

# **Enhanced Communication Strategies for People with Hearing Loss**

## **For 1 or 2 person interactions:**

Always face the person when speaking to him or her.

This enhances the ability to hear and see what is being said (speech reading). This means not checking your phone, using the computer, reading the newspaper or writing on a board with your back to the person with hearing loss.

Always try to be in close proximity to the person with hearing loss. Optimal distance range for a hearing aid is within 10 feet. The farther away the speaker, the lower reception by the hearing aid

Avoid covering the mouth or chewing gum when speaking as it prevents speech reading and affects voice projection.

Avoid heavy facial hair around the mouth which also reduces the ability to speech read.

Please don't say, "Oh, it wasn't important" when asked to repeat a statement/comment. This may cause 'social pain'

Please don't shout !.

Don't say "I am sorry" when informed "I have a hearing loss or I don't hear well". No one is sorrier than the person with a hearing loss. Instead, ask what is the best way for us to communicate?

Seek a quiet area for conversation.

Generally, the hearing aid will amplify surrounding sounds as well as voice.

Written instructions are always appreciated as they provide verification and future reference.

## **For all groups:**

One person and one person only, speaks at a time.

The facilitator should request an audience member to stand up, if possible, to identify him/her self and to project their voice.

Questions or comments from the audience should be repeated by the facilitator for everyone's verification.

If a room needs to be darkened to view a power point program and a presenter is continuing to speak, the lighting should be adjusted so the speaker's face is able to be seen by the person with hearing loss to speech read.

Facilitators should try to stay in the front of the audience and visible to everyone.

People with hearing loss tend to seat themselves as close to the front as possible so they can also see what is being said

## **Microphone(Mic) Use**

Please use one, if it is available.

Make sure, if it is a portable Mic that is turned on, usually there are 2 switches

Speak directly into the Mic, holding it at a 45 degree angle just below the mouth.

If your head is turned, the Mic should follow in the same direction.

Avoid blowing into the Mic, whispering or coughing into the mic.

Avoid using the Mic as a pointer

Avoid rustling papers near the Mic

**Everyone tends to appreciate and benefit from these communication techniques which are an extension of personal and professional courtesy.**

**Mary Chizuk 2012**