

Social Impacts of Hearing Loss



Hearing loss compromises our ability to communicate, and in turn, our ability to participate in social activities, relate to others, and deeply connect with the people in our lives.

Hearing loss can cause us to withdraw. This can include avoiding crowded or noisy places, avoiding social interaction with some people, or “tuning out” when at a social event.

These avoidance and withdrawal behaviours can be conscious (on purpose) or sub-conscious (we may not even realise that we are reacting to our hearing loss in this way).

How is hearing loss affecting you?

- I am tired & fatigued
- I am always bluffing - pretending to know what's going on
- I avoid certain people, places, or activities
- I withdraw – I keep to myself or keep quiet
- I feel excluded, ignored, rejected, or ridiculed
- It makes things hard at work
- It affects my ability to enjoy hobbies & sports
- It causes conflict with my family/friends

My story - Barb, 57 years

“I’ve got a group of friends and we go to the Fringe theatre a lot, and I absolutely love it. But this year I only went to half of the shows, because I find it just so difficult to hear. Then, when I catch up with my friends, they are all talking about the shows that they saw, but I really feel disengaged. I’m feeling like I’m losing my friends because I can’t go to those things with them or, if I do go, I do not fully enjoy it. I feel like I’m pulling myself out of the social circle and now I’m missing out.”

What can be done?

- Know that you are not alone. Others with hearing loss experience the same social problems.
- Talk to your family and friends, let them know how challenging certain situations and environments can be for you - work together to problem solve realistic solutions.
- Improve your communication skills. See our Communication Strategies factsheet or attend one of our RehabPlus sessions.
- Check your hearing and use your hearing devices regularly to provide optimal opportunity for hearing and communication within social situations.
- Support groups can be a wonderful source of information and support.
- Actively improve your social engagement, think about the family/friends who you would like to see more of, the social activities in which you would like to partake in... and make them happen! Ask how we can help you.