



Tips for communicating with deaf people

It is important to keep in mind when communicating that we are all individuals with different background, experiences and abilities. Remember, deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) people may use and require different communication strategies.

Some may use sign language (Auslan), some may lip-read, and others may listen and speak, while some may use a combination of these modes and methods. When communicating with a deaf or hard of hearing person, it is always best to ask how they would prefer to communicate.

LET'S START A
CONVERSATION
ABOUT DEAF
AWARENESS

Deaf
Children
Australia.

Let's keep the conversation going, get in touch

Telephone: (03) 9539 5300
Email: info@deafchildren.org.au
deafchildreनाustralia.org.au



DO:

Get the deaf person's attention before you start to speak.

Place yourself where the person can see you to gain attention.

Or try waving, knocking on a table or lightly touch their shoulder.

Face the deaf person when you are talking.

Speak clearly and naturally. Try to use an expressive face.

Use whole sentences to help a deaf person pick up clues to what is being said.

Use visual clues, where possible. Point to what you are talking about.

Make it clear what the topic of the conversation is.

Always let them know when a topic changes.

Ask the deaf person to repeat what you've said if you are not sure they've understood

Use whole sentences to help a DHH person pick up clues to what is being said

Avoid having more than one person speak at a time when in a group.

Stand with your face to the light

DON'T:

Speak too slowly or shout - this will distort your lip patterns.

Move your head or walk around while you are talking. Speech movements can easily be missed.

Have lots of noise on in the background, like a TV or radio. Hearing aids amplify all noises, not just voices.

Take forever to get to your point.

Stand with your back to a window - this can turn your face into a shadow and make it hard to read your lip patterns/facial expressions.

Make a DHH person lip read for too long without a break. Lip reading involves a lot of concentration and can leave the DHH person feeling very tired

Cover or put anything in your mouth while talking. Eating or smoking while talking is a definite no-no.

Give up. If stuck, try explaining in a different way or writing your message down. Or if you have a phone or computer available, type your message.