



Communication tips

Keeping connected with people who
have a hearing loss

Tips to help you communicate when you struggle to hear

DO:

- **Be open:** Before you start your conversation, let them know you have a hearing loss or you lipread
- **Help them:** Ask people to get your attention before they start talking to you
- **Position yourself:** Stand a reasonable distance away, and if your hearing is better in one ear, turn your better side towards the person speaking to you; or at events try to sit near the front, and/or close to a loud speaker
- **Speak up:** If you miss something, ask the speaker to slow down, speak more clearly or rephrase rather than repeat
- **Learn to lipread:** It's a really positive step to keeping connected **Keep calm:** If you become anxious or flustered, you might find it harder to follow the conversation
- **Check for a hearing loop:** Staff should know if there is a hearing loop to use with your hearing aid (T-coil)
- **Use a notepad, screen or Boogie Board:** Ask the speaker to write down important information
- **Share tips:** Spread communication tips with others
- **Take a break:** It can be exhausting, so take a quiet moment out when you feel tired, turn off your hearing aids, or take an eye break.

Above all...

Be kind to yourself: Remember, no one hears perfectly all the time

And a few useful tips on things to avoid

DON'T

- **Don't meet in a crowded, noisy place:** Find a quieter situation without too many visual or noise distractions
- **Don't choose the middle of a room or doorways:** The corners of rooms are often better acoustically, especially with soft furnishings or curtains
- **Don't eat and talk:** Holding a conversation while trying to lipread could get messy!
- **Don't bluff or nod your way out of conversations:** You could miss something important, so don't be afraid to ask the speaker to repeat or rephrase
- **Don't worry:** If you miss what has been said, stay calm so you can hear the rest - your brain can often fill in the gaps that your ears have missed
- **Don't feel embarrassed or ashamed:** So many people share similar hearing problems - we must all have the opportunity to be heard
- **Don't struggle on your own:** If you feel you need help, contact Hearing Link:

Email: helpdesk@hearinglink.org

Tel/SMS: 07526 123255

Web: www.hearinglink.org/support

Above all...

Remember: Better communications makes for a better world

Tips to help you communicate with people who have a hearing loss

DO:

- **Find the right place to talk:** Close together with good lighting, away from noise and distractions
- **Get the positioning right:** Make sure everyone can see each other's faces and establish good eye contact
- **Check communication preferences:** Ask if anyone has any particular needs e.g. Whether they need to lipread, whether they have a better ear, or whether they want to move to be in the best position for lipreading
- **Get the lipreaders' attention:** Before you speak, make sure they can see your face and lips clearly
- **When talking to two or more people:** Make eye contact and talk directly to everyone, regardless of their hearing
- **Speak normally:** Use normal lip movements, speak clearly with natural facial expressions and gestures
- **Get straight to the point:** Avoid jargon and don't waffle
- **Check the message:** Make sure everyone has the same understanding of what has been agreed or said
- **Write down important information:** On a notepad, screen, Boogie Board, or anything to hand
- **Avoid lipreading frustration:** If someone cannot lipread what you've said, don't repeat the same words but instead deliver the same message using different words or phrases, as they might be easier to lipread.

Above all...

Please be patient and understanding.

And a few useful tips on things to avoid

DON'T

- **Don't meet in a crowded, noisy place:** Find a quieter situation without too many distractions
- **Don't eat while speaking:** Chewing and food in your mouth will distort your lip patterns
- **Don't turn away or cover your mouth:** Keep your hands and papers away from your face, and maintain eye contact so a lip reader can see your face
- **Don't speak over another person:** Make sure just one person talks at a time
- **Don't talk too fast:** Use a natural speed, but slow down slightly if your natural speed is fast
- **Don't overemphasise your words:** It actually makes it harder to read your lips
- **Don't shout:** It can appear aggressive, it disturbs your lip patterns, and it can be very uncomfortable for a hearing aid user
- **Don't drop your voice:** miming is not helpful.

Above all...

If someone asks you to repeat please don't say "It doesn't matter"; if it didn't, you wouldn't have said it in the first place. Throwaway comments are just as important as any other part of your conversation.

MOT health check

If you are running a local meeting, a conference or anything in between, these tips can help you identify and overcome any potential communications issues:

Venue practicalities

- ❑ **Location** Choose a room away from noise & distractions, with good lighting
- ❑ **Acoustics** If possible choose a room with soft surfaces, carpets or rugs, curtains and upholstered furniture
- ❑ **Accessibility** Consider wider accessibility e.g. stairs/lift, whether hearing dogs are allowed
- ❑ **Layout** Ensure the speaker is clearly visible in the room and well lit. Round tables work better than long tables

Presenter etiquette

- ❑ **Communicate well** Refer to our communication tips (pages 4-5 e.g. speak clearly, don't cover your mouth, avoid jargon and waffle)
- ❑ **Check with your audience** Check individual needs before your meeting; get your audience's full attention before you start speaking, and check they can hear you
- ❑ **Be patient** If someone cannot understand, be patient, and repeat or rephrase using alternative words

Hearing technology

- ❑ **Hearing loops** Check if your venue has a hearing loop system fitted. If it does, check it works; and if it doesn't consider asking the venue to install one for regular meetings
- ❑ **Personal listeners** Helps pick up microphone signals through a wireless radio signal to a small receiver attached to the hearing aid, so you get a clearer sound
- ❑ **Microphones** Before you start to speak, ensure you have clipped on the microphone and checked it is working - and remember to use it, rather than turn away from it when looking at a screen

Communication support

- ❑ **STTR** Book Speech To Text Reporters (or Palantypists) for displaying verbatim speech on a computer screen or room screen well in advance. (See: www.avsttr.org.uk)
- ❑ **Note-takers** These can be a manual hand-written summary of what is said, or using laptops using SpeedTest in real time

For more information

Visit our website: www.hearinglink.org/living

Hearing Link supports people with hearing loss across the UK, and their families and friends.

Promoting better hearing

Across the UK, more than 11 million people live with a hearing loss.

Hearing loss impacts on much more than your ability to hear. The disruption to communications can affect every part of life: Relationships, work status, daily routines — ultimately confidence and self-esteem.

We believe in a world where people can participate fully and confidently, whatever their level of hearing.

Through shared experiences, advice and practical support, we can help people better manage their hearing. Using today's technology combined with simple behavioural change, people can live well with hearing loss — feeling understood, included and connected.

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**Hearing
Link**

connecting people
transforming lives

Hearing Link is a trading name of Hearing Dogs for Deaf People, a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (number 1964878) and registered as a charity in England and Wales (number 293358) and in Scotland (number SC040486).

www.hearinglink.org

