

Communication Strategies: Tips for Communication with Hearing Loss

- 1. Look directly at people when they are speaking with you.**
 - a. Expressions, gestures, and lipreading cues will all help to supplement what you are able to hear.
 - b. Keep your hands away from your face while talking. You may be difficult to understand if you are eating, smoking, or chewing gum or candy.
 - c. Get the person's attention before you begin speaking.
- 2. Reduce background and competing noises.**
 - a. At home, turn off music or the TV (or at least turn them down). Turn off the dishwasher and/or other loud appliances or move to a quiet area.
 - b. In restaurants, ask to be seated in a quiet corner away from the kitchen, front door, bar area, or anywhere there is heavy traffic or noise.
 - c. Never attempt to speak to a person who is hearing impaired from another room or from a distance. Reduce the distance of conversation in order to increase understanding.
- 3. Inform the person speaking to you when you are having trouble understanding.**
 - a. Ask the speaker to repeat when needed. After listening to an additional 2 or 3 sentences, a misunderstood message may become clearer, but don't wait too long into the conversation if you are still "lost."
 - b. Ask the person speaking to rephrase what they have said. Using different words adds additional information and can increase understanding.
- 4. Speak a little slower; pronounce your words distinctly, but naturally.**
 - a. Do not over-exaggerate your words; they will appear unnatural on your lips and make lip reading difficult.
 - b. Do not shout, scream, or yell as your speech will sound distorted and less clear.
- 5. Try to remain patient and sympathetic.**
 - a. Remember, the difficulties with communication caused by hearing loss are frustrating for everyone involved.
 - b. Listening is sometimes a difficult and tiring task as it requires concentration. It is important to understand that exhaustion and stress have negative impacts on communication.
- 6. Educate others on how to best communicate with individuals with hearing impairment. You must take responsibility to teach them.**