



**COLORADO**  
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## Tips for Communicating with Persons with Hearing Impairment

If you're a hearing person communicating with someone who has hearing loss, please be mindful of the following tips:

1. Get the person's attention before you speak. If you start talking before they are looking at you, chances are they won't understand what you say.
2. Do not speak to a person with hearing impairment unless your lips are visible to him or her (e.g., not from another room or while her or she is reading or watching television).
3. Do not put obstacles in front of your face. This includes coffee cups, hands, pencils, etc. Many people with hearing loss rely on **lip reading** to assist their understanding of speech.
4. Do not have things in your mouth. This includes gum, candy, cigarettes, etc. **Again, the person is probably trying very hard to see your lips.**
5. Speak clearly and at a moderate pace. Speak slowly, but naturally. **Do not shout!!!**
6. Move away from background noise. **Background noise is the hardest situation for a hearing impaired person to communicate in.**
7. If you're not understood, try to say the same thing using different words. If that doesn't work, writing a few key words may help the person with hearing loss understand. If that doesn't work, write the whole sentence.
8. Include the hearing-impaired person in all discussions about him or her. Individuals with hearing impairment sometimes feel quite vulnerable and left out; this approach will aid in alleviating some of those feelings.
9. When you change the subject, be sure the person with hearing loss knows what the new subject is.
10. When in doubt, ask the person with hearing loss what you can do to improve communication.
11. **Keep a sense of humor.**