

## Hearing Better During Meetings

### A Practical Guide from ER Audiology

#### Why Meetings Are So Challenging

Many people find meetings exhausting, not because of volume, but because of **speech clarity, pace of discussion, and multiple speakers talking at once.**

In-person meetings often involve background noise, distance from the speaker, and people speaking from different directions. Online meetings introduce different challenges such as compressed audio, microphone quality, and people speaking over each other.

Small adjustments like these can significantly reduce listening effort and improve confidence in workplace discussions.

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## 1. Position Yourself Intentionally

Where you sit in a meeting room can significantly affect how clearly you hear.

Try to:

- Sit where you can clearly see the main speaker
- Position yourself close to key presenters
- Choose a seat where you can see as many faces as possible
- Avoid sitting near noisy areas such as doors, air conditioning, or office equipment

Visual cues such as lip movement, facial expression, and gestures provide valuable information that supports speech understanding.

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## 2. Request Structure

Meetings become much easier to follow when discussions are structured.

If possible, encourage:

- One person speaking at a time
- Clear introductions before someone begins speaking

- Key points summarised at the end of discussions
- Important decisions repeated for the group
- Request repetition of questions from the floor
- Encourage use of microphones if available

Structured communication reduces listening effort and helps everyone stay on the same page.

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### 3. Preview The Agenda

Understanding the topic of discussion beforehand can make a significant difference.

If an agenda is available:

- Review the meeting topics in advance
- Familiarise yourself with key terms or documents
- Note any areas where you may want clarification

Context helps the brain anticipate speech and fill in missing information more easily.

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### 4. Take Control Early

If you miss something at the beginning of a discussion, it can quickly become difficult to follow the rest of the conversation. It is often best to ask for clarification straight away.

Helpful phrases include:

- *“Sorry, could you repeat that last point?”*
- *“I just want to make sure I understood that correctly.”*
- *“Could you briefly summarise that again?”*

Most people appreciate clarity, and asking early prevents confusion later.

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### 5. Confirm key points

Repeat important information back:

*“Just to confirm, the deadline is next Friday?”*

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### 6. Technology That Can Support Hearing in Meetings

Technology can also improve clarity in both in-person and online meetings.

Some helpful tools include:

## Remote Microphones

Remote microphones can be placed near the speaker and transmit their voice directly to hearing devices or headphones.

This can significantly improve speech clarity in meeting rooms.

## Hearing Devices With Speech Enhancement

Modern hearing technology is designed to improve speech clarity in challenging environments, not just increase volume.

Features may include:

- Directional microphones
- Background noise reduction
- Automatic environment adjustments
- Speech enhancement programs

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## Staying Confident in Workplace Conversations

Meetings are an important part of workplace communication. They allow ideas to be shared, decisions to be made, and teams to work together effectively.

When conversations become difficult to follow, many people simply work harder to keep up. Over time, this increased listening effort can lead to fatigue and frustration, particularly in longer or fast-paced meetings.

If you regularly find meetings challenging, or feel unusually tired after group discussions, it may be helpful to explore your hearing health. Early hearing changes often affect speech clarity in busy or multi-speaker environments before they affect overall volume.

At **ER Audiology**, we provide thorough hearing assessments and personalised guidance to help you better understand your hearing and improve communication in everyday situations.

Clearer hearing can make meetings feel less stressful and help you stay confident in professional conversations.

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