

# COMMUNICATION TIPS FOR FRIENDS & FAMILY

## FACT SHEET

If you have friends or family members who are experiencing hearing loss, there are some simple plans that you can put into practice right now – things that you can do and changes you can make to your environment – to make listening a little easier.

### COMMUNICATION APPROACHES

There are some helpful communication approaches that both the person with the hearing condition and by their communication partners can use...after all, communication is the responsibility of all of us, not just the person with the hearing condition!

The following actions may help when talking to someone with hearing difficulties:

- **Connect.** Get the person's attention and make sure they can see your face clearly. They will understand better if we connect first and I can see you speak
- **Articulate.** Speak more clearly, not more loudly. Speaking clearly at a moderate pace is more helpful than shouting
- **Rephrase.** If the person didn't understand what you said, try rephrasing it. Some sounds are more difficult to understand than others
- **Move.** Background noise makes hearing more difficult. Move to somewhere quiet when necessary

### ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES

If you live with somebody who has a hearing condition, there are simple things you can do to the living and dining areas of your home that can make socialising a little easier.

- **Buffer the sound of the room.** Fabric absorbs sound and reduces echoes. Carpeted floors, soft furnishings, tablecloths, and drapes will allow for a quieter and more accessible setting than hard floors, bare surfaces and uncovered windows.
- **Read my lips.** People who lip-read need good lighting to see other people's faces clearly so make sure your rooms are clearly lit and don't talk with your mouth full or cover your mouth when speaking.
- **Go full-circle.** Circular tables create a better listening environment and allow people with hearing conditions to lip-read more easily so opt for a circular table in your dining room, and ask if a circular seating arrangement is possible if you are dining out.
- **Find your quiet place.** Identify a quiet part of the house where the person with a hearing condition can retreat

#### ADDRESS

1 Hamilton Place  
Mount Waverley  
Vic 3149

#### HEARING LINE

**1300 242 842**

For hearing, social & emotional support, & general enquiries, Monday to Friday, 9am – 5pm

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“ ”

Shouting. People shout at you, even though you have your hearing aids in, they speak terribly loudly. People overcompensate your hearing loss, particularly if you've got hearing aids in. A bit of empathy is needed, I think – Cornelia

to if they need a listening break; this is also helpful for people who can experience sensory overload.

- **Turn down the music.** while music adds a nice tone to any occasion, it can become overpowering to people with hearing conditions. The effort in trying to catch people's words over the background music can be exhausting, so make sure music levels are low.
- **One conversation at a time.** Trying to catch what people are saying when everyone's speaking at the same time is a nightmare for people with hearing conditions. If you're hosting a party or event, try to moderate the conversation so that there's only one conversation taking place around the table at a time. Try to plan

events that allow/prioritise one-on-one conversations rather than one-to-many or, worse, many-to-many.

- **Take it outside.** If you're in the middle of a one-on-one conversation and the other person is struggling to hear, suggest they go to a quieter place with you.

You can use similar approaches when socialising outside the home. Taking note of the environment, the seating options, and even thinking ahead about where you plan to go can go a long way towards making listening a little easier for your friends and loved ones with hearing difficulties.

This factsheet is intended to be a guide of a general nature, having regard to general circumstances. The information presented should not be relied on as a substitute for medical advice, independent judgement or assessment by a healthcare professional, with consideration of the particular needs and individual circumstances. This factsheet reflects information available at the time of its preparation, but its currency should be determined having regard to other available information. Soundfair disclaims all liability to users of the information provided.

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Author: Natalie Fletcher

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