

Conversation Tactics Checklist (Hallam, R S, Ashton, P, Sherbourne, K, Gailey, L, & Corney, R. 2007).

This 54-item self-report questionnaire was devised to assess how people behave when it becomes difficult to converse through reasons of hearing loss and/or background noise. Items were suggested from the literature on the tactics people employ when there are problems of aural communication. The items were worded to be meaningful to normally hearing individuals as well as to persons with hearing loss. Some of the tactics are directed at a normally hearing conversational partner. The response categories refer to the frequency with which the tactic is employed when conversation becomes difficult: Never (0), Rarely (1), Sometimes (2), and Usually (3).

Items are grouped into eight a priori categories based on what is known about processes of communication when conversations are set up, break down and are repaired. Although the items are constructed to be meaningful to anyone, some tactics are not generally applicable, in which case the respondent has the option of checking 'never use'. For example, the item 'Turn your ear towards the talker' would not apply to a person unable to hear sounds at all. Mean scores (total divided by number of items in the set) are computed for each of the eight categories. Some items apply to both partners in a conversation (e.g. 'Try to move with the talker to a quieter place'), some refer to attempts to achieve successful communication (e.g. 'Speak clearly'), and some to optimizing the sensory environment or initiating repair. Optimizing may be self-managed (e.g. 'Take note of facial expressions or gestures') or be achieved by requesting a behavioural change (e.g. 'Ask the talker to show his or her face while speaking'). A separate category of optimization consists of general metacommunication skills, e.g. 'Organize what you want to say in your mind before saying it'. An example of a repair strategy is: 'Ask the talker to repeat what they said'. Four items with a coercive intent were grouped separately; these represent attempts to induce others to communicate better by ignoring them until they do so, acting as though nothing has been heard, using facial expressions such as frowning, or simply getting irritated. With regard to avoidance, it is possible to avoid conversation altogether or to avoid initiating conversation-repair; items representing these two types of avoidance are scored together.

Test instructions and items.

The 54 items are listed below together with the category of tactic in which they fall. Norms are currently limited to the original sample on which the questionnaire was used but further studies in normally hearing and impaired samples are in progress. The instructions and format of the checklist are given in an appendix below.

ITEM	CATEGORY
1. Try to move with the talker to a quieter place	(FACIL).
2. Speak slowly	(PREP)
3. Give up trying to understand and switch off	(AVOID)
4. Ask the talker to show his or her face while speaking	(OPTI)
5. Remind a talker that shouting doesn't help	(HREP)
6. Give more information to make sure the other person understands	(PREP)
7. Ask the talker to say something in a different way	(HREP)
8. Ask the talker to speak more clearly	(HREP)
9. Pretend to understand what the talker is saying	(AVOID)
10. Make sure you can see the talker's face clearly	(OPTI)
11. Turn off any interfering external noises or shut window, etc.	(FACIL)
12. Interrupt others if you begin to lose track of the conversation	(HREP)
13. Ask a partner or friend who is with you in a group to summarize the conversation or tell you what people are talking about	(OPTI)
14. Ask the talker to tell you what the subject of the conversation will be about	(OPTI)
15. Speak clearly	(PREP)
16. Ask the talker to write down important information or unusual words, e.g. names of people	(ALT)
17. Replay in your mind what you have just heard and try to piece together the sounds	(META)
18. Use visual clues watch the lips of the speaker	(OPTI)
19. Make the minimum amount of effort and withdraw into your own thoughts	(AVOID)
20. Use gestures or sign language	(ALT)
21. Take note of facial expressions and gestures	(OPTI)

