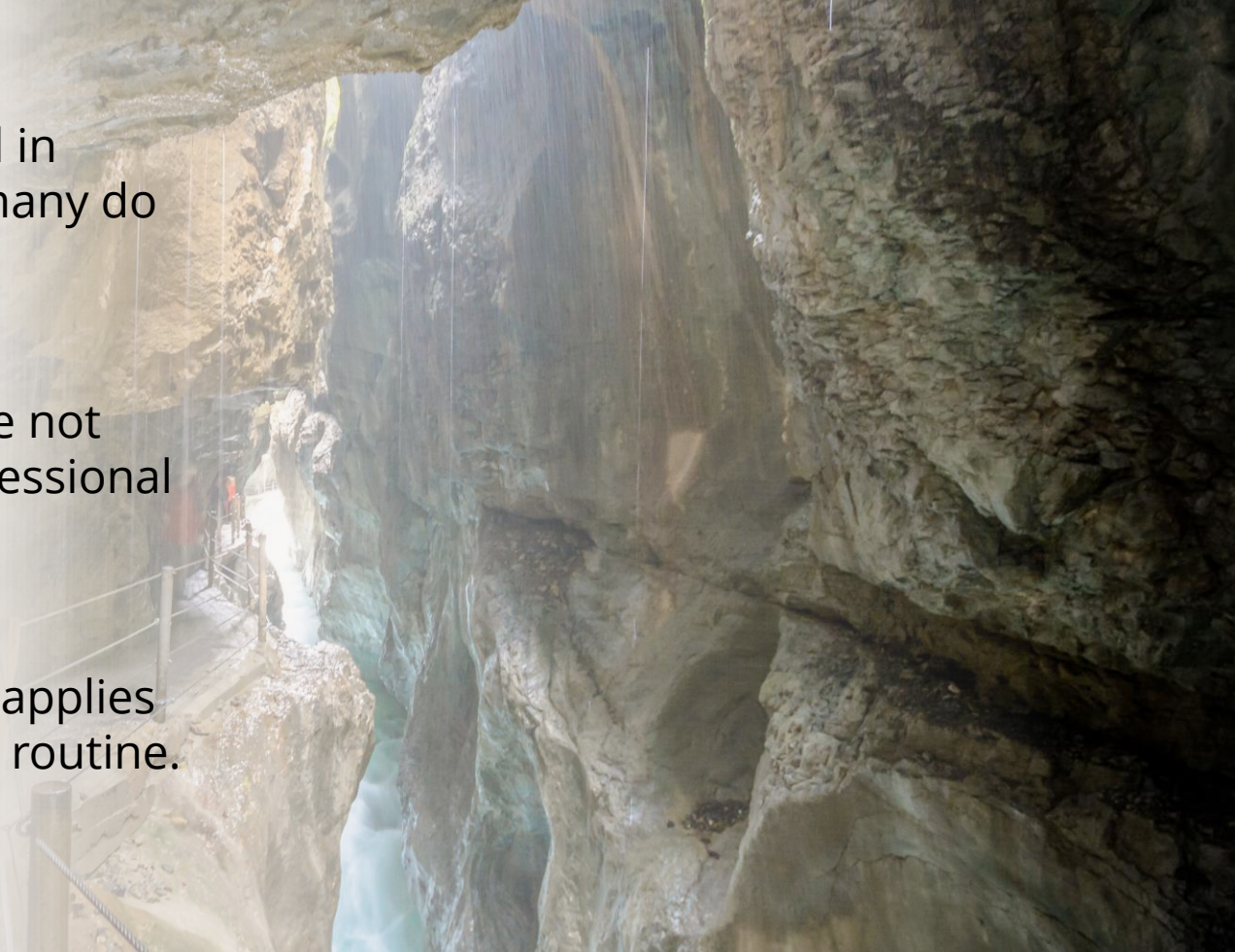
The context of counseling in audiology clinical practice

- Patient appointments geared towards the availability of the audiologist.
- Audiologist running late **versus** patient running late.

May set up a power dynamic that is not supportive of patient hearing health literacy

Practice gaps

- Professionals are interested in promoting health literacy, many do not know how.
- Health literacy principles are not taught as part of many professional training programs.
- Use of communication that applies these principles may not be routine.






