

Phonak

ABCs of eAudiology

10 steps to talking to clients about eAudiology

No. 7, by Gina Angley, Au.D.

As hearing healthcare providers, we are always learning about new products and how those products can benefit our patients. We all have experience presenting new features, hearing aids and accessories to patients and perhaps because it is something tangible that we can easily show in the office, we do not struggle finding the words to say. eAudiology, is a little more abstract of a topic though. How do I explain this to my patient? Who do I explain eAudiology to?

Where to start?

Step 1

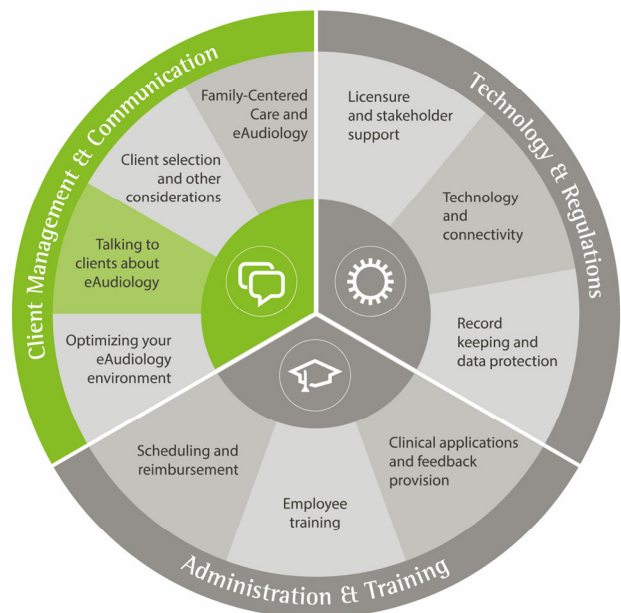
Prior to the appointment determine if there are any obvious motivators for the patient to try eAudiology (Distance to your clinic, age of the patient, reliance on others to travel, etc).

Step 2

Determine if the patient lives in a state different from you. You need to be mindful of licensure and would not want to present this to a patient if you were not licensed in their state of residence.

Step 3

Listen to your patient. As they express their frustrations and concern, they may give you hints that you can use to determine if eAudiology will address those concerns. You can also use those hints as your starting point.



Step 4

If your patient has expressed a need that eAudiology would fill, inform them of the products that can accomplish this task. "Mrs. Jones, you mentioned that you have a busy work schedule, so I can see that coming here for follow-up appointments might be difficult and frustrating for you. We have a product now that will allow us to meet for follow-up appointments, without you coming here. You can stay in your office and I can address your concerns from here in my office. I think this new device would be a good option for you and your busy schedule. Let me show you what this would look like."

Step 5

If they have not expressed a need, then pull out the research you did in Step 1 to initiate the conversation. "Mr. Edwards, I see that you have to travel quite the distance to come to our clinic. I now have a hearing aid to offer you that would allow you to stay home or at work for our follow-up appointments. Let me show you what that would look like."

Step 6

Consider setting up a pair(s) of clinic hearing aids paired with a clinician(s)' cell phone to demonstrate what an eAudiology appointment might look like. This might help make the concept a little more tangible for both you and the patient.

Step 7

If you are hesitant to offer this to patients right now, then start by thinking about your current patients in hearing aids that have eAudiology capabilities. Who might be a good person you could contact to try a practice eAudiology session with? We all have those patients who are eager to try the next best thing and can easily work with new technologies. This would be a great person to start with. Gain some of your experience with them.

Step 8

Once you have completed Step 7, ask that patient for feedback or a testimonial that you can use once you introduce the idea to a different patient. "Mr. Smith, I saw another patient using eAudiology last week. After the appointment they sent me a message stating how convenient and easy this service was. They also really enjoyed not having to come into the clinic for their appointment. I know you struggle with transportation, so this would be an option where you could stay at home but still get your hearing aid concerns addressed. Should we get you scheduled to try an eAudiology appointment for your next follow-up?"

Step 9

Think about creating an internal support system for patients. Patients may be hesitant to try this new service delivery model because they are worried about having support, if needed. When you present this to patients, it may ease their minds if they know they can call someone on your staff who can answer any questions they may have or be available in office to help with set-up. "Mrs. Williams if you would like to try an eAudiology session, our technician (or front desk staff) would be more than happy to walk you through the set-up here in the office. Shall I let them know you are interested?"

Step 10

Use the tools provided by manufacturers and consider creating some clinic specific resources for patients. As you are explaining this to patients and once the patient has agreed to try eAudiology, you want to ensure they have clear instructions on next steps and what to expect at their appointment. For example, you may want to let them know how they will be checked-in. Do they have to call, or will someone call them? "Mr. Davis, I will provide you with a handout that lists a few simple steps on what to expect on the day of your appointment. I also have this available electronically if you prefer."

Are you up to the challenge?

Look ahead in your schedule for potential patients, contact those already in hearing aids that are capable of eAudiology sessions to practice, and set up a demo in your office!

Author



Gina Angley, Au.D., is the Associate Director of the Adult Amplification Program within the Department of Hearing and Speech Sciences at Vanderbilt University Medical Center. She specializes in the diagnosis and rehabilitation of adults with hearing loss, and served as the Clinical Trials Coordinator for five years. Dr. Angley is a Fellow of the American Academy of Audiology and a member of the American Speech Language Hearing Association, through which she maintains her Certificate of Clinical Competence in Audiology (CCC-A). She earned her Doctor of Audiology (Au.D.) from Vanderbilt University School of Medicine in 2010, prior to which, she received a Bachelor of Science in Communication Sciences and Disorders from Syracuse University.