

## Tips for Speaking to a Hard of Hearing Person

- Make sure you have the attention of the person with hearing loss and be sure you are clearly visible to him/her before you start to speak. Tapping the person on the shoulder or waving are both acceptable methods for getting the person's attention.
- Do not put obstacles in front of your face.
- Do not have objects in your mouth such as gum, cigarettes, or food.
- Speak in a normal tone of voice. Do not shout because shouting distorts the sound of your voice.
- Speak clearly and at a moderate pace. Do not over-articulate your words. Stress key words and pause between statements.
- Use natural facial expressions and gestures. Avoid moving around while you are talking.
- Speak at a distance no more than 6 feet (approximately 2 meters). Do not make the person with hearing loss speechread or listen over excessive distances.
- Stand in good lighting, facing the person with whom you are speaking. This will make your lip movements, facial expressions, and gestures easier to see.
- Move away from background noise. Turn any sources of noise off, e.g. television, radio.
- Give clues when changing the subjects.
- Rephrase when you are not understood.
- Include the person with hearing loss in the conversation. Tell the person the topic of the conversation; do not force him/her to guess. Speak directly to, not about, the person with the hearing loss.
- When in doubt, ASK the hard of hearing person for suggestions to improve communication.

## **Tips for Listeners Who Are Hard of Hearing**

- Relearn the trick of concentration. Pay attention and listen carefully.
- Avoid pretending that you have understood what was said. It may lead to confusion later.
- Don't be afraid to ask people to repeat or to speak louder/quieter.
- Don't hesitate to inform a talker that you have a hearing loss and suggest what he/she can do to help you improve understanding.
- Carefully watch the talker. Attend to the lips, facial expressions and gestures, and body language.
- Position yourself to take advantage of good lighting. Make sure the light is behind you and the talker's face is clearly visible.
- At informal gatherings, try to limit the number of people you speak with at one time. One-to-one conversations are easier than group conversations.
- Avoid communicating in noisy areas.
- Try turning down the volume of your hearing aid in noisy places and move closer to the person you are speaking with.
- When you do not understand what was said, ask the talker to say it differently (rephrase) rather than repeating the message.
- Provide feedback that you understand or fail to understand, as well as informing others about how well they are communicating.
- Learn about the topic being discussed. When you know what a person is talking about, it is easier to follow the conversation.
- Keep alert to keywords in sentences in order to follow ideas.
- Set realistic goals about what you can expect to understand.