



COLORADO
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Listening & Communication Strategies

1. Watch the Talker's Mouth, Not Their Eyes!

Lip reading combined with hearing the talker's voice is the most effective way to decipher what is being said. Your brain will be able to fill in the missing gaps much easier if you can see the talker's lips move combined with the volume of their voice.

- Indicate to the talker in some way that you are hearing impaired.
- Watch the talker's lips, not his or her eyes.
- Look around only during pauses (there are plenty of them) and changes of talkers.
- You can see facial expressions and eye movements without leaving the lips.

2. Ask Specific Questions

The best way to get clarification of something you missed the first time is to ask as specific question as possible, instead of saying "Huh?" or "What?" **or simply pretending to understand.** Here's an example. Suppose you heard the sentence "My wife and I are planning on going to visit my aunt in XXXXX this fall." With XXXXX representing the word that you missed. The best response is to ask, "Where does she live?" rather than "What?" which makes the talker repeat the whole sentence and quickly become irritated.

- Learn to relax, even in tough listening situations. Avoid tension—keep your shoulders down, do not wrinkle your forehead, and so on.

3. Talk About Your Hearing Loss

We ask you to recognize the necessity of frequently mentioning ("admitting") you're hearing loss. The primary source of communication breakdown for many hearing impaired individuals is the presence of noise in the listening situation. Lip-reading can improve the situation, but it is tiring and not always satisfactory. This kind of tactful manipulation of the situation can produce a lot of benefit, and by admitting the loss you could open the door to resolving some of the difficulty.

4. Change the Situation

Adjust the situation so that the light is on the talker's face and not yours. Avoid the glare and backlighting that obscure the talker's face or cause you to squint or strain to see. Also, arrive early for situations that are more formal or structured, such as meetings, religious services, classes, or any place where people will be seated, so that you can stake out the best spot. Do not be afraid to move if you made a mistake or if the structure of the group changes. If there is one primary talker, sit so that you can see him or her without strain.