22. Ask a talker to catch your attention before speaking to you	(OPTI)
23. Move closer to the talker	(FACIL)
24. Try to look interested when you are not hearing clearly	(AVOID)
25. Keep calm and unflustered when you miss one thing, so as not to miss the next	(META)
26. Act as though you have heard nothing so others have to repeat themselves	(COERC).
27. Catch the other person's eye before speaking	(FACIL)
28. Take note of what the person is doing or looking at	(META)
29. Ask the talker to speak more slowly	(HREP)
30. Repeat what you say, word for word	(PREP)
31. Ask the talker to repeat what they said	(HREP)
32. End the conversation if the other person looks irritated	(AVOID)
33. Get irritated with the other person	(COERC).
34. Avoid having the conversation altogether if you think it will be difficult	(AVOID)
35. Repeat back to the talker what you think you have just heard	(META)
36. Decide that what you are saying is not important enough to keep repeating it	(AVOID)
37. Ask the talker to speak more loudly	(HREP)
38. Smile if you are following, frown or look puzzled if you are not	(COERC).
39. Ask a quietly-spoken talker to speak more loudly	(HREP)
40. Deliberately ignore the other person until he or she communicates more effectively	(COERC)
41. Ask others not to shout to you from another room	(OPTI)
42. Ask a talker to face you when talking	(OPTI)
43. Write out what you want to say	(ALT)
44. Organize what you want to say in your mind before saying it	(META)
45. Give up and leave if conversing is too difficult	(AVOID)
46. Mention to others your difficulty in hearing when you cannot understand what they are saying	(HREP)
47. Just keep on talking so you don't have to listen	(AVOID)
48. Turn your ear towards the talker	(OPTI)
49. Keep quiet to avoid the effort of conversing	(AVOID)
50. Avoid talking about unimportant things	(META)
51. Ask a 'reverse question' to check that you have heard correctly	(META)
52. Mentally fill in the gaps or guess when you miss parts of the conversation	(META)
53. Use fewer words or simplify to get your message across	(PREP)
54. Phrase a question so that only a few answers are possible	(META)

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Response categories and scoring.

Never (0), Rarely (1), Sometimes (2), and Usually (3).

Definitions of Categories

FACILitate. Communication partners (CPs) catch each other's attention and optimize the general communication environment (4 items).

ALTernative. CPs use alternative modes of communication (signing, gesture, writing) (3 items).

OPTimise. A CP (usually a hearing impaired person) optimizes the sensory and contextual information available to them (10 items).

METAcommunication. A CP (usually a hearing impaired person) employs meta-communication skills to organize their thoughts, interpret what has been said, construct what they are about to say, and ensure that the message is conveyed (9 items).

HREP (hearing repair). A CP (usually a hearing impaired person) attempts to repair a breakdown of communication by requesting that their CP repeat, or change their delivery or content of the message (9 items).

PREP (partner repair). A CP (usually a normally hearing person) repeats, or changes their delivery or message, in order to repair a breakdown of communication (5 items).

COERCe. A CP uses a non-verbal coercive means of influencing or repairing a conversation (4 items).

AVOID. A CP avoids communicating, or escapes a conversation when difficulties arise or avoids repairing a conversation breakdown (10 items).

Norms

People with Acquired Profound Hearing Loss (APHL), N = 22.

Tactics (means and SDs)							
facil	meta	opti	hrep	prep	coerc	avoid	alt
2.26 (0.56)	1.98 (0.49)	2.26 (0.51)	1.95 (0.55)	1.87 (0.58)	1.22 (0.63)	1.52 (0.57)	1.15 (0.56)
Family members of the above sample, N = 18							
1.98 (0.77)	1.62 (0.57)	1.41 (0.73)	1.34 (0.72)	2.31 (0.46)	1.05 (0.56)	0.91 (0.54)	1.50 (0.78)

Reference

Hallam, R S, Ashton, P, Sherbourne, K, Gailey, L, Corney. Coping, conversation tactics and marital interaction in persons with acquired profound hearing loss (APHL): Correlates of distress. *Audiological Medicine*, 2007, 5 (2), 103-111.

