

# Cochlear Family

Keeping you supported, connected, inspired

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# Gael Hannan's tips for living skillfully with hearing loss.

Did you ever wish you had a practical guide to manage different hearing situations? Like whether to disclose your hearing loss on a date, how to navigate work phone calls, or where best to sit in a restaurant?

Gael Hannan, who has congenital hearing loss and a cochlear implant and hearing aid, has written a new book with loads of practical advice to help people manage these instances and more. Gael and her co-author Shari Eberts, who also has hearing loss, tackle many of the tough issues that people living with hearing loss encounter every day. ▶

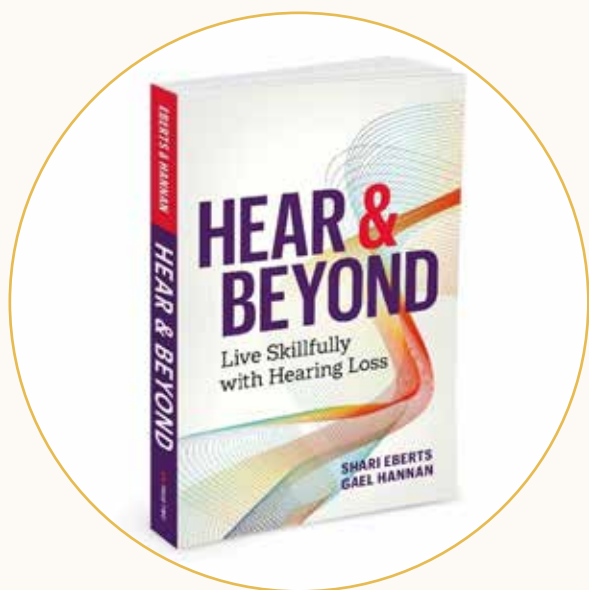
Gael, Cochlear™  
Nucleus® System  
recipient



- ◀ Such as knowing when to disclose hearing loss on a date with a potential partner. Gael writes: “Do you say your name and pop out with: ‘I have hearing loss, and this is what I need you to do if we’re going to have a good conversation and possibly a great relationship?’

“Perhaps you don’t want to disclose your hearing loss right away, worrying, ‘Maybe my date will be turned off by it.’”

## A guidebook for communicating better



To help address these dilemmas and many others, *Hear & Beyond: Living Skillfully with Hearing Loss*, is full of practical advice and covers everything from developing a positive mindset about living with hearing loss to fulfilment in the bedroom.

“This is the guidebook that neither of us had in our journeys,” says Gael. “I could have used this book back in my 20s. I felt that need, and I always wanted to write a book that really laid it out.

“That was my inspiration, because I know that people still need that information. Because regardless of when your hearing loss first occurs, you have to start at the beginning of learning how to live with it.”

Although Gael grew up with hearing loss, she was a mature adult when she fully realised its impact.

“I was 40 years old and I was pregnant. And for the first time my hearing loss wasn’t just about me,” she said. “I’m going to have a baby. What if I don’t hear him crying in the night? What if I don’t hear him burp, will he blow up? There were no resources for those types of questions.”

Finally, after decades of experience with hearing loss and a first book called *The Way I Hear It*, Gael set out to fill this gap and create a practical guide with fellow author Shari.

## Living with hearing loss, how to date and more

So, what’s some of Gael’s top advice? Start by changing your mindset.

“Then there’s the technology,” says Gael, stressing that it’s important to understand the value to quality of life through using your hearing implant, hearing aid, and any other tools and resources. These range from induction loops in a movie theatre to apps on your smartphone. ▶

“The mental approach you take is a key strategy to living skillfully. We call it Mind shifts: taking a clear look at how we view our hearing loss can be one of the biggest steps forward that we take.”

