

Communication Tips

For People with Hearing Loss

Be Prepared: Get and know how to use hearing aids and assistive technology.

Don't Bluff: Appearing to be stupid is a lot worse than appearing to have a hearing loss.

Project a "can-do" image: Attitude makes a difference.

Be specific when asking for help: Tell people that you don't hear well. Ask for their help because ... "what you say is important to me".

Pick your best spot: Good lighting, quiet rooms, closeness to the speaker make a big difference.

Anticipate: Planning ahead enhances the value of context.

Eliminate distractions: Turn off the TV and stereo.

Pay attention: Concentrate on the speaker.

Take the pressure off: Telling others of your hearing loss keeps them from being

apprehensive it's their problem.

Advocate: Ask for and use assistive technology where it should be available.

Never Give Up: It requires a lot of you. Don't accept brush-offs like "never mind".

Show your appreciation: Tell them how much you appreciate their patience and help.

Join HLAA: It's the way you learn to do the rest of the things.

For Communicating with People with Hearing Loss

Get Their Attention: Tap their shoulder; wave your hand; say their name ... before you start talking.

Make the Subject Clear: Establish the subject at the start of the conversation and whenever you change subjects.

Don't shout: Raising your voice doesn't usually help ... it's the consonants that most Hard of Hearing people miss; shouting only makes the vowels louder.

Don't exaggerate your Lip Movements: It's hard to speechread.

Use Appropriate Gestures: Your head motion can clearly indicate "Yes" or "No". Shrugged shoulders indicate uncertainty, a pointing finger calls attention to something.

Use Appropriate Facial Expressions: A smile, frown, raised eyebrow, or a furrowed brow all convey meaning.

Cut Out Background Noises: Turn off the television or radio. Turn off fans or air conditioners if they are interfering.

Get Close and Face Them: Sound doesn't travel well and vision helps a lot.

Rephrase: Don't just repeat when someone didn't understand ... rephrase in simpler words.

Ask for Confirmation: If what you said is important, ask for confirmation ... not just a nod, but enough of a playback to assure that your message was understood.

Don't Give Up: Hard of Hearing people really want to hear what you have to say. They will appreciate your perseverance.

Resource Summary

North Carolina Agencies and Services

DSDHH: <http://dsdhh.dhhs.state.nc.us/>

Resource Centers (See DSDHH)

Vocational Rehabilitation:

www.dhhs.state.nc.us/docs/divinfo/dvr.htm

Relay NC: www.relaync.com/

IP Relay: MCI: www.ip-relay.com/

Equipment Distribution

dsdhh.dhhs.state.nc.us/division/tanc/tedp.html

Assistive Technology Demonstration (See DSDHH)

Beginnings: www.beginningssvcs.com/

NCATP: www.ncatp.org/

Arts Access: www.artsaccessinc.org/

Web Pages Related to Hearing Loss

HLAA National: www.hearingloss.org

HLA-NC: www.ncheatingloss.org (has good glossary)

Beyond-Hearing Web Support Pages:

www.geocities.com/nc-shhh/bhframe.htm

A very good consumer focused page:

www.healthyhearing.com

Some Listserves/Groups Related to Hearing Loss

Beyond Hearing (Yahoo Beyond-Hearing)

Hearing_Aids (Yahoo Hearing_Aids)

Better Hearing News (Yahoo BHNews)

say what club (<http://www.saywhatclub.com/>)