

## **Communicating With Those Experiencing Hearing Loss**

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How do you speak and communicate with people who have a hearing loss? Listed below are some guidelines to remember when speaking to people who have a hearing loss.

- GET THE ATTENTION OF THE PERSON BEFORE YOU SPEAK.
- SPEAK UP, BUT DO NOT SHOUT
- SPEAK SLOWLY AND CLEARLY, PRONOUNCING THE BEGINNINGS AND ENDINGS OF WORDS
- USE FACIAL EXPRESSIONS AND GESTURES
- DON'T OVEREMPHASIZE OR EXAGGERATE YOUR MOUTH MOVEMENTS
- REPHRASE RATHER THAN REPEAT A MISUNDERSTOOD SENTENCE
- REDUCE BACKGROUND NOISE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE
- IF IN A GROUP SITUATION, MAKE SURE THAT SPEAKERS TAKE TURNS RATHER THAN HAVING MULTIPLE PEOPLE TALKING AT ONCE OR INTERRUPTING EACH OTHER
- FACE THE PERSON IN GOOD LIGHTING AND ENSURE THAT THEIR VISION IS NOT BEING IMPAIRED BY BRIGHT LIGHT OR SHADOW
- DON'T PUT OBJECTS IN FRONT OF YOUR FACE OR COVER YOUR MOUTH WITH YOUR HAND WHILE SPEAKING
- VERIFY UNDERSTANDING BY ASKING THE PERSON TO REPEAT WHAT THEY HEARD
- DO NOT RAPIDLY CHANGE SUBJECTS. DELIBERATELY INTRODUCE NEW TOPICS TO HELP THE INDIVIDUAL FOLLOW THE CONVERSATION MORE EASILY
- REMEMBER THAT INDIVIDUALS WITH HEARING LOSS GENERALLY DO NOT "OVERHEAR" CONVERSATIONS; DO NOT ASSUME THAT THEY HAVE BEEN INFORMED OF SOMETHING UNLESS YOU SPECIFICALLY TELL THEM ABOUT IT
- KEEP IN MIND THAT A PERSON WITH A HEARING LOSS CANNOT CATCH UP ON AN EXISTING CONVERSATION AS EASILY AS A HEARING PERSON, SO IT MAY BE HELPFUL TO SUMMARIZE WHAT HAS ALREADY BEEN SAID WHEN THEY JOIN THE GROUP
- IF EXPERIENCING PROBLEMS WHILE COMMUNICATING, YOU CAN ALWAYS WRITE DOWN WHAT YOU ARE SAYING AND ALLOW THE PERSON YOU ARE COMMUNICATING WITH TO RESPOND IN WRITING ALSO

- YOU MAY BE ABLE TO COMMUNICATE BEST USING AN ASSISTIVE LISTENING DEVICE (ALD), IF POSSIBLE. ONE IS CALLED A POCKETALKER,
- FINALLY (MAYBE THIS SHOULD BE FIRST, NOT LISTED LAST) ASK THE PERSON WHAT CAN BE DONE TO MAKE COMMUNICATION EASIER

We all know how important communication is and how if it not done well, many issues can arise. Hopefully, these hints will make communication with a person with a hearing loss much easier to accomplish and therefore meaningful for both parties.

If we listen, really listen to each other and honor what each other has to say the world can become a better place. It is stated in the Bible, "he that has ears to hear, let him hear." May God grant us all the patience to hear and then to understand each other.