

Basic Etiquette: People Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Hearing disability, hard of hearing, and deaf are not the same. Hearing disability refers to both persons who are hard of hearing and persons who are deaf

There are a wide range of hearing losses and communication methods. If you do not know the individuals preferred communication method, ASK.

things to know:

-Sign language is not another form of English; is an official language with its own grammar, context and rules.

-Not all persons who are deaf use sign language.

-Not all persons who are deaf write and read.

-To get the attention of a person with

a hearing loss, call his/her name. If there is no response, you can lightly touch him/her on the arm or shoulder, or wave your hand.

Deaf people appreciate the efforts of hearing people to learn the use of sign language.

A deaf person will understand a hearing person's message even with mistakes, just as a hearing person will usually understand the spoken message of a person just learning.

IT IS OK TO USE THE TERMS THE DEAF OR DEAF PERSON. THIS IS AN EXCEPTION TO THE PERSON-FIRST LANGUAGE RULE.

Things to Do:

-Find out how the person best communicates .

-If an interpreter is used, address the person not the interpreter.

-If the person reads lips, speak in a normal, not exaggerated way.

-short simple sentences are best.

Things to avoid:

-Do not become impatient if it takes longer to communicate.

-Make sure there are no physical barriers between you and the person while in conversation.

Four Top Tips:

1- Deaf Community Tells Where They're Going

One of the strangest things some people encounter when being in an area where the Deaf community is strong, is that they announce where they're going. It isn't about being obnoxious, but being polite. Deaf people cannot hear you leaving the room.-.

2- Eye Contact in the Deaf Community

If talking to a Deaf person, it is considered rude not to make eye contact. Deaf people do not hear with their ears, they hear with their eyes. Everything on your face is important to people in the Deaf community, including facial expressions.

3- Excuse Me? Excuse You!

When two hearing people are standing around talking and somebody says "Excuse me" and walks between the two people having a conversation, that is fine. However, for a Deaf person, that is considered interrupting and is rude. We Deaf people do not always understand etiquette that is practiced in other

4- Never Call Someone "Hearing Impaired"

No matter what kind of hearing loss a person has, do not call them hearing impaired. It is polite to ask them how they identify themselves. Questions are welcomed and assumptions are not. Labels for any kind of disability especially the Deaf, are difficult and very confusing so that's something for another time!

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