Research study

Research question



For parents of children who are deaf or hard of hearing, how do they describe the information and supports they receive from their clinical audiologist?

Qualitative study

- 
- Semi-structured interviews
 - ZOOM

Participants

n=15

- American and Canadian parents of children who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- Parents were asked to reflect upon their experiences working with their clinical audiologist.
- Culturally-diverse.
- Mothers

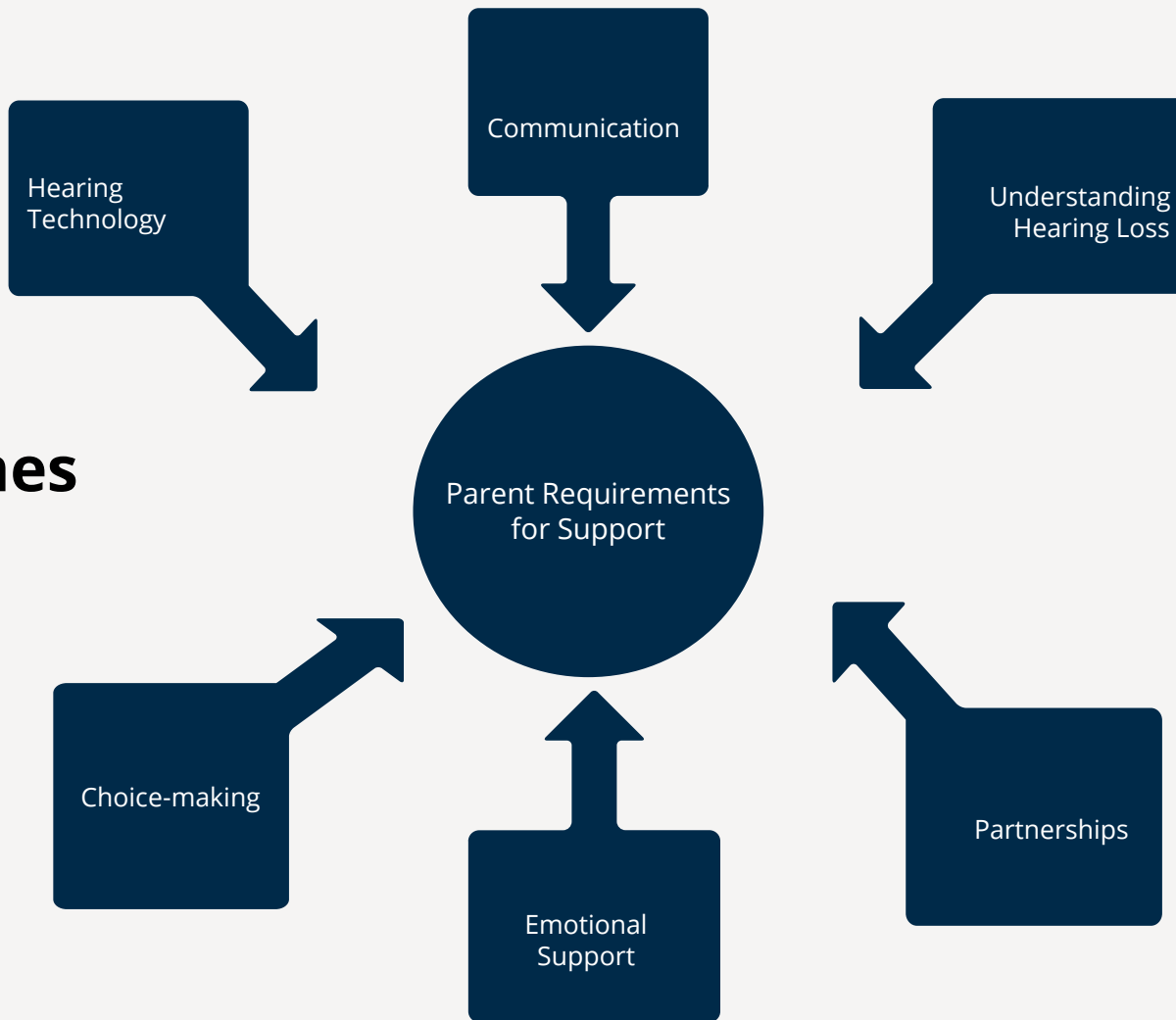




Parent interview questions

- Tell me about your experiences with your clinical audiologist.
- How did the clinical audiologist support you and your child?
- Describe any opportunities for additional support?
- What advice would you give to a new audiologist who will be working with children who are deaf or hard of hearing and their families?

