

Tips for Communicating with Patients with Hearing Loss

General Strategies



- Ask the patient the best way to communicate with them
- Talk to the patient, not the family members
- Support the availability and use of visual communication cues: facial expressions, lip reading, body language, gestures

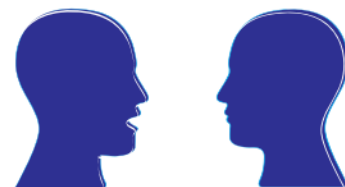
Environment Set-Up

- Minimize background noise
 - Turn down music/TV playing in the clinic
 - Move to empty area of the gym or private treatment room
- Ensure adequate lighting so patients can see your face for visual cues



Your Location

- 3-6 feet away to maximize audibility
- Face patient directly, adjust your positioning so you are at their eye level
- Don't lean in and speak directly into their ear
 - They can't see face and it distorts sound
- Don't turn your head while speaking. Beware of tendency to multi-task!



When You Speak

- Secure patient's attention and eye contact before speaking (say name, wave, light tap)
- State the topic of the conversation so the patient can orient themselves if they miss various words throughout
- Don't chew food or cover your mouth while speaking
- Speak slowly and use short, simple sentences
 - Be concise!
- Speak slightly louder and with lower pitch/frequency of voice
 - Do not shout (distorts sound)
- If a patient doesn't understand you, rephrase rather than repeat the same words



Patient Education

- Avoid complex, multistep verbal instructions
- Demonstrate exercises and activities, but NOT at the same time as verbal instructions
- HEP: Write it down (especially modifications, sets/reps!) Use pictures!
- Check for patient understanding often
- Use the teach back method to ensure understanding



Images Reference:

1. Louder Than Words. Good Workplace Communication Tips. https://louderthanwords.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/A1325_W4C_Comms_Tips_A4_1019_poster.pdf. Accessed April 10, 2021.