

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

- Be assertive. Tell others that you have a hearing loss and let them know the best way to communicate with you (e.g., speak slower, look directly at you, etc.)
- Let people know that you have a hearing loss so they don't think you are simply ignoring them if you don't respond. Ask them to get your attention, then repeat the question.
- Keep background noise to a minimum. For example, turn down the radio or television and avoid fans or running water during conversations.
- Move closer to the person speaking.
- In large groups, try to position yourself in the center. At large gatherings such as places of worship or lectures, sit at the front of the room. Use an assistive listening device if available.
- Practice speech reading. This involves more than just reading lips and includes watching facial expressions and body movements.
- Position yourself so you can see the speaker.
- Listen for context and key words and phrases.
- Ask people to rephrase the statement if you don't understand what is being said instead of simply asking "what?".

## **Tips for Better Listening in a Restaurant**

- Choose a quiet restaurant. Some restaurants are deliberately noisy, so scouting around your community for quieter restaurants can help. Also, dining in the off hours can improve a restaurant listening situation. Instead of eating at the popular meal time, try eating earlier or later to avoid the rush and excessive noise.
- Choose a restaurant with optimal lighting. Dimly lit restaurants can darken faces and therefore mask important visual cues. If a dimly lit situation is unavoidable, request to be seated near a window in the daytime or nearest to lighting. In restaurants using candlelight, move the candle away from your direct line of sight (your eyes will naturally adapt to the light and darken the person's face in front of you) and towards the side of the table. If possible, ask for extra candles to line the sides of the table for additional lighting.
- Choose or request a table away from the kitchen and closest to a wall, away from the center of the room. Avoid seating near the main door, cash register, wait station, and buffet line if applicable. Booths are quieter than tables so if there is a choice, choose a booth.
- If possible, position yourself at the table with your back to the majority of the room, facing a wall.