Study themes



Partnerships

Relatedness

Audiologist
Parent
Communication



Partnerships

- Desire for a relationship where decision-making is shared, and the parent voice is valued.
- Accommodating and understanding of parent and their life outside of the clinic.
- Create an agenda together.



Partnerships

“

I would say how nice it was that the audiologist followed my lead. My daughter was a preemie and I really did not want her sedated for the ABR. The audiologist worked really hard with me over two days to get an unседated ABR so that we did not have to put her to sleep. ”

Carrie

Audiologist-parent communication

- Clear, concise, neutral language.
- Grief can impede understanding. Check in for comprehension.
- Prepare parents with a possible set of outcomes. (e.g., technology activation).



Audiologist-parent communication (from new parent)

“

It could be nice to start each clinic visit with having the audiologist ask, tell me, what are your expectations for this appointment?” It could set us up nicely to understand what needs to be done.”

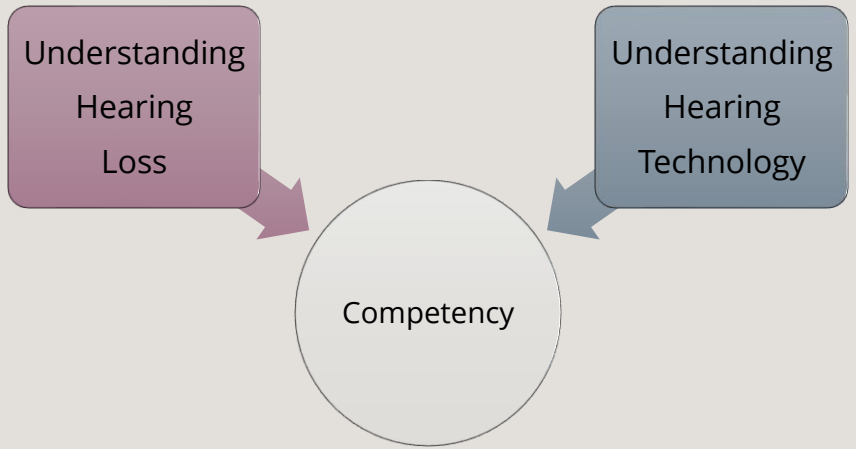
Janet

Audiologist-parent communication

“

I wonder if audiologists understand that parents may have learning differences? Having multiple access points for communication is really important.”

Gabrielle



Understanding hearing loss

- Use audiograms designed for non-audiologists with pictures and speech and environment sounds.
- Use other parent-friendly tools to convey how they can access speech and sound.
- Plan to teach my child about their hearing loss (elevator pitch).



Understanding hearing loss

“

When I was shown the audiogram and the audiologist explained the hearing loss, all I could think, what does this paper mean for our lives? ”

Farrah

Understanding hearing aid technology



Connecting the use of hearing technology as **access** to learning, brain development, friendships and the child's future.

Explanation of why they hear some sounds without wearing their hearing technology.

Understanding hearing aid technology



Hearing technology assessments that can estimate performance in real world hearing activities.

Give information in drips. Repeating that information and checking for comprehension is crucial

Prepare me for the ups and downs. Hearing device tips and tricks.

Hearing technology

“

If he is at the movies with friends, in the lunchroom at school, in his classroom, or at a family event, I want to understand if his hearing technology will help him.”

