

Client Success Story April 2021

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“Hello, I am hard of hearing. If you directly look at me and speak slowly, I will have a better chance of communicating with you.”

That is a statement I now make but I would not have prior to taking the **Sound Advice on Hearing Health** workshop at Canadian Hearing Services - run by very skilled, personable, and professional counsellors.

To tell people I am hard of hearing, as I now do, and let it be centre stage is a significant change for a person of my years.

I have worn hearing aids for close to 20 years and like so many others, it was vanity which made me avoid using them for at least 10 years or more. Over the years my hearing has deteriorated. I am now considered to have “profound hearing loss”. Simplistically, that means my hearing aids amplify sound as they are designed to do but have limited capability of clarifying words. Because of this, I do not always hear all the words in a conversation and rely on lip reading to gain the gist of a conversation.

I get by OK in quiet settings. However, in noisy surroundings such as restaurants, or settings with a loud TV or other background noise, or even family gatherings, I experience challenges with hearing. Before attending the **Sound Advice on Hearing Health** workshop, my normal approach was to sit quietly in the background. Sometimes I would try to get involved in the conversation, but that often led to embarrassment or significant misunderstanding of what was said, which led me to further retreat into the background.

This all changed when I decided to finally connect with Canadian Hearing Services.

Because the workshop sessions have the option for a hard of hearing participant to be accompanied by a person close to them, I brought my wife of 53 years. Also in attendance, were other hard of hearing individuals, experiencing many of the same challenges as me. Understanding what others were also confronting and being able to relate to them was a wonderful experience.

During the workshop, we learned additional skills to help us manage our hearing health, but most importantly, we learned how important it is to let others know that we need unique communication treatment. It turns out, having others looking at me, speaking slower one at a time makes the conversation so much easier for everyone! Plus, being honest and admitting I have hearing loss saves a lot of embarrassment.

I tried this new approach with my sons, daughter-in-law and grandchildren and it was very successful. With my wife by my side, I explained to them how poor my hearing was and how they could best communicate with me. Interestingly, I discovered that no one in my family was truly aware of my poor my hearing. They were as thankful to have the conversation.

I cannot express how important and wonderful it was to have my understanding wife along with me to also learn how to better deal with this situation. We now have conversations only facing each other in the same room with the TV on mute.

My wife and I both gained so much by attending the **Sound Advice on Hearing Health** workshops. I would highly recommend these workshops to individuals who are hard of hearing and their families. So little time spent for such tremendous gain!

From my heart, thank you Canadian Hearing Services and my counsellor, Joyce, for your help and support!

John

To learn more about Sound Advice on Hearing Health, click [here](#).



John Duncan with his wife, Barb