

HEARING LOSS COPING STYLES



DENIER

This person does not yet acknowledge their hearing loss. Therefore, they don't take responsibility for their hearing loss and rarely, get the help they need. Everyone suffers.



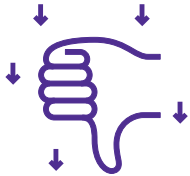
PASSIVE

The Passive realizes that they have a hearing loss and that they could probably do something about it. However, they choose to do nothing at all or just don't get around to do anything. Something usually comes up to put their hearing problem on the back burner.



DEPENDENT

When this person can't hear or understand what is being said, they depend on their spouse to speak up for them. They avoid making any decisions on their own and give up most of their power.



CRITICIZER

This person is good at blaming others for their inability to hear and understand. The Criticizer will often say, "If you would only stop mumbling, I'd hear you." It's the speaker's responsibility not theirs.



ACTIVIST

Not only does this person do all they can to improve their own communication abilities including the use of hearing aids, but they inspire others with hearing loss. Their own experience informs them on how to help others which, in turn, helps them cope with their own hearing loss.



RESIGNED

This person has accepted the fact that they have a hearing loss but are resigned about it. They look back on the days without hearing loss as the 'good old days' and believe their life is as good as it gets. They are heard saying, "My hearing is not very good but what do you expect for my age?"



STRATEGIZER

This person takes responsibility for their hearing loss and strives to do all they can to make communication as easy as possible for themselves, their family and friends. They typically plan ahead so that they can stay connected and in the conversation. For example, they would insist on going to a quiet restaurant with one other couple rather than be part of a larger group in a noisy restaurant.



IN TRANSITION

Most people do not remain in one coping style, long term. People often transition between two styles. The most common transition is from being PASSIVE to becoming a STRATEGIZER. Ultimately accepting their hearing loss, these people are willing to work at being in communication. They choose to get hearing aids for the sake of their health and their relationships.

WHICH COPING STYLES DO YOU USE? _____

FAMILY MEMBERS WHO LOVE SOMEONE WITH HEARING LOSS



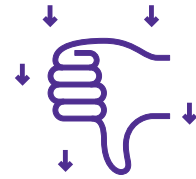
PROTECTOR / MANAGER

This family member assumes responsibility for getting what the hard-of-hearing person needs. Answering phone calls, making appointments, and even interpreting conversations are taken on as accepted responsibilities. Some people get so caught up in this role that they can't give it up even when their loved one gets properly fitted hearing instruments.



UNINVOLVED / HANDS OFF

This person lacks concern for their hard-of-hearing family member. They are often detached because they believe that the person with the hearing problem is the one who needs to cope with it. This person is likely to say, "YOU have the hearing loss, so deal with it." Digging deeper, this person may use the Hands Off approach because they have given up hope after years of living with someone in denial.



CRITICIZER

When a hearing loss impacts your relationship, there are bound to be breakdowns in communication. This family member will criticize the hear-of-hearing person and rarely takes responsibility for these breakdowns. They say, "You never listen to me. You're not paying attention." The Criticizer coping style makes it hard to admit that communication is a two-way street. Both people are responsible for making the communication work, despite a hearing loss.



VICTIM

This person has difficulty empathizing with the hard-of-hearing person. They are so wrapped up in the effect that hearing loss has on them, and how hard their life has become. They are invested in being a Victim which is another way of avoiding responsibility.



RESIGNED / REMINISCE

This family member looks back at all the good times they have had in the relationship but is resigned to the changes they now face in their life. At some level, it is safer to be resigned rather than be hopeful and work on the relationship. It is common for them to say, "Oh well, we can't do what we used to do. It's just not the same with this hearing problem."

WHICH COPING STYLES DO YOU USE? _____