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Make a Sound Choice When Buying Hearing Aids

By **FRANCESCA STEVENS**©

Gesturing towards the office chair on the other side of his desk, board certified hearing specialist and Albuquerque native Damian H. Castillo explains one of the reasons he chose his profession. “I’ve had people crying in that chair after they realize they can hear again for the first time in years,” he says. “You treat their hearing loss and put their hearing aids on, and it’s life changing. They’re able to re-connect with their family and it’s like the lights come on. They’re beyond happy, and it happens a lot.”

Castillo and his wife, Christy, own and operate two local hearing aid specialty clinics in the Albuquerque: SoundChoice Hearing, located at 4811 Hardware Drive NE, Suite C-2, which they founded in 2009; and HearMart (1820 San Pedro Blvd. NE, Suite 5), which they bought in July. Both locations offer free hearing tests, free consultations, and a free one-week trial on any device, says Castillo.

SoundChoice sells just about every kind of hearing aid on the market, including custom fit and extended wear devices. “The idea is to find the right fit for each individual based on comfort, under which conditions the hearing aid will be used and budget,” says Castillo.

One of the most popular models of hearing aid devices is the Lyric, says Castillo, which fits entirely inside the ear canal. “It’s completely invisible from the outside, stays put for up to four months before needing to be replaced and requires no batteries or daily maintenance,” he adds.

About 17 percent (36 million) of American adults report some degree of hearing loss, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. SoundChoice’s clients range in age from 18 to more than 100 years old, with most having hearing

BUSINESS PROFILE

SoundChoice Hearing

4811 Hardware Drive NE, Suite C-2
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problems caused by extended exposure to loud noises, natural aging, an injury, genetics, or even the combination of certain medications, explains Castillo.

Castillo can relate to his clients’ hearing difficulties. He wears a hearing aid in one ear to correct partial hearing loss he believes might have been caused by early childhood ear infections. “Not being able to hear well can affect many parts of your life,” he says. “It’s the best thing you can give people is their hearing back.”

“A lot of people have been misdiagnosed with Alzheimer’s and dementia when their real problem is that they can’t hear,” continues Castillo. “When people can’t hear or understand what everyone around them is saying, they tend to disconnect. That can easily be misinterpreted as a sign of other illnesses. It’s important to get your hearing tested as soon as you believe you’re having problems.”

Castillo says treating hearing loss early can often slow the process before it gets worse, adding that customers at SoundChoice can get same-day or next-day appointments and usually leave with their new hearing aids installed.

Eddie Roebuck recently accompanied his elderly parents to SoundChoice Hearing. “My family and I were impressed with the Damian’s compassion for client needs and the speed at which they provided service,” says Roebuck.

“Damian is very personable,”



Damian H. Castillo, a board certified hearing specialist, has owned and operated SoundChoice Hearing (4811 Hardware Drive NE, Suite C-2) since 2009. The company sells just about every kind of hearing aid on the market, including custom fit and extended wear devices.

continues Roebuck. “Every time I call him, he calls me right back. He even called me back after hours on a Friday when I had a question about my parents’ hearing aids.”

Since 2009, Castillo has been licensed by the National Board for Certification in Hearing Instrument Sciences, an independent nonprofit credentialing organization. The agency was established to promote continuing competency assurance of hearing health professionals and to provide a standard of excellence in hearing health care for the consumer.

Castillo’s aunt Tommie, now deceased, would be proud of her nephew. She inspired him to become a hearing specialist. “When I was a kid, she had a lot of issues with her hearing,” says Castillo. “I always

saw her struggle with not being able to communicate with our family and that sparked my interest in this profession. She missed out on a lot of things in life — like most people who suffer from hearing loss. They become socially disconnected from their families and they don’t want to join in conversations anymore. But with today’s technology, it doesn’t have to be that way.”

For more information, call SoundChoice Hearing at 341-1300 or HearMart at 255-8000, or visit soundchoiceofabq.com to schedule your free hearing test and consultation. SoundChoice Hearing and HearMart both offer no-interest/low-payment options and trade-in credit for previously worn hearing aids.