

Improving communication with Aboriginal staff and clients through using Amplified Listening Devices (ALD)

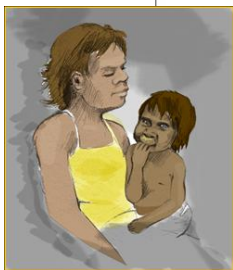
These are some comments from staff and clients who use an ALD

- *“Using the ALD they are now turning up for appointments.”*
- *“Before they would mostly not have a clue of what I was saying.”*
- *“I was not miss stuff and at the end of a training day I wasn’t so tired.”*
- *“People’s participation in their own health management improved.”*
- *“I no longer thought some client’s limited communication was about cultural matters.”*



Did you know?

Up to 60% of Aboriginal adults in remote communities have some degree of hearing loss that affects their communication.



Prevalence of hearing problems

Type of hearing problem	Non-Aboriginal	Aboriginal
Sensori-neural hearing loss	5%	5%
Conductive hearing loss	8%	60%
Auditory processing problems	10%	40%

This high prevalence of hearing problems amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are a result of middle-ear disease in childhood.

Middle-ear Disease

Some children experience middle-ear disease earlier, longer and more often. These children are often the most socially and economically disadvantaged. Prolonged and chronic middle-ear disease is a disease of poverty, where

- crowded housing,
- poor nutrition and
- poor access to medical treatment

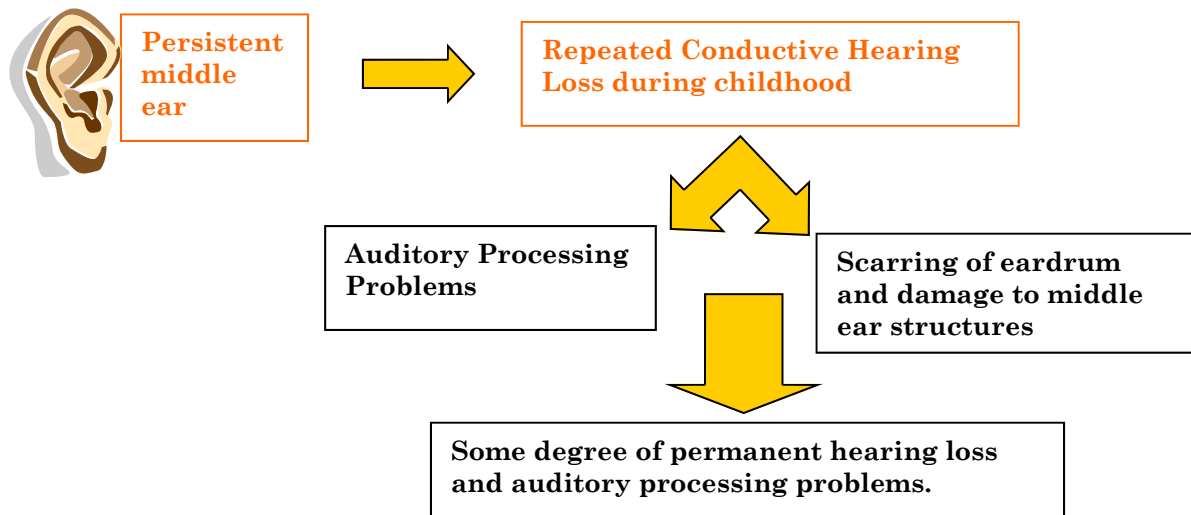
are all contributing factors. Furthermore, the microbes that cause middle-ear disease are highly contagious. So, with lots of people living in a single dwelling the disease spreads easily and stays around longer.



We all live in this two bedroom house.



This flowchart shows the story of middle-ear disease



What does this story mean for people in the workplace or for people accessing a service?



Aboriginal clients and staff often do not understand what is said, especially when:

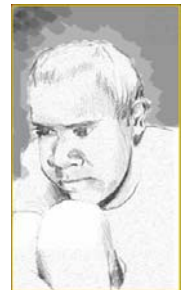
- it is an unfamiliar topic,
- an unfamiliar person is talking and
- it is noisy.

In addition, cross-cultural communication is especially difficult.

People with hearing loss often:

Avoid appointments if they are unsure what will happen

- Remain disengaged and silent during appointments
- Say they understand even if they do not
- Fail to comply or follow through with what was agreed



Improving communication with an Amplified Listening Device (ALD)



The use of an ALD can improve communication with many people with hearing loss. The following comments are from an Aboriginal Community Health Clinic in the Northern Territory.



On Chronic Disease Management

"Before people with hearing deficits often got branded at the hospital as non-compliant but now they can understand (when using amplification) because they can hear us.

Before we would have chase up on people to find out where they were and sometimes they would slip though [the] system and we would not see them again. Using the ALD they are now turning up for appointments, doing their blood sugars – there is better compliance.

I am able to use education tools more – they show they understand by nodding, before they would mostly not have a clue of what I was saying." **Aboriginal Diabetes Educator**

On Participation in health management

“The compliance of patients improved and the interaction improved. People were taking medications and getting to appointments I made for them with specialists, so that would have helped improve health outcomes.

Clients also asked for more information and consultations became longer. People’s participation in their own health management improved.

It also decreased the likelihood of me stereotyping the client. I no longer thought some client’s limited communication was about cultural matters – involving women or men’s business, which was untrue.”

GP speaking about using an amplification device with Aboriginal clients



Communication when it is Noisy

- It is not only during appointments with clients that ALDs help communication.
- Noisy reception areas often inhibit communication. ALDs can also help in training, particularly on the job training.

