



# Disability Etiquette

## Communicating with People who are Deaf or hard of hearing

Disability etiquette is a courteous and respectful way of communicating and interacting with people with disabilities.



### What to Know

People who have no functional hearing are considered either Deaf (upper case D), or deaf (lower case d); people who do have some functional hearing are considered hard of hearing.

Remember that not all D/deaf individuals can lip-read. For those who can, lip reading is only effective roughly 50% of the time, with the remainder understood through context.



### What to Say

Speak naturally, in a normal tone of voice and in a clear and expressive manner.

Talk directly to the person who is deaf or hard of hearing, not the interpreter.

Pause occasionally. If you are speaking through an interpreter, remember that the interpreter may lag a few words behind.

If you don't understand, ask the person to repeat what she/he said or to write it down.



### What to do

Reduce background noise as much as you can.

Make sure you have the person's attention before you start to speak.

Keep hands and other objects away from your mouth.

Face the person directly and maintain eye contact.