Gael, Cochlear™ Nucleus® System recipient

- ◀ Another game changer for Gael was learning not to bluff, or at least trying to bluff less because it's an easy trap to fall into: "Learning how to advocate for yourself and how to tell people who you are and what you need is crucial. You have the right to hear and be heard. You have the right to participate. If you accept that, that's going to take you places." In their book, Gael and Shari share tips to manage everyday life situations, including romantic relationships – such as when and how to tell someone you're dating about your hearing loss and how to have a fair fight with your partner.

For other situations, like eating out at restaurants, managing a work meeting, or just going out and about with friends and family, the book features a set of "hearing hacks" that cover specific situations. Here are some highlights:

- **Let people know your needs.** Communicate with the people around you that you require certain things to hear well. In a restaurant, this might mean asking for a quieter table, or a specific seat.
- **Plan ahead.** No one will be able to anticipate your needs better than you. Before you go out, whether it's on a date or to a work event, think through what you might need ahead of time and prepare as much as possible. This could include packing spare batteries or bringing a friend to be your "hearing buddy".
- **Be the early bird.** Arrive early so you can choose the best seat, and make sure you have your hearing settings optimised, like turning on ForwardFocus\* or setting up a True Wireless™ device, like the Mini Microphone 2+.

## Why this is so important

Gael says others around you might not realise the communication challenges or frustrations you're experiencing in a listening environment, but you have the power to improve the situation.

She believes everyone can learn to live more skillfully with their hearing loss.

"Your life with hearing loss can be better than it is now. My life with hearing loss – my gosh! I got my cochlear implant and it was like 'Wow'! And it gets better over time. But I have to work at it. I have to make those mind shifts."

You can also watch our interview with Gael on [Cochlear's YouTube channel](#) and hear her five principles to communicate better with hearing loss.

"Your relationships will definitely improve and be enriched. Hearing loss has a major impact on a relationship between you, your spouse, your children, everyone around you. It starts with you."

Gael, Cochlear™ Nucleus® System recipient



# Audrey shares her experience of enjoying hearing with her new sound processor



As a socially active 63-year-old, Audrey was looking for a more comfortable and discreet sound processor as her new device – something that would make her everyday life easier.



## Discover how you too can enjoy the freedom and confidence of the Kanso 2 Sound Processor

- ◀ “When I first heard about Kanso 2, I was looking forward to a lighter and more convenient sound processor solution,” says Audrey. “It is so light; I no longer feel the pressure of something sitting behind my ear.”

The fact that the Cochlear™ Nucleus® Kanso® 2 Sound Processor sits discreetly under her hair, Audrey says has given her a “boost of confidence.” Her glasses and face mask no longer get caught up with her device – a problem Audrey experienced with her previous behind-the-ear sound processor.

Audrey has also noticed the difference that improvements in hearing technology have made to everyday conversations.

“The sound quality is much clearer. I can engage in meaningful and enjoyable conversations with my family and friends.”

Before getting her Kanso 2 Sound Processor, Audrey would need to pack a remote control or another accessory so she could adjust her sound processor settings to different listening environments throughout the day.

“Nowadays, all I need is my mobile phone. And with a swipe of my finger, I can access the Nucleus Smart App to adjust the volume and check on the battery status,” says Audrey, who also likes that she can do this without drawing unnecessary attention from those around her.

Free to download from either the Apple App Store or Google Play, the Nucleus Smart App allows Audrey to control her sound processor using her smartphone. She can also check if the microphones are working well, view personalised hearing information, and locate her processor if she misplaces it – all from the convenience of a compatible Apple or Android device. ^

“I am truly amazed how a small device like Kanso 2 is packed with so many features,” Audrey says. “Wearing it ... enhances the quality of my life. I worry less, and I can focus on what I enjoy doing.”

**Learn more about  
Audrey’s story here.**

# Learn simple strategies to help your child become socially successful

Every parent wants to see their child feel socially in tune with their peers, to make friends and be invited to birthday parties. Yet many children with hearing loss are delayed in developing the critical social skills needed to “fit in” at school and beyond. ▶

Expert - Dr Anne Fulcher





◀ “Our initial thinking is that children with hearing loss are used to working one-on-one in their auditory verbal situation. They’re very good communicators with adults, but they’re not used to working together with typically hearing children to solve problems,” says Dr Anne Fulcher (PhD), an Australian listening and spoken language expert. “Because of their hearing loss, they grow up in a ‘hearing bubble’ where it is difficult to easily participate in conversation with friends and family when in a noisy situation or at a distance,” she says.

