



## Hard of Hearing

### How to Talk on the Phone or Video Call to a Person who is Hard of Hearing

**Speak Directly into Mouthpiece (Phone/Wireless):** Avoid having the microphone too close or too far from your mouth. Do not use the speaker phone. Both lead to voice distortion and clarity is lost.

**Speak at a Normal Pace, with Good Volume:** Talking too fast will make it difficult to follow the conversation. Talking too slow, overenunciating, or yelling can distort your speech.

**Be Flexible with Adaptations:** When being made aware of a caller's hearing loss, try increasing the volume of your voice in increments until understood. Focus on talking clearly without yelling. Ask the caller for feedback about communication and plan to revise if needed.

**Rephrase if Needed and Ask for Clarification:** If the person has difficulty understanding a specific word or phrase, use a different word or phrase to say the same thing. Ask the listener to repeat your instructions to ensure they heard accurately.

**Avoid Using Complex Terminology:** Use everyday words, sentences, and phrases as much as possible. If complex terminology is unavoidable, ask the person to repeat what was said to ensure understanding.

**Introduce Topics of Conversation:** Introduce the person to the general topic of the conversation you are covering, such as, "Now we will talk about the medication you are taking." A short pause between conversational topics will signal a new topic is coming.

**Follow Up:** Send a summary of the conversation and instructions by email, text, or mail. The sooner received, the more effective it will be.

**Accept Relay Calls:** People with hearing loss sometimes depend on relay services to make phone calls. At the beginning of the call, there will be a moment of silence while the relay operator connects. Don't assume that a several second delay is a solicitation call.

**Successful Communication Takes Patience:** Following the above tips and exercising patience will reduce strain on everyone's part.

*For further information related to accommodations for your callers, you can reach out to DSDHH at [www.ncdhhs.gov/dsdhh](http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dsdhh) or (919) 527-6930.*



NATIONAL CONSORTIUM OF  
**TELEHEALTH**  
RESOURCE CENTERS

This document was developed through a collaborative process involving the National Consortium of Telehealth Resource Centers.

