

Working with Persons who have Hearing Loss

People with hearing loss represent a diverse group: deaf, hard of hearing, deafened, oral deaf and culturally deaf. Hearing loss is measured from mild, moderate, severe, or profound.

Sign language is not the only method for communicating with deaf and hard of hearing individuals. There are multiple ways of communicating. These include speech, oral communication, lip-reading or speech reading, sign language or a combination of some or all of these methods.

Communication devices used by people who are deaf and hard of hearing include, hearing aids, cochlear implants, TTY telephone communication systems, communication and access realtime translation (CART).

When communicating with the deaf or hard of hearing individual:

- Make sure the person can read your lips. Refrain from covering your mouth, chewing gum or looking away when speaking to someone with hearing loss. The hard of hearing person depends on seeing your lips and facial expressions.
- Do not yell or scream when speaking. Yelling or screaming makes it difficult for hard of hearing individuals to hear and understand.
- Avoid speaking quickly. The person with hearing loss needs time to process and understand the information.
- In a noisy environment, move away to a quieter space or area so that you can have a conversation with the person with hearing loss.

When coordinating a meeting:

- Choose a room with good lighting. This helps the person with hearing loss who relies on lip-reading or speech reading to see the speaker's lips.
- The seating arrangement of the room should be in a circle, U-shaped or use roundtables that allow the individual who is deaf or hard of hearing to have a face-to-face interaction. This facilitates communication for individuals who depend on lip-reading, speech reading and/or sign language interpreters.

Using audio and video for educational purposes:

- Provide captioning or transcription of DVDs, CDs, internet videos and other types of media (e.g. webinars), upon request.
- Avoid using background music while presenting or speaking.

Glossary of Terms:

Deaf is a term that refers to individuals with a severe to profound hearing loss or no hearing. Sign language is their primary method of communication. Depending on the type of loss, some deaf individuals use spoken language and lip-reading.

Hard of hearing is a term that refers to individuals whose hearing loss ranges from mild to severe or profound. Depending on the type of loss, some hard of hearing individuals rely on lip-reading in conjunction with spoken language as their method of communication. Others rely on both speech and sign language.

Deafened is a term that refers to hearing or hard of hearing individuals who suddenly or gradually experience a profound hearing loss. Usually these individuals have lived part of their lives as hearing individuals and may have developed language forms that can help in their communication techniques.

Oral deaf is a term that refers to individuals with a severe to profound hearing loss, or little or no hearing. These individuals communicate by using a combination of speech, lip reading or speech reading. Their communication devices include hearing aids, cochlear implants and sign language.

Culturally Deaf is a term that refers to individuals who identify with or participate in the community, language and culture of Deaf people. Culturally Deaf people use speech reading or lip-reading, speech, hearing aids and sign language to communicate.

Speech reading or **Lip-reading** is a technique of understanding in which a person with a hearing loss or interprets speech by observing a speaker's lip movements and facial expressions.

References:

1. Glossary of Terms, Canadian Hearing Society. (2013, November 14). Retrieved December 02, 2017, from <http://www.chs.ca/glossary-terms>
2. Canadian Association of the Deaf, Terminology. (2015, July 3). Retrieved December 02, 2017, from <http://cad.ca/issues-positions/terminology/>
3. Canadian Hard of Hearing Association, Broadcast Accessibility for People with Hearing Loss. (2017, October). Retrieved December 02, 2017, from <http://chha.ca/baf/index.php>
4. Hearing Aids Scarborough, ON - The Hearing Clinic | Audiologist. (n.d.). Retrieved December 02, 2017, from <http://www.thehearingclinic.ca/>
5. Canadian Hearing Society, Communication Tips. (n.d.). Retrieved December 02, 2017, from <https://www.chs.ca/communication-tips>