

[Music] [Narelle] Hello and welcome to this episode of the Digital Access Show. This week I'm focusing on an issue or a disability, whatever you want to call it, that many people tend to have, particularly later in life. Men seem to have it more than women at times, and that's - when you get older you tend to start to lose your hearing. You know, if you're like Janeen and I, our age and we went out to live music all the time with the big speakers and you're dancing beside the speakers and you went home and you still heard the music three days later, those things have affects on your life, particularly Angels' concerts, they were notorious. Three days later you could still hear the ringing in your ear. [Janeen] Deep Purple, Narelle [Narelle] Oh my gosh, I never saw them in concert. I'd like to introduce everyone to Janeen, Vosper from Speech Perfect. I've brought Janeen here because Janeen is a communications expert, a speaking expert, but Janeen has lived experience herself with members of her family having hearing loss. Janeen, thanks so much for coming on. [Janeen] Thanks Narelle, I'm really interested in learning about what your show does and sharing information, hopefully that might help your listeners a little bit. [Narelle] Well, I hope so because I think people do forget some signs, and very obvious signs when you look back, that people are losing their hearing. My old uncle used to go, 'yeah, whatsa whatsa?' In other words, speak up. And it was - now I look back later. He'd obviously turned his hearing aid off because he was really annoyed with his wife. [Janeen] [chuckles] [Narelle] But you know, before that, before he got the hearing aid, he actually couldn't hear. Or a person might ask you to repeat it again a couple of times. Or they'll say to you, well, you're speaking really quietly, you need to speak up, you're mumbling, you're... [Janeen] You're mumbling, or you're not facing me. [Janeen] Or you... [Narelle] Oh yeah! [Janeen] That's the worst one I used to get, and still occassionally get, if we don't have hearing aids in. [Narelle] Yeah, yeah. And it's a big issue. And the TV goes really loud and the music is really loud or they're talking very loudly. And then you end up talking loudly as well. And you look back and think, oh my gosh, why didn't I pick it up? So Janeen, tell us about you and tell us about your experiences, because obviously I'm very interested myself to hear your experiences. [Janeen] It's interesting as a speaker and a communications coach, Narelle, that my husband, when I'm speaking to him, I think the most... popular word used over the, you know, last 10 years is, 'hey!' [Narelle] [laughs] [Janeen] Hey, hey! [Janeen] I mean you repeat something for the third time, and I just give up and stop communicating because I couldn't be bothered repeating it again. And it's really just - listen better. My husband worked in construction. [Narelle] Yep. [Janeen] You have, y'know, it was the days of, you know, cutting dangerous materials with a handkerchief around your mouth and no hearing aids that are hearing, no hearing devices or anti - devices, trying to think what they're called - headphones. Or something like that. [Narelle] Yeah. [Janeen] So naturally he's ended up with hearing loss. [Narelle] Yep. [Janeen] And... but it's been... And part of his, I think is part of Meniere's and tinnitus as well. So all of that's going on, as well as not having, you know, 100% hearing anymore. They're so frustrating for him and very frustrating for me and anyone else that's trying to have a conversation with him. [Narelle] Yeah. So Janeen, when he first started getting his hearing aids and when you were first aware, what were the adjustments that you had to make? Because there would have been a lot of adjustments, not just for him, but for you as well. [Janeen] Hey! [Narelle] One - yeah, that. [both] [laugh] [Janeen] Oh, Narelle... patience [laughs] I think is the main one. I think with him, it's been a continuous - he's always talked about selective hearing, you know, saying that it was selective hearing, which really was just a cover up.

