

Communicating with Someone Experiencing Hearing Loss

Below are suggestions for communicating with someone who has experienced hearing loss:

- Before beginning to speak, get the attention of the person with the hearing loss
- Face the person and have the light on your face (in your eyes)
- Speak up, as clearly and naturally as possible, without shouting
- Do not overemphasize the speech sounds or talk in slow motion
- Cut out background noise by turning off the TV or radio
- Write down important information and directions
- Don't cover your mouth with your hand or an object
- Think about trimming a mustache and/or beard so lips are easier to read
- Rephrase a misunderstood sentence rather than repeat it
- Ask the person with the hearing loss to repeat vital facts
- When traveling by car, look at the person who is speech reading to the degree safety allows
- When going to a restaurant, choose a quiet, well-lit establishment where the noise is tolerable
- Ask for a table away from music speakers and in a corner, so the person with a hearing loss can sit against the wall to minimize background noise
- When in a group, clue the person into the conversation, the punchline, the context, and/or assist the person when topics change

If the listener does not understand you:

- Repeat what you said
- Slow down
- Speak slightly louder than normal
- Re-word or re-phrase (say it another way using common words)
- Present sentences in short units, breaking them down into "chunks" ("I went on a trip....with my daughter's class.....to Ellis Island")
- Request feedback ("Tell me what you understood.")
- Write down some important words



Information Courtesy of the League for Hard of Hearing, a Leading Hearing Center. For more information visit their Web site at www.lhh.org.