Janet

Choice-
making

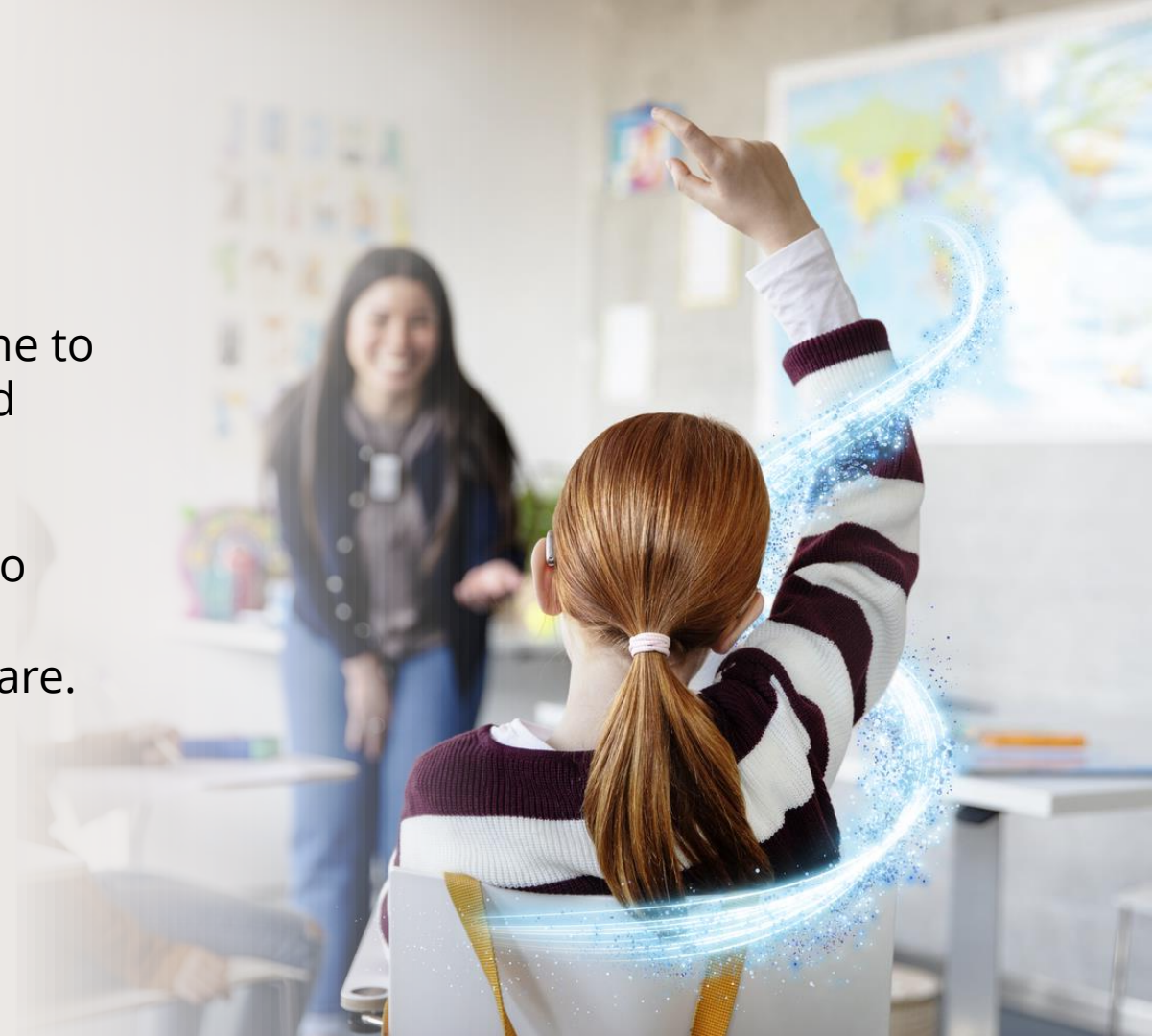
Emotional
Support

Autonomy



Choice-making

- The audiologist shares information that empowers me to make choices for my child and family.
- Children need opportunities to make choices and feel some control in their own hearing care.



Choice-making

“

Now that he is 10 years old, the audiologist asks him what he wants to do. This is wonderful as he does not have a lot of control when it comes to his hearing. They are his ears after-all.”

Marie

Emotional support

- Within a day of hearing loss being identified, parents would like contact with the audiologist by phone to check in.
- Parents described being flooded with questions the day after their appointment.



