

Fact Sheet

Communication

1. Don't be afraid to ask

Ask the deaf person how they would like to communicate and don't just assume. There are a variety of ways to communicate and the person will tell you what works best for them. To get things started try communicating through basic gestures or use a pen and notepad.

2. Face to face communication

Communication with a deaf person will be enhanced if you ensure that you are standing where they can clearly see your face. Speak clearly without shouting, and with normal inflection and timing.

3. Use touch to gain attention

Attract the deaf person's attention before speaking to them or else they may not realise you are talking to them. A tap on the shoulder or a wave is acceptable.

4. Display information visually

Display information visually wherever possible, such as whiteboards, written notes, electronic signs, use of laptops and so on.

5. The importance of light

Always try and maintain a well lighted environment and use lights (flash on and off) to gain a deaf person's attention, particularly when communicating with a large audience.

6. Confirm that your message is understood

If a deaf person does not reply or seems to have difficulty in understanding, rephrase what you just said before moving on. A deaf person will usually confirm they understand what you are saying by a nod of the head and conversely you should do the same.

7. Learn Australian Sign Language (Auslan)

There are a range of courses and educational material available to help you learn Auslan.