Dr Fulcher draws on more than 40 years of experience and work with The Shepherd Centre, an Australian not-for-profit organisation that provides support for children with hearing loss and their families.

“Despite their children frequently being amazingly good linguists, some parents were reporting that they were not happy with their [child’s] social groups or they weren’t being invited to parties. We collated this feedback with research evidence from The Shepherd Centre indicating that children with hearing loss were often quite delayed in social skills compared to their hearing peers.”  
So, what contributes to this?

Dr Fulcher says children with hearing loss often spend a lot of one-on-one time with adults in hearing

therapy or with other children with hearing loss. As such, they can miss out on opportunities to socialise with broader groups of people.

Parents often also use overly simplistic language when speaking to their child, focused on single, simple words, rather than exposing them to rich conversational language. They can sometimes tend to be very protective, often limiting their child’s exposure to group settings with normal-hearing children or answer on their child’s behalf.

As a result, these children miss out on another aspect of listening and speaking – what Dr Fulcher describes as a “hidden language” – which can lead to delays in developing social skills.

Because they may lack sufficient exposure to everyday social situations with their hearing peers, they can miss out on cues learned through body language, tone of voice and group play.

“Just as auditory/verbal therapy is so important to helping them develop the skills to listen and speak, social skills also need to be taught,” Dr Fulcher says. ▶





## Strategies to help you get started



### 1 Expand your child's social circle

Don't limit your child to activities with other children with hearing loss. It's important to help them find

or plan activities with others, especially hearing children, where they can interact and learn from each other.

Give your child opportunities to learn how to interact with people of all ages and in a range of environments, in order to learn how to read body language and develop problem-solving skills. "As well as those nice quiet learning environments, they need to be exposed to their peers if they're going to be successful integrators," says Dr Fulcher. "It's a huge benefit."

"One strategy to assist would be to place them in situations where they work with small groups of hearing children in order to solve problems, for example, when playing tactical board games."



### 2 Talk about conversations and social interactions

"No matter how well they're listening and how amazing they are, children

with hearing loss are going to be somewhat compromised, particularly when they're in noisy social groups," Dr Fulcher explains. "Teach them certain things to look out for, like when it's OK to interrupt when someone is speaking, or how to take turns and share."

Also talk about how body language and tone of voice conveys how we feel. This helps children understand that there are multiple aspects to how we listen and express ourselves. It also prepares them for group settings with children by teaching them how to take turns and role play.

Help your child understand hidden language by labelling emotions and body language: "Look at Jane. She looks sad. I wonder what's making her sad?" Similarly, use role play and find opportunities to ask your child to interpret and copy facial expressions to help them understand body language and facial cues. Dr Fulcher says there are tools that can assist here such as commercial board games and Apps.



### 3 Don't treat a child with hearing loss differently

Avoid using simplistic language or speaking in single words. "Instead, you should talk to them as much as you can, just as if they are a hearing child.

Bathe them in lovely, embellished language," Dr Fulcher says.

Throughout the day, talk with your child consistently about what's happening: how you are making decisions and offering choices.



### 4 It's never too early or too late to start

Social skills develop in children from a very young age, so it's never too early to start implementing these strategies. Simple everyday activities such as singing together; turn taking, imitating the infant's actions and sounds are all the basis for tuning in to each other and having a "conversation".

