



# Hearing Test

## *Rehearsal Guide...*

*preparing people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) to successfully complete a hearing test*



## INTRODUCTION FOR CAREGIVERS

A rehearsal guide contains realistic pictures, concrete ideas, and clear, brief instructions for guiding a person through what can be expected in a specific situation. It includes helpful suggestions for caregivers to follow to make the experience meaningful for the person and increase the likelihood of a successful outcome. This approach is beneficial when supporting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) who are anxious about situations such as doctors' appointments, hospitalizations, and medical testing.

A rehearsal guide provides opportunities for the caregiver to assist the person to learn about a specific situation. It contains information on what is needed and why and explains exactly what can be expected. Such a guide is most effective when it is person-centered and used in conjunction with discussion to allow exploration of specific areas of concern. It can be a powerful tool when used as intended.

The expected result is that the person will then experience the situation in a way that supports health and well-being by being prepared and knowing what to expect. The guide can be used at all stages of the situation to facilitate a positive end result.

Thank you for taking the time to use this tool to work with self advocates to improve their health outcomes.

## HOW TO USE THIS REHEARSAL GUIDE

For best results, begin to review this rehearsal guide with the person prior to the day of the appointment. Sometimes it will help to review this material with an individual several days or weeks before an appointment; other times, it may be better to wait to review this material until just before the procedure is to take place, perhaps the day before or the morning of the procedure. It is up to the caregiver to determine which will best suit the individual's needs and abilities in understanding the information provided; however, it is important not to wait until 5 minutes before a procedure to introduce this guide to an individual. Give the individual enough time in advance to become familiar with the procedure based on the pictures and information contained on each page and on the individual's abilities.

It is best to review this guide slowly and to focus on one idea/page at a time, allowing the person to talk and/or ask questions after each idea/page is presented. A caregiver may want to share experiences in regards to having this procedure done personally, but be sure to do so in a positive manner, depicting a positive outcome.

### For best practices:

- Allot time to review this material when the individual is alert and interested in doing so.
- Ensure that the setting is free from distraction. Based on the individual's attention span, it may be best to review one page at a time, rather than reviewing an entire guide in one sitting.
- Explain each picture and practice the suggested exercises with the individual, such as deep breathing, as they appear throughout the guide.
- On the day of the procedure, take this guide along to continue rehearsing the various steps involved in the procedure. Review each page step by step.
- Remain positive, calm, and upbeat.
- Remember to offer positive reinforcement and praise throughout the procedure, especially after the individual has successfully completed the procedure.

## INTRODUCING THE PROCESS

(Name of individual), you are going to have a test to check your hearing on (insert date here).

This test will take place at (name of location).

The doctor ordered this test to make sure you are hearing okay. If you can't hear okay, this test will help the doctor know how to help you.

This test does not hurt at all.

(Name of caregiver) will go with you and stay with you while you have the hearing test.



## IN THE WAITING ROOM

When you first get to your appointment, you will have to wait until someone calls your name for the hearing test.

(Name of caregiver) will stay in the waiting room with you.

Would you like to take a favorite magazine to look at while you wait?



## WHAT YOU WILL SEE

When you are called into the room, you will see a table with different machines. These are used to give hearing tests.

None of these will hurt you.



## WHAT YOU WILL SEE

You will also see a small room with a door.  
This room is very quiet inside.

You may be asked to sit in this small room  
so you can hear better.



## WHAT YOU WILL WEAR

When you sit inside the small room, you may be asked to wear headphones, just like the ones used for listening to music.



**Note to Caregiver:** *If there are headphones available to practice with, ask the person to try them on to experience what it feels like to wear them.*



## QUESTIONS TO ANSWER

The person who will be doing your hearing test is called an *audiologist*. This person may ask you questions, like

- Do you have any problems with your hearing?
- Do you have any problems with your ears?
- Do your ears hurt at all?
- Does your doctor clean wax out of your ears?

It's okay if you don't know all of the answers.

(Name of caregiver) will be there to help if you need it.



**Note to Caregiver:** Take this opportunity to discuss with the individual any of these issues he/she may be experiencing. Help the person to practice their response(s) in order to prepare him/her with answering the audiologist's questions independently.

## CHECKING YOUR EARS

The person will look in your ears to see if your ears are healthy, or if there is a reason you are not hearing well.

This won't hurt at all.

