

## Hints and Tips on How to Identify and Improve Communication with someone who has hearing difficulties.

There are several ways to identify whether or not someone is finding it harder to hear things. Some examples of these are;

- > Asks numerous times for you to repeat what you have said.
- > Often misinterprets what has been said to them.
- > Complains that you are mumbling and not speaking loud enough.
- > Has equipment such as the television or radio on very loud.
- > They may even begin to separate themselves from conversations and activities as they find it too draining.
- > Will ask you not to shout.

If you notice these signs and you are concerned it is important that you encourage that person to go and speak to a professional, whether it's a G.P. or a hearing check.

### What can help both parties?

When someone speaks, clues are gained from what we hear and what we see. YOU may be able to create a situation so that as many clues as possible are available.

### **THE BEST CONDITIONS FOR LISTENING**

- > A room with soft furnishings (such as carpets, curtains and cushions, these absorb sound and so reduce the echo effect.)
- > Try to reduce background noise (a tablecloth may lessen the noise of plates clattering for example, turning off a television or radio which may be on.

- > Ask others to face you, to speak clearly and a little louder (mumbling and shouting make it more difficult for you to pick out the words of the speaker.)
- > Make sure the room is well lit. Have your back to the light source, e.g. the window so that the light falls on the speakers face.

REMEMBER NOISY PLACES SUCH AS BUSY STREETS, LARGE SHOPS, HOSPITALS AND RAILWAY STATIONS WILL BE RATHER MORE DIFFICULT TO COMMUNICATE IN BECAUSE OF THE VERY LOUD BACKGROUND NOISE.

### **THE BEST WAY TO IMPROVE AND UNDERSTAND CONVERSATIONS;**

- > Just because someone is wearing a hearing aid, it does not mean that they can hear you.
- > If you have hearing loss, don't be afraid to tell people that you have difficulty in hearing.
- > Keep hands, pens, cups, food, etc away from your mouth whilst talking.
- > If someone does not understand what is being said, don't keep repeating it. Try saying it in a different way instead.
- > Position yourself 3-6 ft. away, as lip reading is difficult if the speaker is too near or too far away.
- > Make sure your eyesight has recently been checked to ensure your vision is working at its best.
- > Try to watch the speaker's lips (you may be surprised at the number of clues you pick up without realising it. Use natural facial expressions and gestures.
- > Do not be afraid to let people know that you have to rely on a bit of lip reading, and give them an idea of how they can help you.

- > Consider using a notepad and pen to assist if needed.
- > Remember if the person is deaf and a British Sign Language user they may not have good understanding of written English, so keep it simple and to the point. A notebook each is helpful to avoid passing one back and forth.

Part of this information has been provided by Action on Hearing Loss. For more information please visit their website at [www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk](http://www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk). Alternatively you can phone them, via telephone on 0808 808 0123 (freephone) or by textphone 0808 808 9000 (freephone).