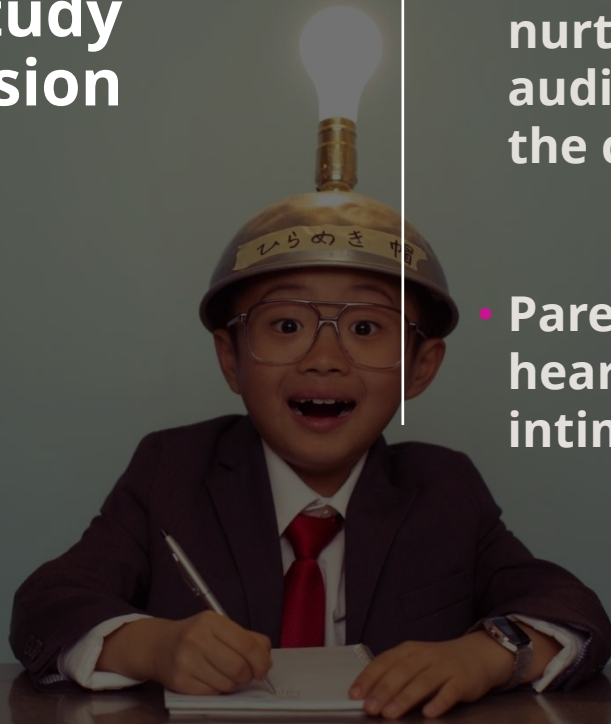
Emotional support

“

But it was the time between appointments that started thinking, what did I do? Did I drink some bad water while I was pregnant? I just didn't know enough information to prevent the blaming or what-ifs.”

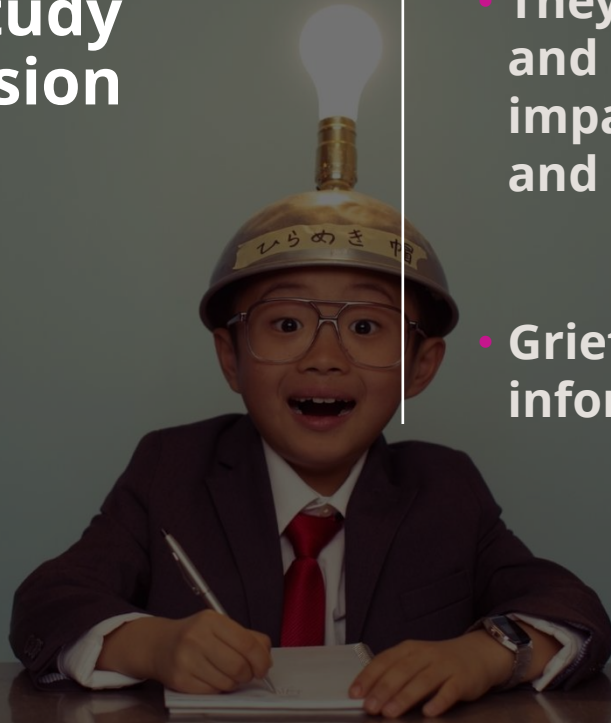
Elizabeth

Study conclusion



- Parents in this study had fantastic, nurturing relationships with their clinical audiologist. They valued being a part of the clinical process.
- Parents find the process of learning about hearing loss and hearing technology intimidating.

Study conclusion



- They want different options for learning, and explanations how hearing loss will impact their child's development, learning and daily life.
- Grief may impede the acquisition of information.

Counseling to support hearing health literacy.

Strategies to improve hearing health literacy

- Hearing health literacy skills can be impacted by stress, sleep deprivation and other factors.
- Universal access approach to hearing health literacy.
- Communicate with individuals at basic level, assume they know nothing.



Strategies to improve hearing health literacy

- Limit information presented to three messages; or end the appointment with “the most important message for today.”
- Teachback/showback.



Patient readiness

Exploring this concept within shared decision-making

Levels of readiness can fluctuate – important to ask:

- “Could we talk about how the hearing aids work today? How would you like this information shared with you?”
- “Would you be ready to discuss using a remote microphone at home?”



Knowing when patients or families do not understand you. What to watch for!

- Not asking questions
- Frequent missed appointments
- Dismissing important information, wanting to review it at home.



Take home messages



Meet your patients on their level



Provide options for how you share information



Patient and parent readiness will vary throughout the clinical process



Thank you

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