



Self Help for Hard of Hearing People



The official website for Self Help for Hard of Hearing People (Australia) Inc

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## Information Sheets

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### Information Sheet Number 15

#### **HELPFUL HINTS FOR BETTER COMMUNICATION WITH THE HEARING IMPAIRED**

##### **GET THEIR ATTENTION**

- If it is dark, turn on the light
- Always face the hearing impaired person
- Put yourself on the same level as the hearing impaired person – standing or sitting
- Don't speak to a hearing impaired person behind his or her back
- Don't turn your face away when speaking
- Don't speak from another room
- When appropriate, gently touch the hearing impaired person before you speak
- Ask the hearing impaired person what's the best way to get their attention.

##### **SPEAK CLEARLY BUT NORMALLY**

- Don't shout

- Maybe speak a little slower but don't exaggerate
- Let the hearing impaired person see your lips – don't chew food or gum or smoke while talking
- Don't put your hand or anything else over your mouth while speaking. If you wear a moustache or beard, keep it trimmed around your lips.

### **SPOTLIGHT YOUR FACE**

- Face a window or lamp to let the best light shine on your face to help the hearing impaired person see your mouth and expression as you speak
- Remember that in the dark, a hearing impaired person finds it almost impossible to hear – e.g. in a car at night or in the bedroom in the dark.

### **AVOID NOISY BACKGROUNDS**

Before you speak to a hearing impaired person ...

- turn down the TV or radio
- turn off the vacuum cleaner or other equipment – e.g. an electric jug
- move away from a noisy fan or air-conditioner
- move away from any noisy machinery
- move away from loud music in a shopping centre
- don't try to talk above loud traffic noise
- remember, if there is too much going on at once, the hearing impaired person will find it very difficult to hear or understand what you say
- always remember it is harder for a hearing impaired person to hear when there is other noise.

### **GET TO THE POINT**

Say the main thing as soon as possible without preliminary description.

If a hearing impaired person doesn't understand you, find another way to say the same thing.

E.g. "What will the weather be tomorrow?" could be rephrased as "Will it be sunny tomorrow?"

### **POINTS TO REMEMBER**

- Hearing impaired people do not hear as well when they are tired or sick or have been involved in long conversational sessions
- Check that what you said to the hearing impaired person was heard correctly
- Use facial expression or gestures when talking to a hearing impaired person – it helps illustrate your meaning
- Try to encourage the hearing impaired person to build up their self confidence
- Try to keep patient and relaxed yourself!

**HEARING IMPAIRED PEOPLE HEAR WHEN THEY CAN...NOT WHEN  
THEY WANT TO.**

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