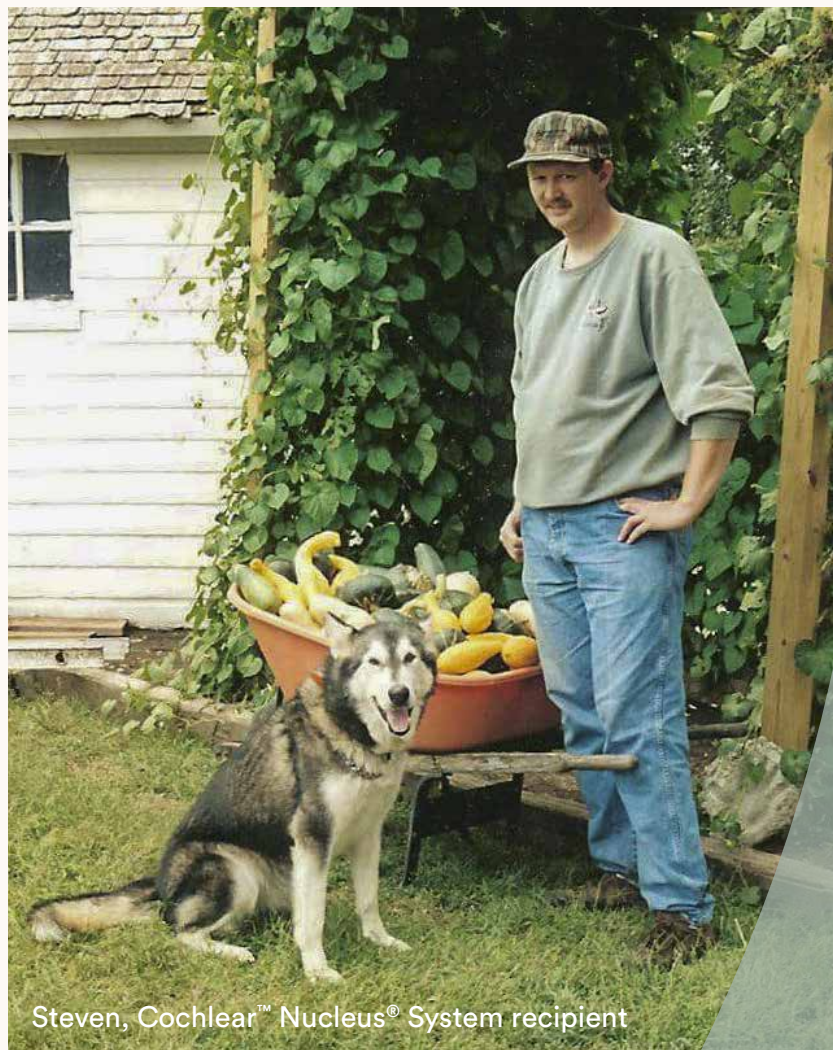
If your child is older, or an adult, and you notice they're missing certain social cues, it's never too late to help them learn. When the time is right, offer constructive tips and specific advice after observing a situation that could have been handled differently.

Explain the hidden language they may have missed or how to act more appropriately. We never stop learning as adults about self-awareness. It's important to be constructive and supportive.

# Steven takes a mighty leap into a whole new sound experience

At any stage of life, a change in circumstances can often lead to new opportunities and experiences. This was certainly the case for 51-year-old welder and cochlear implant recipient, Steven. Recently, when his employer changed ownership and started to offer health insurance, Steven took the opportunity to get a new sound processor – gaining three decades worth of technology enhancements in the process.

Having lost his hearing to meningitis as a young child in a rural town, Steven still vividly remembers going to the city for the surgery and hearing for the first time with his cochlear implant. Back in 1974 in the US, cochlear implants were not indicated for children under the age of 18 and hearing aids never seemed to work for Steven, so he had to wait more than a decade for his Cochlear Nucleus 22 implant and ESPrit Speech Processor. ▶



Steven, Cochlear™ Nucleus® System recipient

“I walked around the city and could hear everything so clearly – cars, people, conversations, doors opening and closing, and things I’d never heard before.”

Steven, Cochlear™ Nucleus® System recipient

## ◀ **A giant leap**

Steven is now enjoying his Cochlear™ Nucleus® 7 Sound Processor and the giant leap in hearing technology it provides from the ESPrit Sound Processor he used for 30 years. In fact, Steven says he doesn't want to take it off at the end of the day. Loving how much more comfortable it is in comparison to his old processor, Steven now wears his Nucleus 7 Sound Processor daily from 6 am to 11 pm.

