

## TIPS FOR BETTER COMMUNICATION

**H**earing loss can often cause problems when a person tries to understand what others say to him/her. Hearing aids and other such devices, together with speech reading (lip reading), can help them understand spoken language better. In addition to this, certain tips/strategies can be used to make communication easier. These strategies/ tips are of two types:

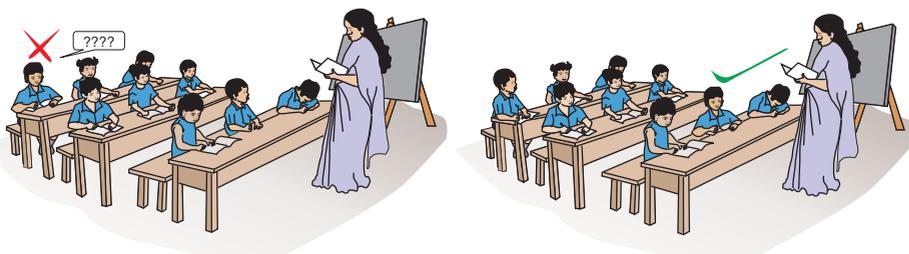
### ANTICIPATORY STRATEGIES

This involves preparing oneself for problems that may arise in communication, and planning ahead to avoid them

#### 1. Talk about your problem

Politely inform the speaker about your problem, and tell them you need to watch them to understand better

#### 2. Select appropriate seating



Arrive early for classes, lectures and meetings, and choose a good seat near the speaker. Avoid corner seats.

#### 3. Adequate lighting

Try to position yourself such that the light source is behind you, and not behind the speaker.

#### 4. Avoid noisy situations



Avoid sources of noise while communicating by:

- Choosing seats in a quiet corner
- Avoiding conversation in crowded places

#### 5. Anticipate vocabulary/conversation

Practice the possible words that might arise in a situation. Think ahead about what questions could be asked. Prepare answers beforehand

#### 6. Request for speaking naturally

Moving the mouth too much makes speech reading difficult. Ask the speakers to speak as normally as possible

#### 7. Request for clues about the topic

When you are talking in a group, you may have difficulty in following the topic, or you may miss out on some information. In such situations,

- Ask one person to give you a clue when the topic changes
  - Ask group members to speak one after another
  - Ask group members to signal before speaking
- Ask for notes beforehand, if the discussion is form

#### 8. Be informed



Update yourself on current events, happenings in your neighbourhood and your friends' interests. This will help you understand what people will be talking about most often.

### REPAIR STRATEGIES

These are usually used when anticipatory strategies do not help in better communication. They are used when communication has already failed.

#### 1. Repetition

Your request for repetition must always be polite. Always say 'please' before the request. Avoid saying "what?" or "huh?" Instead, you may ask the speaker to:

- Repeat part of the message
- Repeat the keyword. If the speaker repeats the main word, you can understand the whole sentence
- Repeat the whole message



#### 2. Speak slower

Speaking slowly makes speech reading easier. It may also reduce head movements and avoid excessive facial expressions.

#### 3. Speak louder

If the speaker is speaking too softly, politely ask them to speak louder.

#### 4. Rephrase or simplify

Politely ask the speaker to say the sentence in a different way. This is especially useful if the speaker is using technical terms you do not understand.

#### 5. Seek clarification

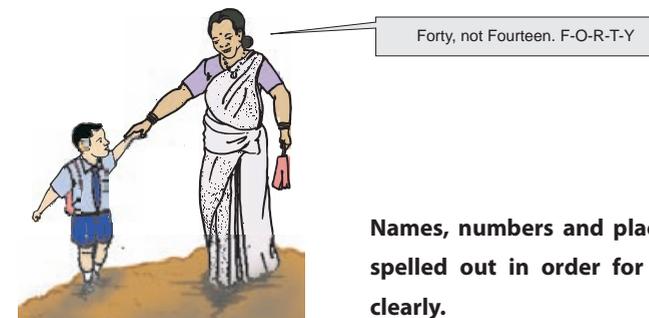
Clarify or confirm what the other person said.



#### 6. Summarize/brief about a message

This helps clarify the correctness of the message.

#### 7. Spell



Names, numbers and places may need to be spelled out in order for you to understand clearly.

## 8. Remove visual distractions



Speaking with objects (EG: paan, beedi, cigar, pipe, chewing gum, etc) in the mouth results in poor understanding of speech. Politely ask the speaker to speak after removing the object from their mouth.

## 9. Pointing to subject matter



The speaker can be asked to point to a related object/ refer to a picture about which he/she is talking.

## 10. Writing



Use this only if other strategies fail. Use writing to get directions, numbers, names, appointment times, dates, bus/train timings, etc. Carry writing material with you. Keep the written messages short and to-the-point.

## 11. Sign language/gestures/finger spelling



If you use any of the above in order to communicate, ask the speaker if they know sign language or finger spelling, and explain that signing would help you understand better. You can also ask the speaker to use gestures.

Initially, use the strategies mentioned first. If those fail, use the later ones. Any strategy that aids in better and faster communication should be chosen. Remember:

- Be honest about your hearing loss
- Be positive about asking for help
- Keep the communication flowing



If you have any questions/comments, or need any help, feel free to contact us:

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