
AGING I&R/A TIPS

Tip Sheet 2

National Aging Information & Referral Support Center

COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY WITH PERSONS WITH HEARING LOSS

According to the National Institutes of Health, one in three people older than 60 and half of those older than 85 have a hearing loss.

Communication is important! Here are some tips to help you communicate better with people with hearing difficulties.

10 Tips for Better Communication

- Speak naturally. It is more important to speak slowly than loudly.
- Be sure you are speaking into the telephone mouthpiece.
- Do not cover your mouth or chew while talking—your speech will be harder to understand.
- Reduce background noises as much as possible (telephone rings, microwave beeps, others talking, traffic sounds).
- Avoid sudden changes in topic.
- Avoid sentences that go on too long. Rephrase rather than repeat what your listener does not understand.
- Don't be afraid to ask "Are you having trouble hearing me?" You can also ask: "What can I do to help you hear me or understand me better?"
- Remember to allow enough time for your listener to respond.

- Supplement phone conversations with written material.
- Be prepared to provide phone numbers for interpreting services.

Signs of Possible Hearing Loss

- Frequent need to have things repeated.
- Trouble following and participating in a conversation, especially when there is background noise.
- Trouble understanding high-pitched, female voices.
- Great irritation (and complaints) with automated voice menu systems.
- Sound quality not always the best on an amplified phone line—may distort voice.
- Complaints that the speech of others is mumbled or slurred.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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