## **Superior sound**

Steven says the sound quality of the Nucleus 7 Sound Processor is wonderful: "I can hear bugs chirping away in the garage at night and my cats meowing from across the room." He also hears sounds he couldn't before with his old processor, such as aeroplanes and helicopters flying overhead. At work, Steven feels safer now that he can more clearly hear machines in the work yard and metal dropping on the floor.

## **Experiencing every musical note**

With music as one of his greatest passions, Steven says he can now listen to music much better than before. He loves the sound of the saxophone and plans to learn to play the piano. Music is an especially big part of his life because his wife has a musical background, having played the cello in college and continuing to enjoy orchestra concerts. With the Nucleus 7 Sound Processor, Steven is experiencing live music in all its intricacies: "I can hear the bow glide across the string of an instrument so clearly".

## **Connecting with new technology**

When he's not listening to live music, Steven is enjoying streaming his favourite songs directly from his phone^ to his sound processor. With his Nucleus 7 Sound Processor, Steven is also appreciating the advantages of new technology such as the Nucleus Smart App^, which allows him to fine-tune his hearing experience, change programs or volume, check battery life and more.

Steven is grateful that, even though he was one of Cochlear's first recipients, he can access the latest hearing technology and innovation across his lifetime. He believes the biggest things in life are truly hearing the "little things".


Whether you received your hearing solution a few years or decades ago, you can open the door to new possibilities with a new sound processor.

**Find out if you should consider upgrading your sound processor.**



Steven, Cochlear™ Nucleus® System recipient





Adrian, Cochlear™ Osia® System recipient

# Adrian shares how the Osia System has helped him live life to the fullest

Adrian, a 50-year-old working professional and passionate singer shares how the Osia System has made his life easier and given him more confidence at work.

Adrian had started experiencing middle ear problems and some hearing loss. The inability to hear properly was affecting his productivity at work and also his social life. “At my workplace, communication is really important. Often in group scenarios I’d have to tilt my good ear. I wouldn’t be looking directly at people and it was hard to maintain good communication. It added extra stress to the day,” he shares. ▶

“Just not having to ask things again, or to miss parts of conversation, makes my day run a lot smoother. And to be able to hear sound on both sides makes my hearing more complete and gives me more confidence.”

Adrian, Cochlear™ Osia® System recipient



### ◀ How did you find out about the Osia System?

Through my ENT surgeon. I've followed Cochlear for quite a few years, and I knew they had a great reputation. So, I was pretty confident.

### How did you feel when you first heard through the system?

I felt this sense of relief, probably why I teared up. It was more a sense of completeness, and not having to impose a little bit on people and ask them to repeat themselves. Just being able to engage like a full hearing person, it's hard to explain.

### And how is life at work now?

Work is a lot easier. It's obviously improved my relationships, because I'm more confident in what I can hear and how I can engage with people.



### Finally, what would you say to someone thinking of getting an Osia System?

The Osia System has just made life easier and the advantages are so worthwhile. It's changed my life so much for the better, and I'm really grateful for that. I'd really recommend it.

**Learn more about the  
Cochlear™ Osia® system**

**The new innovative Cochlear™ Osia® System is the world's first osseointegrated steady-state implant (OSI) that uses digital piezoelectric stimulation, to send sound through the bone to your inner ear, helping you hear speech in difficult noisy situations.**



# Music selection and rehab exercises

Yoshiki, Cochlear™  
Nucleus® System  
recipient

Before you get started on music listening practise it is important to involve your family and friends. Their support and encouragement can have a really positive impact on your progress. Your family can also help you set up an appointment to speak with your hearing health professional. Your hearing healthcare professional will be able to help you set personalised goals.