[Narelle] Yeah. [Janeen] And I do believe his left ear, he doesn't hear as well out of his left, meaning when we're traveling in the car, he's not... we can't have a conversation. [Narelle] Yeah. [Janeen] And I also think a lot of the times he would zone out if we're in the car, I tend to listen to books. We do lots of long trips. And he wouldn't be necessarily paying attention to what's on the books or what he's watching on TV. And I think all of those components for him was 'I can't hear it properly anyway.' So he would zone out a bit with what he was meant to be listening to. [Narelle] So he would have missed out on so much, because in that time you had, you had grandchildren coming into your life. [Janeen] Definitely. [Narelle] You had children getting married, you had family life changes that because he's not hearing properly, he would have missed out on so much. How frustrating for him. [Janeen] Yeah, very frustrating, for him. And because he, and I again would be nagging, he'd be out in the yard using very loud equipment or he's a wood turner, so he'd be at the lathe and he wouldn't have proper protection on. And I would be on his case. But because his hearing's already damaged, it's not as loud to him, so if he comes along with the blower, it hurts my ears, where it's not as loud to him because he can't - he doesn't hear it as well. But those things are also important to know. And it can be dangerous then I suppose too when you're missing out on hearing something. I know my neighbour is profoundly deaf, and ever since we've known him he's a brilliant lip reader. But that's part of the thing I've learnt with Don is that if I'm facing away, then he can't hear me. And you know, with our neighbor you actually have to be looking. And with Lloyd, you purposely look at him and speak and he can read everything that you're saying. Whereas, when someone has lost part of their hearing, then you don't sort of think it's the same deal. Whereas it is. [Narelle] And they wouldn't have - yeah, [Narelle] and they wouldn't have learnt Auslan sign language at any time. [Janeen] No. [Narelle] They don't have lip reading. [Janeen] No. [Narelle] They're really dependent on being able to read a person's body language and facial language. They're really dependent on a person talking clearly. And as you said, facing them. [Janeen] Yeah, that was what I'd get accused of all the time is, 'well, how can you expect me to hear when you're facing me the other way?' Whereas I'm thinking, well, that doesn't really matter when you're talking to someone. But it did matter to him. He's now got hearing aids only in the last four months? [Narelle] Yeah. [Janeen] He's put hearing aids - [it's] made a difference to his world. He can't believe, is that, you know, making comments of the things that he can hear that he couldn't hear before. And he's helping our son out in a, in a heavily industrial workplace. And he had to go and get hearing protection that blocks out 100% of the sound because it was so loud. [Narelle] Yeah. [Janeen] Which, you know, that's quite a contrast to what he was doing before. [Narelle] And the thing is, he would have, like, children learning to speak as well. That would have been terribly hard for him. With your grandchildren, and with Don getting the hearing aids, what's been the way the grandkids have reacted? Have they, are they very good at making sure they face grandad to speak, speak clearly? [Janeen] No. [Narelle] These things, yeah. [Janeen] No. [laughs] [both] They're kids! [Janeen] They wouldn't think twice. And because he wouldn't ever say, I can't hear you, he would just ignore the question. And I'm thinking about it. And the grandies would, I know when Miss 8 when she was littler, she would actually grab his face and turn him in the direction towards her. I just thought about that when she was probably about three or four. [Narelle] Well, that would have worked, wouldn't it? That greeting. [Janeen] Absolutely. Because he would have just been ignoring her up until then. And she still is a chatterbox. Doesn't stop talking at all. [Narelle]

[laughs] [Janeen] So I think part of that is a bit of selective as well.
[both] [laugh] [Janeen] But that, you know, basically, by doing that, she was like, 'you're not paying attention!' [Narelle] Yeah. But even when you go out to a restaurant or something like that, there are things you have to take into account. I remember you talking, I can't remember where you were, and you were talking about you, you'd gone out with all your sons and their families. And one of the sons had made a particular choice to ensure that Don would be included. Do you want to explain that day?
[Janeen] Yeah, we had to find somewhere that was not 100% indoors because you get so much - a lot of the new restaurants and cafes don't have any soft furnishings in them. Which means they become very loud environments. And he can often hear what's going on in the kitchen. Which seems weird, but not what's happening across the table. So for our son's 40th, and we were at the Brekky Creek but it was all outdoors where we were. [Narelle] Yep. [Janine] And, even though there were hundreds of people there, well, not for the birthday, but just as a pub is. And there were lots of noises and music and everything. He could have a conversation because it was not this noise bouncing off walls. It made it easier for him. Still very difficult. [Narelle] Yep. [Janeen] I- we haven't actually been out. Anywhere in particular... Most of the things we've done in the last few months are sitting around campfires, which is a different space. But yeah, there hasn't been anywhere we've been, I think, to