

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.