

COMMUNICATION TIPS from the Hearing Loss Association of America

Gain Attention

Get the listener's attention before you begin talking by saying his or her name or, if necessary, lightly touching the listener's hand, arm, or shoulder.

Make Eye Contact

Face the person with hearing loss and make eye contact. Your facial expressions and body language add vital information to the communication.

Keep Your Face Fully Visible

Most people with hearing loss use some degree of lip-reading. Keep your hands away from your face while speaking and do not cover your mouth.

Do Not Over-Articulate

To support lip-reading, avoid making odd lip shapes.

Speak Naturally

Speak clearly, but without exaggeration. If needed, speak louder but do not shout, as shouting can distort the words. Try not to mumble. Speak at a normal rate, not too fast or too slow. Use pauses rather than slow speech to give the person time to process speech.

Rephrase Rather than Repeat

If the person with hearing loss has difficulty understanding something you said even after you repeat it, find a different way of saying it. Do not keep repeating the same misunderstood words; instead, try to rephrase them.

Reduce Background Noise

Try to reduce background noises when conversing. Turn off the radio or television. Move to a quiet space away from the noise source. At restaurants, ask for a quiet table away from the kitchen, server stations or large parties.

Don't Forget About White Noise

Background noise also includes air conditioners, humming refrigerators, or anything else that whirs or rumbles. Try to move away from these noise sources.

Don't Lean Towards a Listener's Ear

Most people with hearing loss read lips. If you are speaking (or whispering) in someone's ear, that person will not be able to see your lips or face.

Move to An Area With Good Lighting

At restaurants or social gatherings, sit where there is good lighting so that your face can be more easily seen. Also, avoid strong lighting coming from behind you, such as through a window.

Ask How You Can Help

Ask the person with hearing loss what you can do to make the conversation easier.

Speak One at a Time

Avoid talking all at once. If in a group setting, try to have one person speaking at a time.

Use Alternate Methods

Writing and texting are other methods of communication. If the listener is having difficulty understanding just one or two words in a sentence, write the words down.

Perhaps most important: don't say "Never mind" or "It doesn't matter"

If the person with hearing loss does not hear you, repeat or rephrase instead of giving up. To people with hearing loss, **being able to hear what you say is all that matters to them.**



www.hearingloss.org