



Angie Aspinall

Single-sided hearing and you

Introducing the Phonak CROS solution

PHONAK
life is on

Welcome

If you've been diagnosed with single-sided hearing, let us reassure you of two things: it's entirely normal to feel overwhelmed; and help is at hand. Thanks to modern technology, effective solutions for single-sided hearing exist. You no longer have to live life missing out on the conversations around you.

Meet Angie Aspinall – the award-winning entrepreneur who shares her inspiring story of living with single-sided hearing in this booklet. "I'm not a medical professional or an audiologist; I'm just someone like you, who has hearing loss but perhaps unlike you, I've had a number of years to adjust. **I'm hoping that by sharing my experiences with you, I might be able to help you make some decisions about how you might wish to manage your hearing loss.**"

Over the next several pages you'll get to know Angie's story well, and perhaps identify with some of the feelings she describes: anger, fear, and excitement at the prospect of finding a solution that's right for you. **"When I was diagnosed with single-sided hearing, I was given no written information. I felt helpless. This guide includes information that I wish I'd been given at the time."**



Angie Aspinall is an award-winning deafened entrepreneur, Accessibility Consultant and Director of Access Solutions Associates Ltd. She is also a journalist, blogger, event speaker and co-owner of Aspinall Ink.

Whether or not you feel ready to take the first step in finding a solution for your single-sided hearing, this booklet is for you. Turn to it when you are ready, and whenever you need comfort, guidance or knowledge. Knowledge is power, and at Phonak, we are on a mission to help you reclaim your power and to reconnect you to the beauty of sound.



Angie's Story

Early signs of hearing loss

Angie's story starts with a visit to the doctor, after almost being knocked down by cars two days in a row because she did not hear them coming. After this happened, Angie went to see her doctor who referred her to a local hospital for a hearing test.

Testing and diagnosis

During the hearing test, Angie realized that something was wrong. Naturally, by the time Angie saw the ENT, she was feeling anxious, self-conscious and uncomfortable. According to the ENT, Angie had a hereditary condition called otosclerosis, which would get worse over time.

"I saw only a future where I would end up being profoundly deaf, unable to hear anything at all and the thought absolutely terrified me. I think I went into shock."

‘Getting by’

After being diagnosed with otosclerosis in one ear, Angie got by using lipreading and making sure that everyone was on her better hearing side. Many people feel overwhelmed when thinking about wearing a hearing aid, and often try to “get by” with their single-sided hearing.

For Angie, being fit with a hearing aid at the time didn't help because it amplified all frequencies to an uncomfortable level. “It meant the hearing aid was of no use to me, as high-pitched sounds such as cutlery and crockery rattling around were simply 'deafening',” says Angie, **“I did what many people do: I put the hearing aid in a drawer.”**

Many people with single-sided hearing may not feel like they need a hearing aid, and like Angie, will learn various coping strategies for their hearing loss. While these strategies may provide benefit at the time, they do not allow you to fully engage and participate in all of the listening situations around you and can become very tiring.

Single-sided hearing means you cannot pinpoint where sounds are coming from: everything sounds like it is coming from your better hearing side. “Sometimes, in a group, by the time you've located who's speaking, they've stopped and someone else has started,” says Angie. **“By then, you've missed what was said and can no longer follow the conversation.”**

No longer 'getting by'

Suddenly, Angie experienced a Sudden Sensorineural Hearing Loss (SSHL). "Between waking one morning and lunchtime, I lost all the hearing in my better ear. It was gone completely and will never return," says Angie. "I went straight to the emergency department of my local hospital. I was told it was 'just an ear infection' but I knew it was more serious."

"When I saw a consultant, I was told that my sudden hearing loss may have been caused by a viral ear infection. I may never know for sure what caused it. For months I was left with just my old hearing aid. It alerted me to traffic sounds but it made voices barely audible. I had been relying on my good ear for years and now I was told it was dead. **It was an incredibly isolating and depressing time and the specialists talked about first a cochlear implant and then a bone anchored hearing aid (BAHA). I was at a loss, and reluctant to have surgery. It was a very scary time.**"



A solution

Determined not to give up on finding non-surgical options, Angie carried out her own research on single-sided hearing and discovered the Phonak CROS.

Unlike BAHA which requires surgery and an extended time for healing, once the CROS solution is fitted, you can simply switch it on and enjoy hearing from both sides.

CROS will transmit sound and voices to let your better hearing ear hear for both of your ears. If you have good hearing in one ear and no hearing in the other, then CROS will work for you.

CROS stands for 'Contralateral Routing of Signal' and consists of two parts:

- The CROS transmitter with a microphone to pick up sounds and voices from the poorer hearing ear and wirelessly transmit them to the hearing aid on the better hearing ear
- The hearing aid to receive the signal from the poorer hearing ear and deliver it to your better hearing ear

Switching on

Angie did not know what to expect when her CROS system would be turned on. "To be honest, my audiologist had told me it could take between six and twelve months to adjust to the CROS solution, and that I might not want to wear the aids all the time. How wrong he was! **As soon as the pair was switched on, I could hear him and reply. My brain remembered what it was to hear and it immediately – and blissfully – fell for the illusion of left/right sound.**" After fine tuning the settings, Angie left her audiologist's office ready to get on with her life.

"I've often said that my CROS gave me back my life," says Angie, "I left the audiologist's and marvelled at the 'click clack' noise the heels of my boots made on the pavement. What a truly amazing experience to hear something so trivial."

"As soon as I got home, I told my husband how amazing it was and how my brain seemed to 'get it' straight away. We went for a walk in our local wood and I marvelled at being able to hear the stream and the birds and my husband's voice – regardless of which side he was on as we walked. But the best part of all was being able to hear the 'squelch' my boots made in the mud. Even before my sudden hearing loss, I hadn't been able to pick up sounds like this, so it was a total revelation to me. I was so happy."

Ready to discover your own single- sided hearing solution?

Angie's CROS II solution



Phonak
hearing aid
(actual size)

Phonak
CROS II-312
(actual size)

Visit www.phonak-us.com/cros to find out more about
Phonak CROS, and to locate an audiologist in your area.

Life is on

We are sensitive to the needs of everyone who depends on our knowledge, ideas and care. And by creatively challenging the limits of technology, we develop innovations that help people hear, understand and experience more of life's rich soundscapes.

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Live without limit. Life is on.**

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