

# Developing self-directed music learning activities for adult hearing aid users

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## Background

- Despite research showing the benefits of music training for CI recipients, no commercially-available training program. Nor any 'standard blueprint' of what type of training should be done, how to do it, what materials to use.
- Seems as if 'focused listening' is important – not just music in the background.
- People have different music preferences and needs.
- People place different levels of importance on music, and have differing schedules/time availability, resources etc.
- Therefore, having activities to do at home, and guidance about how to get the most from each is beneficial. Can cater to the needs & preferences of the individual.

## Background

- Compiled a list of activities that CI recipients could do to try & (re)introduce themselves to music, and/or improve their enjoyment.
- List was based on research evidence of what recipients (as a group) can/can't do, as well as a survey (Looi & She, 2010) on what recipients want to achieve with music training.
- List is by no means comprehensive, nor all-encompassing. It was compiled as a starting point for clinicians, so they had a resource they could use for inspiration, or provide to clients.

## GOALS

### Goals of this session:

- 1) Look at the list of activities for CI users, and decide:
  - a) if they're appropriate as is for HA users, and if so, what level of HL; OR
  - b) if they could be modified for HA users (& what levels of loss); OR
  - c) if they're not appropriate & should be deleted.
- 2) Develop other activities that could be added to a list of self-directed music listening activities a HA user could do at home, to improve their music listening and/or enjoyment.

### On the following slides:

- Blue font = activities that were originally developed for CI users
- Black font = contributions from workshop delegates for HA users

## Activity 1

- Try listening to exactly the same piece using different play back modes. For example try listening to that piece on your stereo, on the computer, via an MP3 or other portable music player (if you have one) with earphones, via an MP3 other portable music player using direct audio input, etc. See which you prefer.
- Try different equipment – e.g. music links headphones or Bone conduction headphones, direct audio input, different quality speakers, different rooms, in the car, ...
- Try different domes on HA if you have them (open vs. closed domes). Talk to your audiologist about the different options and what the differences are.
- Try listening to music on smartphone and playing around with the different equalizer settings and see what differences you hear.

## Activity 2

- Try listening to two CDs of styles you have never listened to, or would not normally listen to. Compare the two styles, and compare them to what you normally listen to. What is similar, what is different? Which sounds better? Why? What elements of the new styles do you like?
- (It's ok to prefer your original – just know why. What's the difference). Try something different.
- Describe the music you hear in lay terms, e.g. rhythm = speed of music, how fast is it? pitch = high vs. low.
- If the new style/song has lyrics, look up on the internet the name of the song and the lyrics that go with it.
- Be open minded
- Try moving to the music

## Activity 3

- Try listening to two Asian or Eastern music pieces and describe what you hear. What features are distinctive? What sounds different? How does it compare to the music you normally listen to?
- Try folk songs also based on pentatonic scale as well.
- Try looking up words to the folk songs on internet.

## Activity 4

- Try listening to two radio music stations you've never listened to for 30 mins each, and describe the music played on each station.
- Be open-minded about the type of music you find on the station.



## Activity 5

- Listen to two different CDs in your preferred style. Try to select two CDs you've never listened to before, and which have contrasting elements. For example, If you like Classical music, compare orchestra vs. chamber music, or romantic vs. baroque, or choral vs. opera, or wind vs. strings etc.  
If you like jazz, contrast blues vs. swing, or instrumental vs. vocal etc.  
If you like pop/rock, try contrasting current top 40 vs. 1980s, or heavy metal vs. rock, or a solo artist vs. a group etc.
- Discuss what you listened out for or compared. E.g. tempo/speed/rhythm, number of instruments or singers, emotion.

## Activity 6

- Compare your everyday listening program to a specific music listening program, whilst listening to three different pieces (i.e. listen to the same piece with both programs) for each of the three songs. Pay attention to (write down) differences, similarities, sound qualities (timbre), pitches, etc that you hear between the programs. Also try listening with features such as auto-sensitivity or noise-cancelling techniques on and off.
- Try to forget which program is labelled a “music” program, and instead discuss program 1 vs. 2. If HA says what the program is when you change it, turn that feature off.
- Try different microphone directionality for different settings (e.g. live vs. recorded music)
- Audiologist could try different fitting formulas in different programs (e.g. NAL vs. DSL. Vs HA manufacturer specific)

## Activity 7

- Try to find the same song (folk song, nursery rhyme, Christmas tune etc) recorded in a variety of ways:
  - i) a solo instrument version (melody only, no lyrics);
  - ii) a version with a singer (lyrics) and simple accompaniment (e.g. piano or guitar);
  - iii) a karaoke version where there are subtitled lyrics;
  - iv) a larger group version (e.g. band) of the song with lyrics; and
  - v) an instrumental-only larger group version.Start with the simplest recording, then as you become familiar with the piece, work your way 'up' in complexity. Use this approach to learn new songs (or 'relearn' old songs). Note which versions you prefer & why.
- Also try different remixes of the same song

## Activity 8

- If you can get access to a keyboard or piano – try experimenting on this. Start with the lowest note (i.e. the one to the left), and go up the notes one-by-one. See if you can hear an increase in pitch of each subsequent note, or if there are a series of notes that all sound the same etc, or if some notes sound 'out' or 'wrong' in pitch. What happens as you get to the right-side of the keyboard (i.e. the highest notes)?
- Try different music apps on your phone/tablet, for example – Shazam (identifies the name of the song), Spotify (to play music), Google search and Musixmatch (to view lyrics), YouTube (for music videos and different versions of the song), Guitar Hero (visual element), Petrucci website (for classical music especially if you can read music – the score shows what's coming).