

Tips for Communicating with Persons with Hearing Impairment

1. If necessary, speak up a bit louder, but don't shout.
2. Speak clearly and slowly.
3. Speak at a distance of between 3 and 6 feet.
4. Stand in clear light facing the person with whom you are speaking for greater visibility of lip movements, facial expressions and gestures.
5. Do not speak to the hearing-impaired person unless visible to him or her (e.g., not from another room or while he or she is reading or watching TV).
6. Move away from background noise.
7. If the hearing-impaired person does not appear to understand what is being said, rephrase the statement rather than simply repeating the misunderstood words.
8. Do not over-articulate. Over-articulation not only distorts the sounds of speech, but also the speaker's face, making the use of visual clues more difficult.
9. Do not obscure your mouth with a cigarette or hands and do not chew food while speaking.
10. Arrange the room (living room or meeting room) where communication will take place so that no speaker or listener is more than six feet apart and all are completely visible. Using this direct approach, communication for all parties involved will be enhanced.
11. Include the hearing-impaired person in all discussions about him or her. Persons with hearing impairment sometimes feel quite vulnerable. This approach will aid in alleviating some of those feelings.
12. Ask the person what you might do to make conversation easier.
13. In meetings or any group activity where there is a speaker presenting information (church meetings, civic organizations, etc.), make it mandatory that the speaker(s) use the public address system.

