



NCPPDSA

The National Council for Persons with Physical Disabilities in SA

BASIC HINTS FOR INTERACTION WITH PEOPLE WITH HEARING LOSS

Persons with hearing loss are a diverse group, whose preference regarding communication can differ. Therefore it is necessary to find out from the person concerned which method he/she prefers. Take note that there are two main groups namely:

- **Post lingual:** That is when hearing loss occurs after acquisition of speech. This group does not use Sign Language – communication is done by means of lip reading enhanced with gestures/hearing aids or a combination thereof (called speech reading), and the use of a lip speaker as an interpreter or a transcriber, if required.—and sometimes an FM sender or loop system.
- **Pre-lingual:** This is when hearing loss occurs before the acquisition of speech (Sotho, Afrikaans, English etc) . This group use Sign Language as a medium and a Sign Language interpreter, if required.

Etiquette for interacting with persons experiencing hearing loss:

1. Wave or touch the person's shoulder to draw his attention.
2. Don't wave in the person's face or use huge waving gestures if you are close by. A small flapping movement of the hand is usually enough.
3. Keep sentences short and use proper sentence construction.
4. Rephrase, rather than repeat sentences that the person does not understand.
5. Speak clearly so that the person can see and read your lips.
6. Use a normal tone of voice when having a conversation, unless otherwise indicated by the person.
7. Do not smoke, chew gum or let your hair cover your face whilst in conversation.
8. Use facial expressions to correspond with the topic and mood of discussion.
9. Keep eye contact with the person and talk to the person and not to the interpreter/lip speaker/transcriber.
10. Be patient when either you or the person experiencing hearing loss, have difficulty in understanding or transferring a message.
11. Do not change the subject or change your language in mid-sentence.
12. Use basic signs to support you in transferring your message.
13. Indicate unforeseen happenings e.g. sudden loud music or dogs fighting.
14. Ensure that the light shines on your face from the front.
15. Avoid backlight - If you are standing with your back to a light source, such as a window, the glare may obscure your face and make it difficult for the person experiencing hearing loss to communicate.
16. Establish a comfortable distance between you and the person involved in communication.
17. Establish eye contact before beginning communication. This might be considered a “stare” in other cultures, but not in the “culture” of persons experiencing hearing loss.
18. Do not pass between two people communicating. If you have to, excuse yourself before walking through.
19. Do not look away during the conversation as that indicates termination of communication.



FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT

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