

Helen Keller once said, "Loss of vision means losing contact with things, but loss of hearing means losing contact with people." Various activities from keeping in touch with family, making friends, learning in the classroom, and finding a job can be affected by hearing loss. If the loss is not treated, the impact worsens.

People with hearing loss may withdraw from family and friends, feel insecure, stop going to places they enjoy, and may become suspicious and paranoid. Some who do not hear clearly may believe that others are laughing at them or talking about them.

The stress of having to fill in the gaps of what one does not hear and the

- 1 learning power
- 2 communication in relationships
- 3 warmth in family relationships
- 4 ease of communication
- 5 emotional stability
- 6 sense of control over life events
- 7 perception of mental functioning
- 8 physical health
- 9 group social participation
- 10 independence and security

The NCOA also proved that hearing loss treatment reduced:

- 1 discrimination toward the person with the hearing loss
- 2 anger and frustration in relationships
- 3 depression

ily and friends, fatigue and heightened stress. A severe loss can become a safety issue due to not hearing sirens, smoke alarms, telephones ringing, and doorbells.

Yet, many people hesitate to take the next step to help themselves. Part of the problem is that the onset of a hearing problem is usually very gradual over many years. The person may not even be aware of the sounds they are missing or misinterpreting. Part of the problem may be denial. No one wants to admit that they are not perfect. As a culture, there has been a stigma with hear-



ing loss that there isn't with eye problems. Fortunately that is changing. Nowadays many seek ways to improve their quality of life through various devices. Having a hearing aid is a way to improve ones quality of life.

A hearing test only takes a short time and is not painful or uncomfortable. Call a licensed audiologist to arrange for an examination; so that, the hearing impaired person can take the first step to a more stable, healthier, and productive life.

The Impact of Hearing Loss

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strain of trying to act as if nothing is wrong can take a toll. A person with a hearing loss may become irritable and anxious. They may worry about speaking too softly or too loudly.

A research study of 2300 people with hearing impaired adults and their significant others was done by the National Council on Aging (NCOA). They demonstrated that treating a hearing problem showed impressive improvements in the emotional, social, psychological, and physical well-being of people with hearing loss in the hearing loss categories from mild to severe. Specifically the NCOA showed positive improvements in:

- 4 feelings of paranoia
- 5 anxiety
- 6 social phobias
- 7 self-criticism

Researchers have also linked hearing loss to major health issues such as high blood pressure, coronary artery disease, and elevated cholesterol.

Hearing loss interferes with your quality of life, restricts your ability to interact with others, causes misunderstanding with fam-

