

Recommendations for communicating with someone who has a hearing impairment:

- Be patient. This person has a medical condition that makes understanding speech difficult. He/she needs your help and support.
- Get close to and face the person.
- Get the person's attention before you speak.
- Be sure the person knows the topic of conversation.
- Speak clearly and at a normal speed.
- Emphasize key words or phrases.
- Use appropriate gestures and facial expressions.
- If the person does not understand you, say it in a different way.
- Talk to the person in quiet places whenever possible.
- Do not chew food or gum while talking to a hearing impaired person.
- Remember that wearing a hearing aid does not give a person "perfect" hearing. He/she may still not hear well even when wearing a hearing aid.



For more information or questions you may have regarding hearing impairment feel free to contact the VA Audiology department at:

(702) 791- 9059

We are located on the second floor in the VA Medical Center.



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**VA
Audiology**

Communication Strategies

Communicating when someone
has a hearing impairment



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Recommendations for the person who has a hearing impairment:



1. CONTROL YOUR ENVIRONMENT

We live in a noisy world; expect to deal with noise in your listening environment. Most people have trouble hearing in noisy places.

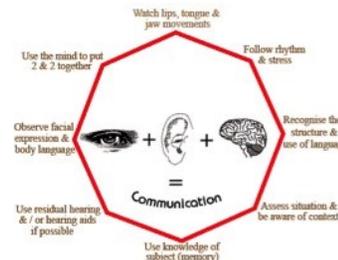
- Choose quiet places to listen and communicate.
- When you can't avoid being in a noisy room, choose the quietest place in that room (near a wall, away from the sound sources, etc.).
- Turn down TVs, radios, stereos, etc. when you need to listen to someone.
- Move closer to and face the person speaking. It is difficult for anyone to hear someone who is talking from a distance of 6 feet or greater, or who is not facing you. Do not expect to hear someone talking from another room.

2. USE CONTEXT

- Determine the topic of conversation. Remember that there are likely topics, words and phrases for every situation you encounter. You are likely to hear different things at baseball game than you would at a library or an airport.
- Listen to get the main idea.
- Remember what you know about the person communicating with you. The person is likely to speak about people and things he/she is interested in.
- Do not ignore what is going on around you; this may provide clues to what people are saying.

3. SPEECH READ (LIPREAD)

- Observe a speaker's facial expressions, gestures, and body language.
- Watch the speaker's lips.
- Be patient and willing to practice to improve your speech reading skills.
- Do not expect to get every letter of every word. This is not possible for anyone.



4. ASK QUESTIONS

- Be open about your hearing loss and tell people what you need from them as communicators.
- Ask people to face you when they speak.
- Ask people to repeat what you do not understand, or to say it in a different way.
- Repeat what you think you heard, and ask if that was correct.
- Get important information in writing.
- Do not guess at what someone said.
- Do not pretend to understand if you do not.

5. CONSIDER ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

- Ask your audiologist if assistive technology may help you. Be prepared to talk about your most difficult listening situations or environments.