dinner with the hearing aids in. So that would be an interesting test. [Narelle] Yeah, I know with my mum, she wears hearing aids as well, and... I've just found you don't take mum to those modern restaurants. It's just too much for her. Or even in her craft group, the more people, the quieter she goes, because she can't hear the conversation, it just becomes a babble to her. And with her hearing aids in, it's just not clear. And there's obviously a limit to what hearing aids can do. [Janeen] Yeah, I know Don is really pleased with the ones that he got and he's finding it's so much clearer than what it was. And, he... They did a trial and he's done a couple of trials of them and found that I imagine anything like that's hard to adjust to because it's not what you've been used to. But he's found this ones to be working really well. [Narelle] Excellent. [Janeen] I'm going to have to take him to a noisy restaurant to see what happens. [Narelle] Let me know [laughs]. Janeen, what are some things like for when a person that's running a meeting and there may be hearing impaired people in the meeting, what are some techniques that you could do to enhance the fact you're getting the message across? [Janeen] A couple of things for the person delivering the meeting. One thing is, is to, if you're in a really tiny room, it's okay to stay seated. My recommendation is if you're going to speak, stand up. [Narelle] Okay. [Janeen] Because that means that eyes go on to you and people know that you have something to say. That means that you're a lot more engaging. For the speaker, you can be clearer because you've got more air going into your lungs because you've opened the body up and you can project a little bit more. Depending, I know I have a few women in my Mastermind group who've got [quieter] very quiet voices and it's just their normal style to have these quiet voices. [normal tone] And I encourage them to use their outside voice when they're in the meeting. So being aware - and one of the ladies is profoundly deaf and wears hearing aids and she thinks she's speaking way too loud. [Narelle] Yeah. [Janeen] So I have to get her to speak a bit louder. That's, so that's an important part. Stand up and own that space and so people will then be paying attention to you. Ensure that you slow down your speaking. [Narelle] That's a good one. [Janeen] People will absolutely be able to keep up with what you're saying. Treat your speak - the way you speak as if you were reading something with punctuation. A lot of people don't stop at the end of a sentence or if they do,

unfortunately they'll add a filler word like an 'Um'. What you need to learn and recognise is there needs to be pauses for people to keep up with the information that you're delivering. [Narelle] Mhm. [Janeen] So treat it as if it had punctuation. Where are the commas? Where are the full stops? Is this a new paragraph? And then just add one or two or three seconds in a space and that way you will continue to engage the people, and they will be able to keep up with you, and hopefully being able to pay attention. Open your mouth up to speak also. That helps. I know I've said in the past - and I don't have a hearing problem - but I am shortsighted. Is that where you go, where you can't see long distance? [Narelle] Yep. [Janeen] I have to, I often say Oh, I haven't got my glasses on so I can't hear you. [Narelle] [laughs] [Janeen] Isn't that interesting? [Narelle] Yeah. [laughing cont.] [Janeen] It is. And it is part of that body language. How are they... [stumbles] That's part of lip reading. I think we all get a little bit skilled at it. [Narelle] Mm. [Janeen] But that's an important factor is to make sure that you do open your mouth and use - and connect your body language with what you're saying. [Narelle] Yeah. What about like when you and Don go to parties or like you talk around campfires, if you're sitting around a campfire, it could be eight, nine people. How do you manage then? A campfire is a darker area, so being able to y'know, turn face on and speak, you're not necessarily going to know - how do you manage those times? [Janeen] You usually don't have the distractions or the background noise. [Narelle] Okay. [Janeen] The odd curlew or something like that. [Narelle] Yeah. [Janeen] It makes a big difference to the background noise. And if you're doing something like that, the rest is quiet. [Narelle] Yeah. [Janeen] There's usually only one person speaking at a time. [Narelle] Yeah. Yeah. What about for TV, for music? All those things that require good sound, like watching TV, watching the NRL, not necessarily some of the commentators, we'll leave them to one side. But you know, how does... How's that working for Don now? [Janeen] Oh, it's a lot easier for him. And the other thing is that the TV isn't on full blast. I can tell when he's got his hearing aids in or not. [Narelle] Yeah. [Janeen] You know... [sighs] And I- I work from my office which backs onto our TV area, which is actually better than where it used to be because it used to flow through to it. If I close the door it's fairly good, but I can tell if he hasn't got his hearing aids, I'm in the office with the door closed, and I can certainly hear all the words. And that's been a major problem over the years. It's just how loud the TV's been. And he's got shocking sleeping habits. I'm telling secrets now. He's got terrible sleeping habits. And so he'll go out very early in the morning, and then pop the TV on. And I'm in the bedroom with the door closed. And I'm hearing the other end of the house. And I'm - on more than one occasion, I've rung him. [Narelle] [laughs] [Janeen] Rather