

## **Centre for Hearing & Balance disorders**

# **Communication strategies: For those communicating with a person with a hearing impairment**

### **How to help a hearing impaired person 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:

- Attract the observer's attention before you start talking to them so that they can catch the beginning of what is said and not just the ending
- Avoid speaking from another room, or with your head in a cupboard
- Keep your face visible and ensure your environment is well lit
- Try to avoid conversation in the kitchen where there are background noises from food mixers, washing machines and dishwashers etc
- Do not hide your lip movements behind your hands, paper etc
- Do not speak while looking down into a newspaper, book etc
- Keep your head fairly still when speaking
- Use natural hand gestures but do not exaggerate
- 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 rhythm of speech



## Patient Information

- Try to make the subject of conversation as clear as possible
- Try to use full sentences rather than just short phrases as they are easier to understand
- When you are speaking do not distract the observer's attention with unnecessary hand movements
- 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 speaking
- Repeat the sentence again if necessary and then perhaps rephrase what you want to say. Some words are more difficult to lip-read than others, for example, the month of March is easier to lip-read than August. In the word March the shapes making the 'M' and 'CH' are visible on the lips, but the components in August are made inside the mouth so there is nothing to see
- Write down any important facts
- Most importantly, **be patient**
- Remember a hearing aid amplifies background noise as well as speech

## Further information from Action on Hearing loss

### Action on hearing Loss Information Line

The Information Line offers a wide range of information on many aspects of deafness and hearing loss. You can contact us for printed copies of the full range of Action on Hearing Loss information fact sheets and leaflets:

Information Line, 19-23 Featherstone Street, London EC1Y 8SL

Telephone: 0808 808 0123

Textphone: 0808 808 9000

Text: 07800 0000360

Email: [informationline@hearingloss.org.uk](mailto:informationline@hearingloss.org.uk)

## Patient Information

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please contact 024 7696 6444 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy

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