



Hearing Loss and Communication

Resources:



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[Communication Modes & Languages](#)



[40 Million Words Goal](#)



[More Tips on Communicating](#)

Here are some tips to help improve communication with individuals who are deaf/hard of hearing (d/hh).

- Get their attention before speaking by saying the person's name (if one on one) or by raising your hand or waving to indicate you are about to speak. This allows the person with hearing loss to quickly identify who is talking.
- Face the person directly, this helps ensure the direction of the sound travels straight to the person you are trying to engage with. It also allows for easier access to visual cues such as: facial expressions, gestures, signs, and mouth movements. Do not talk to them from another room.
- If the person hears better in one ear than another, position yourself accordingly. Try to remember which side it is for future interactions, if you forget, just ask.
- Use lighting to your advantage. Choose an area that is well lit to allow for visual access.
- Keep your hands away from your face while talking to provide access for visual cues and lip reading. Facial hair such as beards or face masks may also make it more difficult for lip reading.
- Remember that speech is more difficult to understand if the speaker is eating, chewing, drinking, etc. while talking.
- Minimize background noise, if possible. Speak clearly, naturally, in a normal voice and at typical speed.
- Be flexible, consider adapting your communication style to allow optimal access, and if able, use their preferred communication method.
- Use other methods of communication if appropriate (example: Ask "What are some other ways that we can communicate right now? Writing? Gesturing?").
- Be patient and respectful. Take turns speaking and avoid interrupting. Be willing to repeat what you or someone else says.
- Pause (Wait time). Slow down a little by pausing between sentences or phrases. People with hearing loss can take longer to process spoken language so there may be a slight delay in their responses.
- Engage in active listening and look for cues of understanding. Politely ask for feedback, use open ended questions that encourage more conversation such as "Could you recap what I just said to make sure we're on the same page?" "Could you tell me your thoughts on what we just discussed?" "If there's anything I can explain further, please let me know."

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