

# Effective Communication: It Takes Two!

## TIPS FOR IMPROVING COMMUNICATION WHEN *YOU HAVE REDUCED HEARING*

**1. Self identify.** Let people know you have difficulty hearing and what they can do to help you understand. Your reduced hearing is invisible, the **signs** of your reduced hearing are not. Unfortunately, some of the signs may be misinterpreted by others.

**2. Get plenty of rest.** It takes a lot of energy to listen when you have reduced hearing. Take listening breaks. When you are tired and you are finding it difficult to understand what is being said, ask if a particular discussion can be postponed to a better listening time for you, such as the morning.

**3. Look for cues and clues.** Pay attention. There is a lot you can learn from body language, expression and context. Enroll in a speech (lip) reading course at the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association – Newfoundland and Labrador (CHHA-NL).

**4. Be a good listener.** It is a lot of work to listen. If you are tired and unattentive, it may be misinterpreted by others as boredom or rudeness. Let them know your communication needs.

**5. Wear your hearing device.** If you have a hearing aid, cochlear implant, or other hearing device, wear it and learn all that you can about adjusting to the technology. If you need a hearing device, get one, or use other assistive technology that suits your lifestyle and listening needs.

**6. Use Hearing Assistive Technology (HAT).** There is a large variety of HAT available, such as devices for the phone, signaling devices and listening devices. The CHHA-NL provides a FREE assistive technology loans program. For more information call (1-888) 753-3224 or visit our Web site [www.chha-nl.ca](http://www.chha-nl.ca).

**7. Let yourself catch up.** Before interrupting a conversation, let it flow for a short time while you gather more clues. If you are still unsure what is being said, explain that you are lost and ask for a summary of what you have missed.



  
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## TIPS FOR IMPROVING COMMUNICATION WITH *SOMEONE WHO HAS REDUCED HEARING*



- 1. Find out what reduced hearing sounds like.** Understanding reduced hearing is the first step to better communication. The Canadian Hard of Hearing Association - Newfoundland and Labrador (CHHA-NL) has audio simulation of reduced hearing and other hearing disorders, like Tinnitus, available to borrow.
- 2. Get their attention first.** Ensure the person is looking at you and knows you are speaking to them. Calling out from the next room puts the person with reduced hearing at an unfair advantage.
- 3. Be Visible.** Make sure your face can be seen clearly with the light shining on your face and not behind you. This allows for better speech (lip) reading.
- 4. Do not cover your mouth.** It is important for those with reduced hearing to see your lip and tongue placement to speech (lip) read effectively. If you have a mustache or beard, keep it well trimmed.
- 5. Reduce or eliminate background noise.** Understanding speech in a noisy environment is a challenge for everyone, but it is especially difficult for those with reduced hearing. If it is noisy move to a quieter location.
- 6. Do not shout or exaggerate your speech.** Use clear speech—slower & slightly louder. Those with reduced hearing are constantly solving a puzzle by filling in the gaps of missed communication.
- 7. Repeat, rephrase, write it down.** “If at first you don’t succeed”.... do not try and try again. If someone with reduced hearing asks you to repeat something more than once, try using different words to explain the same thought or concept. If this does not work, write it down. Do not give up or say “never mind”. If it is worth saying once, it is worth communicating it again, effectively.
- 8. Include the person in your conversation.** Speak directly to the person who has reduced hearing, not their spouse or family member standing next to them. Reduced hearing is invisible, the person is not.
- 9. Use Hearing Assistive Technology (HAT).** There is a wealth of technology available to help those with reduced hearing listen in different environments. CHHA-NL offers a FREE hearing assistive technology loans program open to anyone in Newfoundland and Labrador.
- 10. Remind yourself and practice.** Keep reminding yourself of these tips and practice them. Have the person with reduced hearing remind you of their communication needs.