

Making The Workplace More Hearing Accessible

TIPS FOR **EMPLOYEES** WITH REDUCED HEARING.

1. Understand your own hearing and communication needs. This includes your type and degree of hearing loss, how your hearing aid (or other hearing technology) works, and situations or environments where you do not hear well. This knowledge allows you to provide effective information and suggestions for improvement to your employer.

2. Wear your hearing device. If you have hearing aids, a cochlear implant or other hearing technology, wear it regularly and ensure you have extra batteries available.

3. Arrange your workstation so that you can see anyone who is approaching you.

4. During meetings or conversations try to position yourself close to the main speaker so that you can see and hear clearly.

5. Let co-workers and visitors know that you have reduced hearing and how they can best communicate with you, such as facing you and speaking clearly.

6. Ask for accommodations from your employer to make your work more hearing accessible. This may include: moving your workstation to a quieter area, using an amplified telephone or an assistive listening device, or requesting a different room set-up for meetings.

7. Sometimes job duties can be modified if they present particular challenges. For example, if you experience challenges communicating by telephone, this duty could possibly be exchanged for others.

8. Make sure the environment is quiet enough for you to hear and understand clearly. Move to a quieter location if there is too much background noise.

9. Be patient with yourself and others. Communicating when you have reduced hearing takes effort. Try to be well rested each day and give yourself time for listening breaks.

10. Educate Yourself. Ask questions. Be aware of the types of technology available to assist you. Take a speech (lip) reading class. The Canadian Hard of Hearing Association - Newfoundland and Labrador (CHHA-NL) can support you with information and resources.



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TIPS FOR *EMPLOYERS AND CO-WORKERS.*

- 1. Train all employees in hearing awareness and effective communication.** 1 in 10 people experience challenges with their hearing, which means that MANY employees and visitors can benefit from improved communication. The Canadian Hard of Hearing Association – Newfoundland and Labrador (CHHA-NL) provides this training.
- 2. Front-line employees should be clearly visible to visitors and be able to be heard** (good lighting, face unobstructed by computer monitors). Hearing accessible listening devices should be available to visitors, especially if employees are behind glass.
- 3. Provide visual and written supports during meetings** (agenda, graphics etc). Written meeting minutes should also be provided as follow-up.
- 4. The best meeting room arrangement is a round or U-shaped table** so that all participants can see the faces of all other participants.
- 5. Ensure you have the full attention of a co-worker or visitor before speaking.** If there is background noise, reduce it if possible, or move to a quieter location.
- 6. Audio announcements** should also be provided to employees in text format.
- 7. Assistive Technology** is available for employees with reduced hearing, including amplified telephone devices & listening systems for meetings. Technology solutions are often inexpensive, and can be borrowed for a trial period from the CHHA-NL.
- 8. Fire and other emergency signallers** should include a visual alert (flashing light) to correspond with the alarm, or a louder audible alert for employees and visitors with reduced hearing.
- 9. Noise in the workplace may cause hearing loss.** Invest in a workplace hearing conservation program, including environmental modifications in noisy areas, providing hearing protection to employees and offering employee education on noise and hearing awareness. The CHHA-NL provides noise awareness training to employers.
- 10. Remember that reduced hearing can vary significantly from individual to individual.** What works best for one person, may not work best for another. Ask each employee for input on his or her own hearing and communication preferences in the workplace.