Sometimes, if you have wax in your ears, it can make it hard to hear well.



## THE HEARING TEST ROOM



To start your hearing test, the person will ask you to sit in the small room.

This person will sit outside of the room, and you will see the person through a window.

You will only be in the room for a short time, about 30 minutes.

(Name of caregiver) will be sitting right outside of the room so you won't be alone.

**Note to caregiver:** Before the test, discuss with the audiologist any fears/anxiety the individual may have regarding sitting alone in the testing booth. Ask if it is possible to leave the door to the booth open, if needed; and if it is possible for the caregiver to sit outside of the testing booth where the individual can still see him/her.

## THE HEADPHONES



Now the person will ask you to put on the headphones.

If you wear glasses, you may have to take them off so the headphones fit better.

Don't chew gum during the test.

You won't be able to hear anything when you are wearing the headphones.

That's okay.

You will be able to hear the person talking to you in the headphones once the test starts.

## STARTING THE TEST

The person will sit outside of the small room and start the test.

He or she will play different sounds through the headphones.

Some sounds may be very quiet and hard to hear.

Try to relax and be still so you can hear better.



## LISTEN FOR THE SOUNDS



You can close your eyes to listen for the sounds from the headphones.

Remember to sit quietly to listen for the sounds.

## RAISE YOUR HAND

You will hear a sound in one ear from your headphones.

When you hear this sound,  
put up your hand or finger on the same side  
you hear the sound.

If you hear the sound in this ear, raise your hand or finger,  
like this.



**Note to Caregiver:** If you have headphones to practice with, you can stand behind the person and lightly tap on the left side of the headphone and ask the person to raise his/her hand or finger on the same side on which they heard the sound.

## RAISE YOUR HAND

You will hear a sound in one ear from your headphones.

When you hear this sound,  
put up your hand or finger on the same side  
you hear the sound.

If you hear the sound in this ear, raise your hand or finger,  
like this.



**Note to Caregiver:** If you have headphones to practice with, you can stand behind the person and lightly tap on the right side of the headphone and ask the person to raise his/her hand or finger on the same side on which they heard the sound.



## PUSH A BUTTON

There is another way to test your hearing.

The person doing your test  
might give you a “button” to hold.

When you hear sounds in the headphones,  
just push the button like this person is doing.

Hearing tests are that easy!



**Note to Caregiver:** You can practice this step by giving the person a pen (that “clicks”) to hold while wearing headphones. Stand behind the person and lightly tap the headphones, one ear at a time. Ask the person to “push the button” (click the pen) whenever he or she hears the sound from the headphones. Practice as needed to ensure the individual understands the concept.

## THE TEST IS DONE!

When the person (audiologist) tells you  
your test is done,  
you can take off the headphones  
and leave the small room.

(Name of caregiver) will be waiting for  
you.



## WHAT'S NEXT?

If the person (audiologist) who gave you your hearing test tells you there is a problem with your hearing, he or she may say you need hearing aides.

You may have to schedule another appointment to come back to get the hearing aids for your ears.

If you need hearing aides, don't worry.

They don't hurt; and they will help you to hear much better!



**GREAT JOB! I KNOW YOU CAN DO IT!**

See? It's that simple!

I know you can do it! You always do a great job!



**Note to Caregiver:** This is a good place to assess how well the person understood what was presented. Ask brief questions, such as, “Do you know what will happen at your hearing test? Where will you sit? What will you have on your ears? When should you raise your hand?” etc. Revisit this guide as often as needed to ensure the person understands what to expect and is prepared when the day of the test arrives.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA). (n.d.). Types of Tests Used to Evaluate Hearing in Children and Adults. Retrieved June 20, 2018, from <https://www.asha.org/public/hearing/Types-of-Tests-Used-to-Evaluate-Hearing/>
- Andersson, Eva & Arlinger, Stig & Magnusson, Lennart & Hamrin, Elisabeth. (2012). Audiometric screening of a population with intellectual disability. *International journal of audiology*. 52. 10.3109/14992027.2012.700773.
- KidsHealth. (2014, October). Going to the Audiologist. Retrieved June 20, 2018, from <https://kidshealth.org/en/kids/hearing-test.html>



For additional information regarding this guide or  
any of our physical or behavioral health trainings,

contact

KEPRO SW PA Health Care Quality Unit

(KEPRO HCQU)

[hcqu.kepro.com](https://hcqu.kepro.com)