

What is Adult Aural Rehabilitation and Why Pursue It?

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Adult aural rehabilitation is a type of therapy that focuses on hearing and communication when a person has hearing loss. Aural rehabilitation for adults promotes improved communication by teaching participants to take charge of their hearing loss by:

- maximizing their use of technology
- managing the listening environment
- preventing (and repairing) communication breakdowns
- building listening skills.

Aural rehabilitation helps participants identify techniques and strategies to improve successful communication and is especially helpful post cochlear implantation (CI) to help a recipient maximize use of the new signal. Individuals with any severity of permanent hearing loss, including hearing aid users, may also benefit from aural rehabilitation. Some specific areas of concern addressed in aural rehabilitation include understanding conversations, listening in noise, maximizing use of programming and technology options available with a person's hearing technology, and communicating on the telephone. Individuals seeking aural rehabilitation may experience minor to severe challenges in any, or all, of these areas. Goals are selected by the participant, with provider insights and expertise, to target issues that will have a meaningful impact on listening and communication.

HOW CAN I FIND AN AURAL REHABILITATION PROVIDER?

Aural rehabilitation is in the scope of practice for both audiologists and speech-language pathologists. An audiologist or otolaryngologist (ENT) may be able to recommend a local provider who is familiar with the unique communication needs of adults who are deaf or hard of hearing. Additionally, one may receive suggestions by exploring the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) ProFind (<https://www.asha.org/profind/>) and searching by state for "audiologic rehabilitation."

DOES INSURANCE COVER AURAL REHABILITATION?

Insurance typically covers aural rehabilitation post CI; insurance

coverage is less common to support hearing aid use, though some insurance policies do cover such services for hearing aid users. What is covered by each insurance carrier, policy, and plan differs, meaning that the same insurance provider may have different coverage policies for different plan members. As a result, it is important to contact your insurance provider to determine if aural rehabilitation is a covered benefit as well as the specifics of the benefit (e.g., duration, number of sessions). A patient may ask their aural rehabilitation professional to provide the Current Procedural Terminology (commonly called CPT) codes and International Classification of Diseases (commonly called ICD-10) codes that they will be using for services to support an insurance inquiry. Of note, Medicare covers aural rehabilitation under the CPT code 92507, which may be billed only by a speech-language pathologist. This service is covered for services related to CI. For information on insurance coverage of rehabilitation post CI, review content on the website of the American Cochlear Implant Alliance: <https://www.acialliance.org/page/HealthIns>.

HOW LONG WOULD I RECEIVE AURAL REHABILITATION?

Aural rehabilitation services vary by individual, lasting as long as it takes for the participant to realize specific goals in listening and communication. It may be a few sessions for people with minor challenges and may require longer periods of intervention for more severe challenges. Services may occur weekly, monthly, or at a different frequency depending on goals selected by the participant with the provider, how quickly the participant moves toward their goals, and whether the goals are best targeted by a home practice program or in person.

WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT IN AURAL REHABILITATION?

Expect to receive counseling, suggestions, strategies and techniques to improve listening and communication. Sometimes rehabilitation will also include guidance on making best use of one's hearing technology. People are often provided with a home program of exercises to utilize between aural rehabilitation sessions to improve listening and communication skills. Such exercises may be carried out with a supportive



From left: **Lindsay Zombek** provides aural rehabilitation services for children and adults at University Hospitals Cleveland Medical Center, and **Donna L. Sorkin** is the executive director of the American Cochlear Implant Alliance, helping to expand awareness of and access to CIs. www.acialliance.org



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