

Top tips for communicating with deaf people



Top tips for communicating with a deaf or hard of hearing person:

- 1. Always face a deaf person.** Make eye contact when you are talking. Try not to look away or cover your mouth as many deaf people rely on lip reading to help them understand you.
- 2. Check the noise and lighting.** Turn off or move away from background noise. Make sure your face is not in shadow and there are no strong lights or sunshine in their eyes.
- 3. Keep your distance.** Stand a metre or two away from the deaf person. This is important for hearing-aid users, lip-readers and signers.
- 4. Speak clearly, slowly and steadily.** Do not mumble, shout or exaggerate – it distorts your lip patterns.
- 5. Take turns.** If there is more than one person in a conversation take turns to talk.
- 6. Repeat and re-phrase if necessary.** Trying to say the same thing in a different way might help.
- 7. Write it down.** Do not be afraid to write or draw to help with understanding.

One of the most important points to remember is to *keep trying* – even if a deaf person does not understand what you're saying the first few times. When someone says 'oh, don't worry - it doesn't matter' it feels like they mean 'you don't matter.' Even if it takes rephrasing or writing it down, do not give up.

Did you know...? Over 11 million people in the Middle East are deaf or hard of hearing.

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