

Strategies for Better Communication

How can I help my spouse, family member or friend who has hearing loss?

- Make sure you get their attention prior to speaking.
- No need to talk loud or shout. **Do** talk clearly, without mumbling, projecting your voice and try not to talk too fast.
- Always face the person and keep your hands away from your mouth when speaking. Avoid chewing gum.
- **Ask** what **you** can do to make yourself better understood.
- Give clues when you are changing the subject.
- Rephrase when you are not understood.

In your home

- Turn up the lights and turn down the music or TV, background noise can be a real source of frustration.
- Offer to turn on the Closed Captions for TV.
- The person who begins the conversation should go to the listener. Understanding well over a distance is difficult.

In restaurants

- Consider the acoustics. Look for places that have carpeting or private seating areas. Ask if the music can be turned down or request a table away from loudspeakers.
- Reserve at times when there is less of a crowd. If necessary, avoid places that have live entertainment.
- Ask for a booth or a table near a wall or window.

At work or in meetings

- Use visual aids, such as PowerPoint presentations or typed agendas.
- Use e-mail to summarize discussions.
- Limit private conversations and cross-table talk in meetings.
- Use a private meeting room away from noise.

If a person you know has hearing loss, **encourage** them to get a hearing screening. Many people who begin to lose their hearing may deny the problem and begin to withdraw and isolate themselves. Studies show that most people who decide to get tested do so upon suggestion of a friend or family member. Hearing aids and other technologies can really make a difference in someone's life. Ask us for further suggestions or information.

