

## Changes in Hearing: A Fact Sheet on Aging

### Hearing Changes:

- Impact may be greater than other losses
- Source of loss
- Auditory nerve
- Structure of ear
- Deterioration of brain
- Decreased ability to hear **intensity** or **volume** of sound
- Decreased ability to hear **pitch** of sound—especially high pitched sounds. Shouting (increased intensity and pitch) does not aid **hearing**.
- Decreased ability to discriminate between similar words.

### Hearing difficulties may produce these behaviors:

- Increased volume of speaking, shouting
- Tipping head or moving position to facilitate hearing
- Asking for things to be repeated or confusing words
- Blank looks, disorientation, inappropriate responses—“yes” or nods when not really understanding
- Isolation – withdrawal from social participation
- Not reacting – slammed door, loud noise
- Emotional upset – hyperactivity, frustration and anger. It is a typical and normal reaction not to admit but to lash out.

### Actions you may take:

- Stand in front of person you are speaking to (give opportunity to read lips)
- Make sure is aware that you are addressing him; touch the person slowly to assure attention
- Use gestures or objects to illustrate message, point in direction
- Use short sentences
- Attempt to speak to “good” ear