We have developed some simple steps that you can follow to discover your love for music and help with those initial stages of song selection. When it comes to music rehab, it's important to start with the basics, go at a pace that you are comfortable with and try not to overcomplicate things. ▶





### 1 Keep it simple

Begin by listening to songs performed using one instrument i.e a piano or guitar.

Songs that are familiar or repeat musical patterns can be easier to follow.



### 2 Pick up an instrument

Grab an instrument and start playing. You may find that you form a

deeper connection to music when you are the one producing the sounds and setting the rhythm. This is also a great way to experiment with different chords and how small changes to the notes you play can alter the overall sound.



### 3 Explore Music Apps

There are a great library of apps that you can download to help with things

like identifying the different sounds instruments produce, tone, pitch and rhythms – All of which come together to form the melodic quality of songs. Later on, once you are onto step 5, you can try downloading some lyrics training apps. We have shared a list of useful apps further down in the guide.



### 4 Continue with instrumental songs

Build your confidence in listening to instrumental songs and begin listening to

songs that use 2 or 3 instruments. You can even watch these being performed on Youtube, so you can see when the different instruments are being played.

To increase the difficulty, listen without the visual input and try to identify the different instruments being played and listen for shifts in the beat.



### 5 Introduce lyrics

Start with simple songs with repetitive lyrics.

If you choose a song where you are familiar with the melody, that's even better.



### 6 Watch live or acoustic performances

Start by watching live acoustic performances of artists you like on YouTube.

Try typing BBC Live Lounge into the search bar to see good quality live performances from a range of artists. Live or acoustic performances tend to strip back the production side of the song and use fewer instruments, making it easier to listen to the words the singer is saying. Also, by watching their performances, you get the visual input of their lip movements and facial expressions. Try having the lyrics on hand, so you can follow along with the singer.



### 7 Listen to live acoustic performances

Repetition is key, so try listening to the same acoustic performances, but this time

without the visual cues that come from watching a video. When listening to the song, focus on identifying the lyrics, how the singer uses tone to convey emotion and also listen out for the different instruments that are being used.



### 8 Watch music videos

Music videos usually use the radio edit version of songs, these tend to be more

stylised and a step up in listening difficulty.

“We made a specific point of listening to music while incorporating it into playing. We danced together, or bashed pans together, or had music playing while relaxing on the floor. Dad can play the guitar with him and he also takes on the singing role, showing Felix that it's ok to be out of your comfort zone.”

Jo, mother of Felix, Cochlear™ Nucleus® System recipient, Australia



# Share your story with Cochlear Family

Cochlear Family wants to hear from you.  
Share your story, tips, tricks, advice, ideas and  
any questions you might have.

Get in touch >

## Hear now. And always

Cochlear is dedicated to helping people with moderate to profound hearing loss experience a world full of hearing. As the global leader in implantable hearing solutions, we have provided more than 650,000 devices and helped people of all ages to hear and connect with life's opportunities.

We aim to give people the best lifelong hearing experience and access to next generation technologies. We collaborate with leading clinical, research and support networks to advance hearing science and improve care.

That's why more people choose Cochlear than any other hearing implant company.

■ **Cochlear Limited** 238 Thomson Road #25-06, Novena Square Tower A, Singapore 307684

**[www.cochlear.com](http://www.cochlear.com)**

Please seek advice from your health professional about treatments for hearing loss. Outcomes may vary, and your health professional will advise you about the factors which could affect your outcome. Always follow the instructions for use. Not all products are available in all countries. Please contact your local Cochlear representative for product information.

Views expressed are those of the individual. Consult your health professional to determine if you are a candidate for Cochlear technology.

\*ForwardFocus is a clinician-enabled, user-controlled feature.

In Australia, Cochlear™ Nucleus® implant systems are intended for the treatment of moderately severe to profound hearing loss.

^The Cochlear Nucleus 7 Sound Processor is compatible with Apple and Android devices. The Cochlear Nucleus Smart App is available on App Store and Google Play. For compatibility information visit [www.cochlear.com/compatibility](http://www.cochlear.com/compatibility)

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