

# Ensuring Effective Communication With Your Customers

Deaf	Hard of Hearing	Late Deafened
<p>Primary method of communication is visual, usually sign language but may include other devices/strategies</p> <p><b>Hearing loss not relevant</b> May not use their voice to speak</p>	<p>Primary Method of communication is auditory and may include other devices/strategies</p>	<p>Primary method of communication are visual cues, such as speechreading, reading text, and sometimes sign language</p> <p><b>Hearing loss is relevant</b> Will use their voice to speak</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication strategies help them interact with the mainstream of society</li> <li>• Fragmented acoustic messages are experienced with or without amplification               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speech discrimination issues abound</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		
<p>Hearing loss “MAY” identify them as deaf</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Those who grew up in the deaf community feel a sense of belonging and identity Acceptance of cultural values of the deaf community</li> <li>• Those who were mainstreamed or possibly more isolated may or may not feel that same connection to the deaf community</li> <li>• Most often use ASL / sign language and/or other accommodations</li> </ul>	<p>Hearing loss <b>does not</b> identify them as deaf. General preference is to be called hard of hearing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try to fit in and sometimes can’t because of communication challenges</li> <li>• Focus is on technology</li> <li>• Accommodations may be simple low or no cost fixes</li> </ul>	<p>Hearing loss <b>may or may not</b> identify them as deaf</p>

## Getting Their Attention

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not throw things</li> <li>• Door bell flasher at desk</li> <li>• <b>May not</b> be able to lipread/speechread</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get their attention before speaking</li> <li>• Don’t talk too fast</li> <li>• <b>May</b> be able to lipread/speechread</li> </ul>
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## Things to Remember

<p>Watch facial expression and body language for frustration – may mean lack of communication</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accept the fact initial communications will feel uncomfortable</li> <li>• Deaf people value face-to-face communications</li> <li>• Deaf people may create “noise” to get your attention</li> <li>• In communication, it is okay to use gesture, body language and facial expression</li> <li>• ASL is not English</li> <li>• If you try to communicate in writing, keep it simple and without double meaning</li> <li>• When using an interpreter speak directly to the deaf person and make eye contact with the deaf person</li> <li>• Only one person should speak at a time in a group setting</li> <li>• May head nod, “yes,” when they may not understand</li> <li>• Frustration may look like anger</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May say, “yes,” when they may not understand</li> <li>• May not disclose disability until necessary – may bluff</li> </ul> <p><b>A Few Communication Tips</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be patient</li> <li>• Get the persons attention</li> <li>• Avoid standing in front of bright windows</li> <li>• Avoid noisy backgrounds</li> <li>• Speak clearly at a normal pace, don’t shout</li> <li>• Introduce one fact at a time</li> <li>• Only one person should talk at a time in a group setting</li> <li>• If not understood, rephrase your message</li> <li>• Just because the person wears a hearing aid does not mean they understand you</li> </ul>