

CHATTING WITH DEAF OR HEARING IMPAIRED FRIENDS

Persons with hearing loss are a diverse group, whose preference regarding communication differs. It is important that you find out from the person with hearing loss which method of communication he or she prefers.

Here are some general pointers to consider when talking to someone who is deaf or hearing impaired:

Nice to meet you!

Wave or touch the person's shoulder to draw his attention. You needn't make big waving gestures—a small movement of the hand will usually suffice. Waving in someone's face is considered rude. Make and keep eye contact with the person and talk to the person and not to the interpreter, lip speaker or note taker. Breaking eye contact, will indicate that the conversation is over.

Sorry, I did not get that.

Be patient when either you or the person experiencing hearing loss, have difficulty in understanding or getting the message across.

Rephrase rather than repeat sentences over and over that the person does not understand. Keep sentences short and use proper sentence construction. Changing the subject mid sentence can make it difficult for the person with hearing loss to follow.

Speak clearly so that the person can see and read your lips. Speech reading is made more difficult if you chew gum or something obscures your face and mouth.

Use your regular tone of voice when having a conversation, unless the person tells you otherwise. Use facial expressions to correspond with the topic and mood of discussion.

A good old pen and paper can also help when either of you have difficulty understanding.

See you later!

Indicate unforeseen happenings like a phone that starts to ring or dogs barking.

Do not pass between two people talking, especially if they are using a signed language.

If you have to, excuse yourself before passing through.

Use basic signs to support what you are saying, like pointing in a direction or waving goodbye.



National Council of & for
Persons with Disabilities

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