



The Course of Rehabilitation

By: Kiran Mian

THERE WAS A TIME when I was obsessed with the best way to find the truth only to realize that I did not know the truth about myself or my situation. When I was diagnosed with hearing impairment I realized I needed to see myself in a completely new perspective. What would I be like without my impairment? I was 25 years old when I was diagnosed, so my hearing loss must have started in my teens. Did that — unknowingly — affect who I became? How far back do I need to go to find the “real” me?

Would I have fallen for my husband when I met him if I had not been hearing impaired? Does my hearing impairment actually make our marriage work? I found myself questioning the way I act in social situations as well. Am I not making casual conversation because I cannot hear or simply because other than the weather, I do not know how to make casual conversations? Am I an introvert, or has my hearing loss made me an introvert? How can one know his or her true personality?

Finding one’s true self might appear to be an idle theoretical question, yet without this question, recovery would be impossible. Recovery only begins when we get a perspective of ourselves within our environment, and it is important to establish a starting point before the journey of rehabilitation may begin.

I found my answer when I started volunteering for CHIP, where I met many people similar to me. I find

my hearing impairment an obstacle in finding my true self, but here at CHIP I met many people from different backgrounds with varying ages and health problems, yet they amaze me by coming in everyday or for every class. Many of us who work at CHIP or attend courses are dealing with the problem of hearing and other health issues, and yet we come in and try to make the world a better place. I wonder if our hearing impairment is what makes us so determined. I still have many questions, yet all CHIP members have the same thing in common: the will to overcome. CHIP provides us the safe place to realize this struggle.

.....
CHIP has given me the confidence to talk about my impairment.

.....
Why is CHIP so important? CHIP has given me the confidence to talk about my impairment, and it gives us all the environment we need to learn how to cope. I know for sure that whatever trials we face with our hearing loss, the education we receive here, is the key to our rehabilitation. This is why CHIP works so well for us all.

Here are some strategies I have found useful in managing my hearing loss:

► **Tell others about your hearing loss one-on-one.** I find that doing this in a one-on-one setting works best and allows for me to focus and properly answer their questions.

► **Use emails and instant messaging.** Especially for people I find hard to understand, I will send an email explaining the situation to them. I try to avoid telling people on the spot. I don’t want them to get upset, as they might already be trying and telling them on the spot is not a fair deal.

► **Consider voice control.** Sometimes, we speak too loudly or too softly, which annoys many people. To find the right median, we need to practice with close friends or family who will give us honest feedback.

► **If possible, use a partner.** If you’re lucky, at large gatherings, sit next to a person you know and trust. If you miss something, this person can help repeat or explain what is going on.

► **Use a smartphone.** Recently, I bought an iPhone. It is unlocked, meaning I can take it wherever I go. This has saved me a lot of trouble, and I’m able to use it to send text messages, emails, and update myself with directions or any other information. I recommend you buy an unlocked smartphone and take it with you wherever you go.

► **Be open and frank with your hearing aid acoustician and audiologist.** Let them know about the difficulties you’re having and the challenges you face — and together, come up with solutions. ◀