

## HOW TO HELP A PERSON WITH HEARING DIFFICULTIES UNDERSTAND YOU

When someone speaks, clues are gained not only from what is heard but also from what is seen. These clues complement and supplement each other, helping the hearing impaired person to piece together the conversation.

For the hearing impaired the visual clues of speech become very important. Simple actions on your part may determine the ease with which these visual clues can be followed.

The following points will help: -

1. **Attract the observer's attention before you start.** So that they can catch the beginning of what you is said and not just the ending.
2. Avoid speaking from another room, or with your head in a cupboard.
3. Keep you face visible and ensure it is well lit.
4. Try to avoid conversation in the kitchen where there are background noises from food mixers, washing machines and dishwashers etc.
5. Do not hide your lips behind your hands, a cigarette or a newspaper.
6. Do not speak while looking into a newspaper or a book.
7. Keep your head fairly still when speaking. Use natural hand gestures but do not exaggerate.
8. Do not shout – speak clearly and not too fast, shouting and over-mouthing will alter the lip pattern, and speaking too slowly may destroy the natural rhythm of speech.
9. Try to make the subject of the conversation as clear as possible.
10. Try to use full sentences rather than just short phrases, as they are easier to understand.
11. When you are speaking do not distract the observers attention with unnecessary hand movements.
12. For a hearing impaired person it is important to see the speakers eyes to gauge how they are feeling. Therefore, if you are wearing sunglasses, remove these while you are speaking.
13. Repeat the sentence again if necessary and then perhaps re-phrase what you want to say. You may not be aware of this, but some words are more difficult to lip-read. For example, the month of March is easier to lip-read than August. In the word March the shapes making "M" and "CH" are visible on the lips, but the components in August are made inside the mouth. So there is nothing to see.
14. Write down any important facts.
15. Be patient.