than screaming out, [both] [laugh] [Janeen] or getting up, I've.. I've got the phone out and I've rung him and said turn it down. [both] [laugh] [Narelle] I shouldn't laugh but that is funny [laughs] [Janeen] The other night, and talking about that, the other night I could hear this beeping. And I've woken up and I've wandered through the house. I couldn't identify where it was coming. I thought it was the smoke alarms. [Narelle] Yeah. [Janeen] And then it stopped for a few minutes, I went back to bed and then got up again. And when I heard it again, this is ridiculous. Where is this noise coming from? And it stopped, and I got back in bed and realized it was the fridge. So he'd got up at three o'clock and left the fridge open. But he couldn't hear any of this. That's the other thing with, because at night you're not wearing the hearing aids, intru- you know, that thought of intruders or smoke alarms or anything like that at all. He can't hear that. He'll go 'its your imagination.' Oh, no, it's not. I can actually

hear something's going on. [Narelle] Yeah. And that's it. [Janeen] Yeah, that's an important, you know, that's a really important factor. [Narelle] Yeah, it is. Really comes down to you don't know what you don't know. [Janeen] Mm. [Narelle] And I think that's, you know, the conversations that we've had about communication over the last - what, we've known each other about 18 months, two years? And it still comes back to that, doesn't it? You know, Don doesn't know that the fridge door's open, because he can't hear the beeping. [Janeen] Mhm, yep. [Narelle] And he, you know, he might not know of intruders. Where for me, I won't see something. I could hear the beating. I mean, I left the fridge door open yesterday. And it was driving me crazy. And I'm walking through trying to think, well, where's this beeping noise coming from? And of course, I couldn't see it. And so I thought, okay, touch everything. Okay, fridge doors open, that'll do it. [both] [laugh] [Narelle] But again, it is. What are a couple of takeaways, Janeen, that you can say to people about communication with people with hearing loss? [Janeen] I think the most important thing is try not to get frustrated with them, 'hey', 'hey' 'hey', 'hey,' [Narelle] Yeah, oi oi oi. [Janeen] [groans] It is really... takes a lot of patience, not to get frustrated, because often I - well, with my husband, and I found with others, they don't recognize there's a problem, even though other people do. And it wasn't until we were traveling with others that said, you've got to do something about it. Rather than what I'd be saying for years. So that, that's probably one point from the receiver and for the person who might be hearing impaired is, is own up to it. [Narelle] Yeah. [Janeen] And let people know, because if I know that, then I make sure that I face him when I'm having a conversation. I don't walk away and keep talking. And that's the thing is that, so recognizing that you need to identify, yes, I have a hearing problem. And let's get it fixed. Don't just ignore the problem. [Narelle] Yeah. And one other thing is, you know, if people do have hearing problems, give the information to them on a piece of paper to reinforce or an email to reinforce what you told them. There's digital means... to do it. Not necessarily a video, depends on their level of hearing, unless it's captioned, unless it's captioned. But there's always more than one way is what we're talking about, isn't there? [Janeen] Mhm. [Narelle] Thanks, Janeen. [Janeen] And that - sorry, I'm just going to add, that's a really good point from what you said, because my husband does, he usually does the grocery shopping. And I will say, tell him things, he'll say, write me a note. But there's all the, you know, there's a way of learning and keeping track, but it's, yeah, it's not taking it in as much. [Narelle] That's it. And, you know, for me, obviously, I put my shopping list on the reminders on my phone. And then if I'm getting someone to help me, I can share that reminder with them. So I still have control of my phone. They can see the list, and we'll go through and go, yeah, eggs, milk, whatever it is, and tick tick tick, and it's done. [Janeen] Mhm. [Narelle] It's about sharing information in a way that other people can understand it. [Janeen] That's all it. [Narelle] Yeah. Thanks, Janeen. [Janeen] You are most welcome. [Narelle] You really, you gave me a couple of things that I hadn't thought of. So thank you. I appreciate that. [Janeen] You are welcome. [Narelle] And that's Janeen Vosper. Janeen, how can people contact you if they want to find out more about what you do? And seriously, Janeen is great with communication. [Janeen] [laughs] [Narelle] I'm not biased, I just know the truth. [Janeen] Thanks, Narelle. Look, the easiest way is to go to JaneenVosper.com and book a complimentary strategy call and we can have a conversation. All my contact details are on there. That's the simplest way. I spell my name, Janeen, for those that are listening and not watching. If you're watching, you can see it in my background. If you're

just listening, it's J-A-N-double E-N. Vosper, V-O-S-P-E-R.com, and you'll all find everything about me there. [Narelle] And it's, yeah, even if you just want to have a chat and say, give us some tips about how to manage with hearing impairment in meetings, Janeen knows herself. So this is another episode of the Digital Access Show. Please like, subscribe, review. I learned that from Janeen. That's another Janeenism. And Google review, whatever way, we'd love to hear from you. And we will see you next time. Thank you. [Janeen] Bye. [Music]