

Tips For Communicating With People Who Are Hard of Hearing

Many Hard of Hearing people rely on amplification devices for sound (hearing aid / Assistive Listening Device) and lip reading. They match what they hear with mouth movements to attempt to understand what is said.

- **Gain the Hard of Hearing person's attention and be in full face view before initiating conversation.**
- **Move away from noisy areas.** The back ground noise makes it very difficult to hear.
- **Open the conversation with a familiar topic.**
- **State the topic** to be discussed.
- Give some **warning** when **changing topics**.
- Speak clearly, without exaggerated lip movements at **normal conversational loudness**.
- If a statement is misunderstood **rather than repeat** the statement using the same words, **rephrase** the statement. A common mistake when talking to someone with a hearing loss is to repeat the same phrase at louder and louder levels.
- **Don't place anything in your mouth when speaking.** Mustaches that obscure the lips, smoking, pencil chewing, eating, and putting your hand in front of your mouth all make it impossible to lip read.

Don't stand with bright light (window, sun) behind you. The glare makes it difficult to see your face.

Tips For Communicating With People Who Are Deaf

Deaf people communicate in different ways, depending on several factors: age at which deafness began, type of deafness, language skills, speech abilities, personality, family environment, and education background.

- **Gain the deaf person's attention and be in full face view before initiating conversation.** To get the attention of a person who is deaf, tap the person on the shoulder or wave your hand.
- **Look directly at the person when speaking.**

- **Open the conversation with a familiar topic.**
- **State the topic** to be discussed.
- Give some **warning** when **changing topics**.
- Speak clearly, without exaggerated lip movements at **normal conversational loudness**.
- If a statement is misunderstood **rather than repeat** the statement using the same words, **rephrase** the statement. A common mistake when talking to someone with a hearing loss is to repeat the same phrase at louder and louder levels.
- **Maintain eye contact** with a deaf person. Eye contact conveys the feeling of direct communication. Even if an interpreter is present, continue to speak directly to the deaf person. She/he will turn to the interpreter as needed.
- **Use the words "I" and "You" when communicating through an interpreter, instead of "Tell her or Ask him", or "Does she/he understand?"**
- **Don't place anything in your mouth when speaking.** Mustaches that obscure the lips, smoking, pencil chewing, eating, and putting your hand in front of your mouth all make it impossible to lip read.
- **Don't stand with bright light (window, sun) behind you.** The glare makes it difficult to see your face.
- **Be courteous and respectful to the deaf person.** If the telephone rings or someone knocks at the door, excuse yourself and tell the deaf person that you are responding to the knock or answering the phone. Do not ignore the Deaf person and carry on a conversation with someone else while the Deaf person waits.
- NOTE: Lip reading is a guessing game. Even the most skilled lip readers are only 30 - 40 % accurate. It is best to write down critical information to be sure both parties have a clear understanding.
- NOTE: Some individuals are much more challenging to lip read than others. Depending on their speech pattern and ability to speak clearly.