

Communication Tips for the Hearing Impaired and Their Families

Communications is a two-way street. Those with hearing impairments must make as much effort as those with good hearing.

The Person Who Can Hear

Set Your Stage

- Face your audience directly.
- Spotlight your face (no backlighting).
- Avoid noisy backgrounds.
- Get their attention before speaking.
- Ask how you can facilitate communication.

Enhance Your Communication

- Don't shout, or raise your voice.
- Speak clearly and at a moderate pace.
- Don't hide your mouth, chew food or gum, or smoke while talking.
- Rephrase (use different words) if you are not understood.
- Use facial expressions and gestures.
- Give clues when changing subjects.

Establish empathy with the listener

- Be patient if response seems low.
- Stay positive and relaxed.
- Talk to a hearing-impaired person, not about him or her.
- Offer respect to help build confidence.

The Person Who Can't Hear

Set Your Stage

- Face your audience directly.
- Spotlight your face (no backlighting).
- Avoid noisy backgrounds.
- Get their attention before speaking.
- Ask how you can facilitate communication.

Participate in the Communication

- Pay attention.
- Concentrate on the speaker.
- Look for visual clues.
- Ask for written cues if needed.
- Don't interrupt. Let the conversation flow awhile to gain more meaning.

Set Your Stage

- Establish empathy with your audience
- React. Let the speaker know how well he is doing.

- Don't bluff. Admit it when you don't understand.
- If you're too tired to concentrate, ask to continue discussion later.