Communication in Reception

“Before they (clients with hearing loss) could not communicate with front admin there was shouting and not getting the right story. Now we have identified who has hearing loss and immediately get the pocket talker and use it when they come to reception.”

Health Centre Manager



“It makes their and my life much easier – they are less stressed and more comfortable.” **Senior admin officer**

Improved work performance and well being



“I am dealing with lots of Aboriginal clients who, like me, are softly spoken – now (using the ALD) feel I am winning. No matter how softly they speak I can hear them.”

Aboriginal employee with hearing loss

“I always used to come home from work tired, often with headache and just needing to lie down and rest. Now I come home more relaxed and have more energy to do things with my family.”

Aboriginal employee with hearing loss



Improved Training

Using ALDs during training helps not only to improve understanding, they can also reduce stress and assist people to speak at an appropriate level.

“It was heaps better using the ALD. I was not missing stuff and at the end of a days training I was not so tired. Other people kept telling me how I was not talking too loud anymore and I looked more relaxed.”

Training participant

Bellman Audio Maxi with Headphones

Bellman Audio Maxi is a communication aid that uses digital state-of-the-art technology to enhance speech in different listening situations.

It is an easy-to-use device with large tactile controls. All common functions can be accessed using a single push of a button and there are no complicated menus to get lost in.

It exploits the advantages of digital technology to clarify speech and reduce annoying background noise—to give an outstanding sound quality.

This package includes the Maxi with a pair of high sensitivity stereo headphones. Maxi headphones are specially selected to deliver optimum sound and feedback reduction.



\$279

**Plus postage
and handling**



Amplified Stethoscope—Escape 2

For the approximately 50% of Aboriginal Health Workers with a hearing loss using a normal stethoscope can be frustrating and demoralising.

An amplified stethoscope can help overcome these difficulties.

\$604

**Plus postage
and handling**

Price List



**Bellman maxi
with headphones**
(best if device is for public use)

\$279



**Bellman maxi
with ear buds**
(best if device is for unobtrusive
individual use)

\$279



Extra headphones or earbuds

\$29

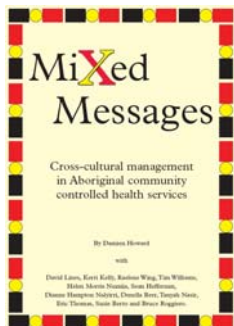


Amplified Stethoscope

\$604

Note these prices may alter in the near future
because of changes
in foreign exchange rates

Other resources



Mixed Messages is a book on cross-cultural management with chapters on the occupational effects of Aboriginal Hearing Loss

\$66



Otitis Media and Conductive Hearing Loss is a poster for schools, child care centres, health centres and elsewhere. It describes what Otitis Media and Conductive Hearing Loss are, highlights the kinds of social responses associated with CHL and describes what families, teachers and others can do to prevent middle-ear disease and manage hearing loss related communication problems.

Large poster

\$50 each or

**\$40 each
when you buy
10 or more**

There are two posters. The large poster is 500 x 1200mm. UV inks have been used which protect against fading. It has been produced with high resolution digital printing on 180 gsm stock.

The A2 size is ideal for notice boards.

\$10 each

You can download to view larger samples from the Eartroubles website: www.eartroubles.com



The Conductive Hearing Loss Story is a DVD that describes what Otitis Media (OM) and Conductive Hearing Loss (CHL) are, highlights the kinds of social responses associated with CHL and describes what families, teachers and others can do to prevent ear disease and manage hearing loss related communication problems. It can be used in Aboriginal health centres, schools, childcare to help inform Indigenous people about OM and CHL. Feedback from those who have watched it indicate that it prompts referrals to have ear disease treated and improves communication in families.

**\$200
Includes
support
materials**

You can preview the DVD from the Eartroubles website: www.eartroubles.com



Ear Troubles Kit

\$190

This kit has been developed to help children, parents and teachers who are dealing with the problems associated with conductive hearing and auditory processing difficulties.

The ear troubles kit includes:

- Resource books for teachers and parents
- Information on how to identify conductive hearing loss
- Action lists for teachers
- A book for children

The school ear troubles kit is available as a series of electronic documents licensed to be used by staff within a specified school or group of schools. Schools that purchase the kit can also access the online training for a two month period after purchase. Cost of the kit depends on the number of teaching staff within a school.

To Purchase

To purchase any of the Bellman audio devices or any of the other resources described, please contact:

Phoenix Consulting - Dr Damien Howard, psychologist

E-mail: damien@phoenixconsulting.com.au

Phone: (08) 8948 4444

There is also more information available at:

www.eartroubles.com

Dr Damien Howard is a psychologist and educator who has been working on addressing the outcomes of widespread Aboriginal hearing loss for over 15 years.

Order Form

Order Date : _____

Customer Name: _____

Postal Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Product	Quantity	Cost per item	Total
Bellman Maxi with headphones		\$279	
Bellman Maxi with earbuds		\$279	
Headphones		\$29	
Earbuds		\$29	
Amplified Stethoscope		\$604	
Mixed Messages book		\$66	
Otitis Media and Conductive Hearing Loss poster		\$50	
Otitis Media and Conductive Hearing Loss poster 10 or more		\$40	
A2 size poster		\$10	
Conductive Hearing Loss DVD		\$200	
Eartroubles Kit		\$190	
GST – 10% of total			
Postage and handling			
TOTAL			

Send this form to **Phoenix Consulting** by:

- **Fax:** (08) 8930 9003
- **E-mail:** damien@phoenixconsulting.com.au
- **Post:** PO Box 793, Nightcliff, NT 0814