



**GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF THE
DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING**

Tips for Hearing People on Communicating with Hard of Hearing People

**RULE: When audio is poor, emphasize the visual.
Practice special speaking skills.**

SET YOUR STAGE

- Face audience directly. Always look at the hard of hearing person.
- Spotlight your face (no back lighting) so the hard of hearing person can see your mouth.
- Avoid noisy backgrounds. Noise blocks out conversation sounds.
- Get attention first. Be sure the hard of hearing person is aware of you before you speak.
- Ask how you can facilitate communication.

PROJECT YOUR COMMUNICATION

- Don't shout. Shouting distorts your face and mouth until speechreading is impossible.
- Speak clearly, at moderate pace. Speak more slowly to let listener keep up with you.
- Don't hide your mouth, chew food, gum, or smoke while talking.
- Rephrase if you are not understood. Try different words or write key words on a pad.
- Use facial expression, gestures, hand signals or finger spelling.
- Give clues when changing subject. Hard of hearing people get lost with sudden changes.

ESTABLISH EMPATHY WITH AUDIENCE

- Be patient if response is slow. Making sense of conversation takes time and is fatiguing.
- Stay positive and relaxed. If you are irritated or annoyed your speech will deteriorate.
- Talk TO hard of hearing people, not ABOUT them. Only their ears are "broken".
- Offer respect to help build confidence. Encouragement is very helpful and appreciated.

*Used with permission from the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA)
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