



When Hearing Aids Aren't Enough: Expanding Your Patients' Communication Toolkit

Practical cues that it's time to recommend additional support tools

Assistive technology like call captioning can resolve communication barriers that hearing aids alone may not reach.

When patients describe challenges — especially with phone communication — it may be the right time to suggest additional support tools so they can communicate with confidence and independence.

Watch for these signs that a patient could benefit from additional support to bridge the communication gap.

Important note:

These signs may indicate that assistive tech may help, but do not necessarily mean a given patient qualifies for CaptionCall. To qualify, a patient must have hearing loss and need captions to understand phone calls.

Listen for These Patient Complaints

Patients may give subtle signals that they need support beyond their hearing aids. Common issues to listen for include:



Phone challenges

- "I usually don't answer the phone because I won't be able to understand what they're saying."
- "I ask callers to repeat themselves over and over."
- "Voicemails are still hard to hear clearly."



Conversation frustrations

- "I hear people talking but still miss every other word."
- "Everyone sounds like they're mumbling."
- "I can't take calls if I'm out in crowds or noisy places."



Workarounds

- "My spouse or kids make calls for me."
- "I put my phone on speaker and hope I catch enough."
- "I prefer texting — calls are too hard."

Clinical Indicators to Watch for

Some patients perform well in the clinic but still struggle with everyday communication.

Potential indicators include:

- Good, aided speech scores in clinic, but ongoing real-world communication complaints
- Difficulty with telephone speech understanding
- Patients reporting listening fatigue
- Limited benefit in challenging listening environments (like phone calls)



Other Available Assistive Technologies

Call captioning can help patients understand phone calls, but there are a range of other assistive technologies that can supplement hearing aids in similarly specific scenarios:



In-person Enhancement

- Hearing aid mini microphones
- Personal amplifiers



Environmental Support

- TV listening systems
- Direct audio streaming from TVs or devices



Safety & Awareness

- Alerting devices for doorbells, alarms, and phones
- Visual or vibrating notification systems

A Simple Question to Open the Conversation

Audiologists can uncover communication challenges by asking:

“What situations are still difficult for you — even with your hearing aids?”

Follow-ups:

- “How do phone calls usually go for you?”
- “Do you ever avoid calls because they’re hard to understand?”
- “Would captions during phone conversations be helpful?”



CaptionCall is available at no cost to individuals who need captions to understand phone calls due to hearing loss.

Reach out to your CaptionCall Account Manager for more information about referring patients and support options available from CaptionCall.