British Cochlear Implant Group

BRITISH ACADEMY OF AUDIOLOGY

Cochlear Implant Conversation Top Tips

General opener

- "I wonder if you've ever been told about cochlear implants?"
- "What do you know about it already?"

Test results

- "When we see scores or results like this, we want to double-check your options with a specialist team."
- "Sometimes when speech scores/hearing test are like this, it's a sign we should get more information about if a cochlear implant might help you"

Follow on

- "Would you be open to learning more about cochlear implants so that you know all of your options?"
- "You don't have to decide anything today."
- "An Implant isn't suitable for everyone, but an assessment is the best way to find out if it's an option for you"
- "It's the next thing to explore when we're nearing the limits of a hearing aid"
- "The hearing aid can only work with the hearing you have left, but a CI doesn't use or need any natural hearing; it sends the signal straight to your hearing nerve."

Patient information

- "Would you like to take this leaflet to have a look through (at home or with family)"
- "Would you like to talk to someone that has had a CI?"

"No thanks"

- Ask with curiosity, no judgement, show you care about what is stopping them
- "Is there something that's putting you off?"
- "Are there things you are avoiding because of your hearing that you would like to return to? Frame the unknown future possibilities."

Be honest; tell them you are not an expert in this area of Audiology, answer the questions you can and advise them that the implant team will answer the rest.

- Dr Ann-Marie Dickinson

(British Academy of Audiology, 2021)

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“I don’t want surgery”

- “Have you, or anyone you know, ever had surgery before?" - Make it feel familiar by comparing to well-known operations.
- "You are not committing to any surgery; it’s just a first conversation to find out if it could help you."

“I’m too old”

- "Multiple people over 100 years old have been implanted in the UK."
- "Hearing isn’t less important as you get older; improved hearing is linked with maintaining independence and relationships."

“I don’t think that would work for me”

- "Would you like me to put you in touch with someone who has been in your position and gone for an assessment?"
- "The criteria in the UK are stricter than some other countries. Elsewhere, people are implanted sooner"

“No, I’m managing”

- Link to patient motivations (COSI).

“I don’t want to travel”

- "Could you travel for one appointment, then weigh up the investment of time and travel"
- "It’s an investment in yourself"
- Options for remote sessions
- Simple travel advice. Talk about how they get there. Collaborate with the Mentor.

“It’s not that bad yet”

- ‘yet’ is a sign to book another session, or make a note to discuss again
- Tolerance Vs Motivation (Ida Institute, 2025)
- "We know the sooner someone is implanted, the better the outcome"
- COSI – linking back to patient motivations