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Tips for Communicating with Persons with Hearing Impairment

If you're a hearing person communicating with someone who has hearing loss, please be mindful of the following tips:

- 1.** Get the person's attention before you speak. If you start talking before they are looking at you, chances are they won't understand what you say.
- 2.** Do not speak to a person with hearing impairment unless your lips are visible to him or her (e.g., not from another room or while he or she is reading or watching television).
- 3.** Do not put obstacles in front of your face. This includes coffee cups, hands, pencils, etc. Many people with hearing loss rely on **lip reading** to assist their understanding of speech.
- 4.** Do not have things in your mouth. This includes gum, candy, cigarettes, etc. **Again, the person is probably trying very hard to see your lips.**
- 5.** Speak clearly and at a moderate pace. Speak slowly, but naturally. **Do not shout!!!**
- 6.** Move away from background noise. **Background noise is the hardest situation for a hearing impaired person to communicate in.**
- 7.** If you're not understood, try to say the same thing using different words. If that doesn't work, writing a few key words may help the person with hearing loss understand. If that doesn't work, write the whole sentence.
- 8.** Include the hearing-impaired person in all discussions about him or her. Individuals with hearing impairment sometimes feel quite vulnerable and left out; this approach will aid in alleviating some of those feelings.
- 9.** When you change the subject, be sure the person with hearing loss knows what the new subject is.
- 10.** When in doubt, ask the person with hearing loss what you can do to improve communication.
- 11.** **Keep a sense of humor.**