Conversation Tactics Checklist

Date _____ (You need not put your name on this questionnaire)

Age _____ Male or Female (tick) M [] F []

Do you consider yourself as having any impairment of hearing? (Tick the box that applies)

None [] Slight or mild [] Moderate [] Severe [] Profound []

Do you wear a hearing aid? No [] Sometimes [] All the time []

Do you have a cochlear implant? Yes [] No []

Instructions

In certain situations (like a noisy party) it is much more difficult to hold a conversation with another person. There are various ways of coping with these situations when it becomes difficult to hear and talk. These “conversation tactics” are listed below. **Please indicate with a tick how frequently you employ these tactics when holding a conversation becomes difficult.**

These difficulties are more likely to arise if you or your conversational partner has a hearing impairment but everyone experiences them at one time or another. Just indicate on the questionnaire how often you use the tactic (Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Usually) when conversation becomes difficult.

0 = Never 1 = Rarely 2 = Sometimes 3 = Usually

All of these items refer to **your behaviour.**

- | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Try to move with the talker to a quieter place..... | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 2. Speak slowly | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 3. Give up trying to understand and switch off | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4. Ask the talker to show his or her face while speaking | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |

0 = Never 1 = Rarely 2 = Sometimes 3 = Usually

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|--|---|---|---|---|
| 5. Remind a talker that shouting doesn't help..... | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 6. Give more information to make sure the other
person understands | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 7. Ask the talker to say something in a different way..... | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 8. Ask the talker to speak more clearly | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 9. Pretend to understand what the talker is saying | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 10. Make sure you can see the talker's face clearly | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 11. Turn off any interfering external noises or shut window, etc. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 12. Interrupt others if you begin to lose track of the conversation ... | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 13. Ask a partner or friend who is with you in a group to summarise
the conversation or tell you what people are talking about) | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 14. Ask the talker to tell you what the subject of the
conversation will be about | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 15. Speak clearly | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 16. Ask the talker to write down important information
or unusual words e.g. names of people | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 17. Replay in your mind what you have just heard
and try to piece together the sounds | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 18. Use visual clues – watch the lips of the speaker | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 19. Make the minimum amount of effort and withdraw
into your own thoughts..... | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 20. Use gestures or sign language | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 21. Take note of facial expressions and gestures | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 22. Ask a talker to catch your attention before speaking to you | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |

0 = Never 1 = Rarely 2 = Sometimes 3 = Usually

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|---|---|---|---|---|
| 23. Move closer to the talker | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 24. Try to look interested when you are not hearing clearly..... | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 25. Keep calm and unflustered when you miss one thing,
so as not to miss the next | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 26. Act as though you have heard nothing so others
have to repeat themselves | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 27. Catch the other person's eye before speaking | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 28. Take note of what the person is doing or looking at | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 29. Ask the talker to speak more slowly..... | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 30. Repeat what you say, word for word..... | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 31. Ask the talker to repeat what they said | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 32. End the conversation if the other person looks irritated | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 33. Get irritated with the other person | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 34. Avoid having the conversation altogether if
you think it will be difficult | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 35. Repeat back to the talker what you think you have just heard... | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 36. Decide that what you are saying is not
important enough to keep repeating it | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 37. Ask the talker to speak more loudly | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 38. Smile if you are following, frown or look puzzled if you are not .. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 39. Ask a quietly-spoken talker to speak more loudly | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 40. Deliberately ignore the other person until
he or she communicates more effectively | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 41. Ask others not to shout to you from another room..... | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |

0 = Never 1 = Rarely 2 = Sometimes 3 = Usually

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|---|---|---|---|---|
| 42. Ask a talker to face you when talking | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 43. Write out what you want to say | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 44. Organise what you want to say in your mind before saying it ... | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 45. Give up and leave if conversing is too difficult | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 46. Mention to others your difficulty in hearing
when you cannot understand what they are saying | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 47. Just keep on talking so you don't have to listen | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 48. Turn your ear towards the talker | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 49. Keep quiet to avoid the effort of conversing | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 50. Avoid talking about unimportant things | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 51. Ask a 'reverse question' to check that you have heard correctly | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 52. Mentally fill in the gaps or guess when you miss
parts of the conversation | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 53. Use fewer words or simplify to get your message across..... | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 54. Phrase a question so that only a few answers are possible..... | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.