

10 Strategies for Communicating with the Hard of Hearing

Communication is our primary means of connecting with others and for many these connections are one of the most important parts of their lives.

The strategies on this page may appear obvious and to be “good old common sense” but don’t be fooled. Many with hearing loss report that most people do not use these strategies and if asked to do so remember them for about 30 seconds before reverting back to their old ways.

Hearing loss can result in misunderstanding, isolation and loneliness. By using these strategies you may be able to keep the person with a hearing loss engaged, connected and interested in life thereby lessening the effects of their hearing loss.

1. Reduce background noise.
2. Reduce the distance between yourself and the person you are talking to; 3 to 6 feet is ideal.
3. Ensure proper lighting. Good lighting helps the person see what you are saying. Avoid bright lights shining directly into the eyes of the person you are talking to.
4. Get the person’s attention before you start talking.
5. Keep your mouth and face visible. Don’t turn your head away when talking as visual information from the lips and face is important.
6. Speak a little slower and clearer than you usually do, but don’t shout or exaggerate your lip movements.
7. Keep your sentences short and to the point. Listening with a hearing loss is very fatiguing.
8. Repeat what you have said if the person doesn’t understand you.
9. Rephrase what you have said if the repetition doesn’t work. Using different words or saying something in different way may be all that is needed to ensure you are understood.
10. Use a pen and paper if necessary