



## Communication Tips

### How to Communicate with a Person who has a Hearing Loss

#### **For one-to-one meetings with a person who has a hearing loss:**

- Provide background information on the topic to be discussed in writing in advance.
- Background noise, music, cross-conversations, reverberation, and distance from the speaker all contribute to a difficult listening environment. Ask what can be done to make hearing easier.
- Face the person with hearing loss and make sure the lighting is even and that you are not backlit to allow speechreading (lipreading) to augment his or her hearing.
- Speak clearly at a moderate pace.
- Don't shout: shouting distorts your voice and increases the tension level.
- Try not to cover your mouth with your hand or a pencil or chew food or gum while talking.
- Rephrase, rather than repeat, misunderstood words; make written note of essential information.

#### **For group meetings that include people with hearing loss:**

- Provide agenda items, names of attendees and supporting materials in writing in advance.
- Provide seating so that the person with hearing loss has his or her back to any windows and sits as close to the main speaker as possible.
- If assistive listening devices (ALD's) are being used, ensure that participants use them effectively, that is, that no one speaks until recognized and speaks directly into the ALD's microphone. If CART is provided, reserve seating for the person with hearing loss together with the CART writer.
- If on a teleconference, ensure that participants speak one at a time, identify themselves before speaking, and use the handset instead of a speakerphone to reduce background noise or other interference.
- Remote CART should be booked well in advance to provide live, text versions of telephone calls; WebCapTel is another option, as long as the person with hearing loss has registered in advance.