

Better Communication Matters

Places, Plans, and Partnership

Better PLACES for conversations are:

- Quiet and calm
- Well lit, but no glare from sunlight
- Away from noise sources such as kitchens, televisions, or music
- Helped by sound-absorbing surfaces

Better PLANS encourage communication partners to:

- Anticipate difficult listening situations and proactively minimize challenges
- Stand or sit closer or directly across from each other
- Provide context for understanding by previewing discussion topics
- Learn from each other and set realistic expectations

Better COMMUNICATION PARTNERS practice these Top 5 Communication Points:



LISTENERS

1 Establish positive communication partnership and mutual understanding

- Are open and honest about hearing abilities
- Focus on working through constructive challenges
- Consistently use properly fit amplification devices as expertly advised

2 Work well together, as better communication is a 2-way street

- Avoid saying "what?" or "huh?"
- Repeat back what they heard
- Confirm not just hearing, but understanding of what was said

3 Problem solve and provide moral support

- Think about how to improve communication abilities
- Politely make specific suggestions that will be helpful
- Positively reinforce when speaker does their best

4 Benefit from eye contact and visual and audio cues

- Directly face speakers and pay careful attention
- Closely observe speaker's eyes, facial expressions, and lip movements
- Carefully interpret body language and gestures

5 Practice patience and strive for continuous improvement

- Are patient with themselves, family, friends, and in all daily communications
- Maintain a positive attitude
- Practice helpful hints daily and learn from experience

SPEAKERS



- Talk one at a time, so the sound source is easily identified
- Enunciate clearly and a little bit slower, *without* exaggerating mouth movements
- Pause between phrases to allow listeners to more effectively process

- Wait and watch before responding, as saying "what?" can be a habit
- Confirm what part of their message was not well heard or clearly understood
- Patiently repeat what they said once, then rephrase as necessary.

- Get listener's attention by first saying their name
- Apply helpful suggestions and talk in a natural voice
- Positively reinforce when listener does their best

- Directly face listeners and look for signs of uncertainty
- Do not cover mouth or face with any objects, including hands
- Do not speak loudly, as yelling distorts words and can be negatively perceived

- Are patient and respectful of those with hearing challenges
- Are kind, caring, and thoughtful with listeners
- Strive to be the best communication partners they can