

# Tips for Communicating with Individuals with a Hearing Loss

*presented by:*

## The Audiology Awareness Campaign

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The following tips are provided to enhance communication with individuals that have a hearing loss. Often, very minor adjustments by the person speaking will greatly increase the ability of the listener to understand what is being said. These tips can even help communication among individuals with normal hearing.

### 1. Always speak clearly and naturally

Shouting can cause distortion of hearing aids and often makes the words even more unintelligible. Speak slowly enough that the words can be distinguished from one another, but not so slow that the natural rhythm of the sentence is disrupted.

### 2. Use different words if you are misunderstood.

Certain sounds may cause the listener difficulty, so if you need to repeat your sentence, try to use different words that may be easier to understand.

### 3. Face the listener and encourage speech/lip reading

Many people can speech/lip read to some degree even if they have not been formally trained. Do not hide your mouth or chew while talking. Also try to have the room lighting in front of you to prevent shadows.

### 4. Attract their attention BEFORE you begin

Be sure the listener knows that you are trying to communicate with them before you even begin your sentence. You can say their name or lightly touch them to let them know your intentions.

### 5. Stay close to the listener

If the listener can hear better on one side, try to stay on that side if possible. Also do not attempt to talk to someone if you are in a different room or if there is distracting noises. Always try to remain within 3 to 5 feet of the listener.

### 6. Turn off or decrease room noises

Other noises can mask out or block speech. Televisions, radios and even other people talking can greatly affect the ability to discriminate speech. For example, you can request a quiet corner of a restaurant instead of sitting in the main seating area. Reduce the background noise as much as possible before beginning a conversation.

### 7. Use facial expressions and hand gestures to emphasis your feelings

This will help the listener understand your emotions and thereby help them understand what you are trying to communicate.