

### Communication Strategies

For someone with hearing loss, understanding speech can be a difficult task. Communication breakdown may occur which can cause frustration, exhaustion, depression, and lead to isolation. To overcome the barriers hearing loss poses to communication, various strategies may be employed. Strategies that can be used by friends and family to assist with communication include:

- **Face the person when speaking.** This helps provide visual cues such as facial expressions, gestures, and lip reading that aids in understanding.
- **Speak clearly and naturally.** Avoid covering your mouth/face, speaking at a loud volume which can distort sounds, and over articulating/ exaggerating speech.
- **Eliminate background noise.** Reduce the volume of the television or radio, move to a quieter environment, etc.
- **Capture attention.** Before starting a conversation or asking a question, say the person's name or touch their arm/shoulder. This way he/she will be prepared to listen and be less likely to miss anything that is said.
- **Alert to any topic changes.** When switching topics, identify the new subject before beginning the conversation.
- **Revise, don't repeat.** When a hearing impaired person indicates misunderstanding, rephrase what was said. This gives more information to the hearing impaired person to improve chances for understanding.

Strategies that can be used by the hearing impaired person when seeking to identify missed information include:

- **Repeat what you understood.** The speaker may then clarify any errors.
- **Clarify by repeating key words.** Example: "You said something about a fence?" "Yes, I am putting in a new fence for my dog."
- **Ask a specific question.** Example: "Where did you say my glasses are?"
- **Request a confirmation.** Example: "My glasses are on the table?"
- **Request for rephrasing.** Example: "Please say that in a different way."
- **Request a specific repetition.** "My glasses are what?"
- **BE ASSERTIVE.** Make your conversational partner aware of your hearing loss, do not be shy to ask them to repeat, speak more clearly, or to face you. Speak out and identify to your partner what he/she may do to assist with successful communication.