

COMMUNICATE WITH THE DEAF

(by all means!!!)

1. It is important to have the deaf person's attention before speaking. He may need a tap on the shoulder, a wave of the hand, or another signal that you wish to communicate.
2. Speak slowly and clearly, but do not exaggerate or over-emphasize. This distorts lip movements and makes speech reading more difficult.
3. Try to show facial and body expression when you speak. You don't have to be a pantomime expert to do this.
4. Not all deaf people can read lips, and even the best speech readers may miss many words. Therefore, if the deaf person does not reply or seems to be having difficulty in comprehending, rephrase the thought rather than repeat it exactly.
5. Look directly at the person while speaking. Even a slight turn of the head can obscure the deaf person's vision. Other distracting factors include beards and mustaches. Remember this.
6. Don't be embarrassed about communicating with paper and pencil. Getting the message across is more important than the medium used.
7. Establish eye contact. It helps convey the feeling of direct communication.
8. Don't restrict conversation to business matters. Deaf people have feelings and opinions. Humor, gossip, and small talk help everyone to relax.
9. If you are called on to read something while an interpreter is signing, please read slowly and clearly. Formal writing is more difficult to interpret quickly.
10. **Never** mimic people using sign language-not even in fun. American Sign Language is a real language, the third most commonly used language in the U.S.
11. Be aware of silent conversations. Often, hearing people interrupt an ongoing dialogue, not realizing what they are doing.
12. The most important advice for those who can hear is to remember that deaf people can speak. **Deafness is not muteness.** Listening is an important part of communication also.