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By Loren Fishman



SUNDAY, LOCAL COMMENTARY | MONDAY, LOCAL COLUMNISTS | TUESDAY & THURSDAY, POLITICAL OPINION | WEDNESDAY, WELLNESS ADVICE | FRIDAY & SATURDAY, POSITIVE LIVING

A VIEW FROM VILLAGES HEALTH

Time to think about background noise if you are having more difficulty following a conversation at your favorite restaurant or when you are out with friends and are over the age of 50.



Al Turri

COMMENTARY

You might be one of the 50 million people living with the third most common chronic medical condition afflicting older adults: hearing loss.

Providing the proper diagnosis and treatment of hearing loss is an important part of the work I, a clinical audiologist and director of Audiology of The Villages Health, perform each day along with my team of nine audiologists throughout the Villages community at The Villages Health Care Centers.

Donna, one of my patients, knows from personal experience the isolation and debilitating effects of living with hearing loss. This past June, at

her birthday party, which is an annual family get-together weekend, Donna realized that she was missing out on most of the conversations around her.

"Things really came to a head for me when my son pulled me aside and asked me why I seemed to be upset with everybody and not taking part in the fun," Donna said. "I was heartbroken when he told me my granddaughter was upset that I wasn't spending any time with her."

Once she heard this, she knew something wasn't right and that she had to get herself checked out.

Once the weekend was over, Donna talked to her son a bit more and they decided to seek help at The Villages Health Audiology Clinic. Donna, her son and her granddaughter, all met with our team for nearly an hour to talk about what she was going through, how her difficulty hearing others was impacting her life and how everybody in the family was concerned about her. We also discussed Donna's goals and what her expectations for treatment were.

Once Donna got through all the testing, the diagnosis was

clear. Donna, like so many over the age of 60, was diagnosed with stage 2 hearing loss.

Hearing loss is a natural process of aging and can start even sooner for those exposed to loud noises or certain medications like chemotherapy. Donna had two strikes against her, both her age and history of breast cancer treatment. So, this was something we had to start treatment on right away to help her recover her hearing.

Donna and her family were told that once she started treatment that although there would be a period of adjustment, she would go from hearing better on day one to hearing great by day 30.

Every patient comes in with a story of a loved one, a friend or a neighbor who had a negative experience with hearing aids, which is why we take the time to discuss the advances in treatment, how affordable our treatment program is and our 100% satisfaction guarantee. This seems to help many patients overcome their fears.

Donna knows that her hearing loss isn't something that can be cured, and that the treatment program she is in today will change over time;

Every patient comes in with a story of a loved one, a friend or a neighbor who had a negative experience with hearing aids, which is why we take the time to discuss the advances in treatment, how affordable our treatment program is and our 100% satisfaction guarantee. This seems to help many patients overcome their fears."

but she also knows that she is hearing better than she has in the past five years and loving life again. She urges others like her to seek treatment from The Villages Health Audiology and to follow the specialist treatment plan.

After reflecting on her own missteps and realizing that she should have sought treatment sooner, she is forever grateful that her son had the hard conversation with her and that she can now spend endless time enjoying every conversation with him and others. Donna so eloquently says, "I'm in my early 60s, and I still have a lot of life to live. I don't want to spend another birthday feeling alone and isolated, and so I have made the decision to hear my very best and to use every key I have to open the doors to a more fulfilled, independent and active lifestyle."

For more information about our audiology department, visit our website: thevillageshealth.com/audiology

Call today to book an appointment: 352-995-2330

Dr. Al Turri, Au.D. is the director of audiology for The Villages Health.

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Stop by anytime, Monday through Friday, 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM. Walk-ins are welcome, but appointments are encouraged.

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