

# Communication

If you have a hearing loss it is important you let people know how to communicate with you. If you are talking to someone with a hearing loss, take care to make yourself understood.

## AT A GLANCE

- Got a hearing impairment? Take responsibility for making the most of your hearing, including letting people know the best way to help you to hear them.
- Talking to someone with hearing impairment? Make it easier for them to hear and understand what you are saying.

## IF YOU HAVE A HEARING LOSS

Help people to help you! Control your environment and let people know the best way to communicate with you.

### Tips

- Let people know you have a hearing loss
- Remind them if they forget

- Put people where you can see them and hear them best
- If they obscure their mouth with a hand, book etc, ask them to move it
- Don't bluff or pretend you know what is being said, when you don't
- Don't be afraid to ask people to rephrase things or write it down
- Be realistic about making the most of your hearing
- Wear a badge that alerts people to your hearing loss.

Check things like:

- **Acoustics:** A room with hard surfaces makes it harder to hear. Try moving closer to the person you are talking to. Alternatively, find somewhere quieter to talk



- **Lighting:** Make sure you can see the face of the person you are speaking to – don't let them sit with their backs to the window or with light behind them. This means you can pick up visual cues to help communicate.

## **IF THE PERSON YOU ARE TALKING TO HAS A HEARING LOSS**

If you are talking to someone with hearing loss be aware they may bluff or pretend they have heard what has been said.

### **Tips**

- Get their full attention
- Don't shout - this distorts speech
- Project your voice
- Give visual cues such as gestures to help with what you are saying
- Look at them and keep eye contact
- Keep your face visible
- Don't chew, smoke or hold your hand or an object in front of your face
- Speak clearly, slowly and fully form all your words – don't mumble
- Don't get too far away or speak from another room – halving the distance between you can increase the sound by 50 percent
- Where possible eliminate interruptions
- Be aware of background noise and reduce it if you can
- If asked to repeat something, never say 'it doesn't matter'



- Empower - don't patronise or make fun of their hearing loss
- If necessary rephrase what you've said, or write it down.

If you think or know someone has a hearing loss but they don't acknowledge it, be supportive. Don't answer for them when they are asked question – let them conduct conversations themselves. Encourage them to make their own phone calls if they can.

The key to successfully coping with a hearing loss – or any disability – is to acknowledge it and take control. Help people to help you.

Many people do not understand hearing loss and think the best way to communicate is to talk louder, when talking a little more slowly and clearly is often better.



**HEARING ASSOCIATION NEW ZEALAND**  
Te Kāhui Rongo o Aotearoa

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Want to know more detail? **Go to [www.hearing.org.nz](http://www.hearing.org.nz)**

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