



### **Advice for Communicating with People who are D/deaf or Hard of Hearing**

1. Know that “Deaf” people associate with the Deaf community/culture, while “deaf” people may have some ability to hear and/or do not associate with the Deaf community/culture.
2. Ask the person how he or she prefers to communicate (e.g., lip/speech reading, writing, sign language, interpreter, etc.) and accommodate as best you can.
3. When speaking with a deaf person, speak in a normal tone of voice.
4. Reduce background noise as much as you can if the person has some ability to hear.
5. If you are speaking through an interpreter, remember that the interpreter may lag a few words behind. Pause occasionally.
6. Talk directly to the person who is D/deaf or hard of hearing, not the interpreter.
7. Facilitate speech reading/lip reading by:
  - Facing into the light.
  - Making sure you have the person’s attention before you start to speak. A wave or a light touch on the shoulder are appropriate ways to get his/her attention.
  - Keeping hands and other objects away from your mouth.
  - Facing the person directly.
  - Maintaining eye contact.
  - Standing still and not walking around or turning your back on the person.
  - Asking if you don’t understand; ask the person to repeat what she/he said or to write it down.
  - Speaking in a clear and expressive manner.
  - Speaking naturally: don’t over enunciate or exaggerate words and do not raise your voice.

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- Familiarizing yourself with and obtaining for your institution systems and assistive devices that assist people who are D/deaf or hard of hearing. (Assistive devices include telephone aids that amplify or convert auditory signals to a print format, TTY's that transmit telephone communication, devices to provide captioning, and induction loops. And while not ideal, cell phones enabling text messaging can also facilitate communication.)