HEARING LOSS
COMMUNICATION TIPS

When we communicate, we share ideas, feelings, and information with others, usually by listening and speaking. If an individual has a hearing loss, verbal communication can be a challenge. Words or sentences may be misunderstood, and wrong messages received.

Effective communication involves active participation by both listener and speaker. The following tips can be used to enhance communication with people with hearing loss.

GET AND KEEP THE PERSON’S ATTENTION
• Get the person’s attention before you begin talking
• Be at the same person’s eye level; bend or kneel for someone in a wheelchair
• Stay out of shadows—and keep light on your face while talking
• Show your face—especially your mouth, while talking; avoid chewing gum, drinking, or eating when talking
• Stay put—don’t move around while talking

HELP YOURSELF BE HEARD
• Position yourself within 3 to 6 feet of the person you’re talking to
• Avoid background noise
• Speak clearly—and not too fast or too slow
• Speak in a normal tone of voice—talking louder to a person with a hearing loss may not necessarily increase understanding
• Keep it short—your sentences, that is, not the conversation

SAY IT ANOTHER WAY
• Use facial expressions and gestures
• Rephrase—use other words with the same meaning
• Write out key words

MAKE SURE YOU WERE UNDERSTOOD
• Keep in mind that someone may nod yes, but that does not necessarily mean that they understood you
• Tactfully ask the person what was said or ask leading questions so you know your message got across
• Ask the listener what you can do to make the message easier to understand if it’s not clear
• In a group setting, repeat questions or key facts before continuing with the discussion