



Portsmouth Hospitals  
University  
NHS Trust

# Communication Tactics

## Audiology Department

### Specialist Support

This leaflet can be made available in another language, large print or another format. Please speak to a member of staff who can advise you

**Working together** To drive excellence in care for our patients and communities



When someone speaks, clues are gained from what we hear and what we see. You may be able to create a situation to maximise these clues.

- All hearing aids and devices are an **aid** to your hearing and are not a **fix** for any underlying hearing loss.
- Due to this, considerations need to be made for the best communication.
- When someone speaks, clues are gained from what we hear and what we see. Therefore, using these clues together can maximise communication in each situation.

## Environment considerations to maximise listening

- Reduce background noise wherever possible by moving further away from any sound sources.
  - Consider moving away from sound sources such as speakers playing music or kitchens where noise may be coming from.
  - In the home consider turning off the television or radio.
  - If you are in a seated environment such as in a restaurant or cafe then request or seat yourself at a table to the outer edge of the room, so you are not placed in the middle of the room and background noise.
  - If possible, seat yourself with your back towards the most noise and whoever you would like to converse with in front of you with their back towards a wall. This will maximise the effectiveness for separating out as much noise from the speech as possible.
- Communicate in rooms with softer furnishings such as living rooms as this will absorb sound and reduce echo.
- Ensure the room is well lit so you can clearly see the speaker's face to increase lip-reading or in public places sit near a window or light.

- Sitting 1 - 2 metres from the speaker is ideal for lip-reading.
- Communication from different rooms or when the speaker is faced away will not be ideal even when using hearing aids. As these will not be able to amplify speech when the sound source is coming through a wall or if not directed towards them.

## **What can I do to help myself follow conversation?**

- Ask other to face you and speak clearly when communicating.
- Don't be afraid to advise people that you communicate with, who are not already aware, that you have a hearing loss and what they can do to help you. Also see overleaf for more advise and communication tactics for others.
- Watch the speaker's lips for additional cues.
- Make sure your eyesight has been recently checked or you are wearing appropriate glasses, so you do not strain your eyes and to help with lip-reading and visual cues for communication.
- You will lip-read better if you are relaxed so try not to become too tense, anxious, tired or stressed, particularly if you have misheard or do not hear something the first time. Ask the person to repeat what they have said and potentially rephrase this to assist you.
- You may find accessories or assistive listening devices useful for helping with your hearing in more challenging listening situations for example for hearing in background noise, the television or phone. Please contact the Audiology department so they can advise you on what devices may be appropriate for you with or without hearing aids.
- If you would like further advice or information on lip-reading classes or materials, please contact the Audiology department.



## What can other people do to help me follow conversations?

- When someone speaks, clues are gained from what is seen as well as what I heard. These clues compliment and reinforce each other, helping the person to piece together the conversation.
- For people with hearing impairment the visual cues of speech become very important.
- Simple actions on your part, such as the below, will help the visual cues of speech to be followed.
- Attract the person's attention before you begin to talk to them so they can hear the entire sentence and not miss the beginning of the conversation. This could be by a tap on the shoulder or saying their name before starting the conversation.
- Keep your face visible and ensure it is well lit to maximise lip-reading. Avoid hiding your lip movements behind your hands or other objects.
- Use natural hand gestures but do not exaggerate them as this can be distracting.
- Do not shout – speak clearly and not too fast. Shouting and over-mouthing will alter the lip pattern and speaking too slowly will alter the natural rhythm of speech.
- Try to make the subject of the conversation as clear as possible.
- Use full sentences rather than short phrases as these can be easier to understand.
- Be patient.
- Repeat or rephrase the sentence if necessary.



- Communicate in the same room and facing the person.  
Sound does not travel as well through walls, at a distance and around corners even when the person is using hearing aids





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# Notes:

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## Consent - What does this mean?

Before any doctor, nurse or therapist examines or treats you they **must** have your **consent** or permission.

Consent ranges from allowing a doctor to take your blood pressure (rolling up your sleeve and presenting your arm is implied consent) to signing a form saying you agree to the treatment or operation.

It is important **before** giving permission that you understand what you are agreeing to. **If you do not understand – ask.** More detailed information is available on request.

## How to comment on your treatment

We aim to provide the best possible service and if you have a question or a concern about your treatment then the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) are always happy to try to help you get answers you need. You can contact PALS on

**0800 917 6039** or E-mail:

**PHT.pals@porthosp.nhs.uk** who will contact the department concerned on your behalf.

## Data Protection Legislation – Privacy Notice

Further information on how we look after your personal information can be found on the Trust Information Governance webpage at [www.porthosp.nhs.uk](http://www.porthosp.nhs.uk) - or alternatively, please speak to a member of staff.

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Date: May 2018/March 2019/April 2021

Review: April 2023

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