



TIPS FOR IMPROVING UNDERSTANDING IN LECTURES, MEETING HALLS AND OTHER EVENTS

Just because you use the most advanced hearing instruments and assistive technology does not necessarily mean that you will enjoy completely successful communication. How well you do will depend upon your own hearing characteristics as well as how well you employ communication strategies.

Here are some tips that you can use to improve your one-to-one and group communication as well as your ability to understand in large lecture halls, meetings, dinners, and theaters. Many of these strategies also apply in your daily life at home and at work.

- Make sure your hearing instruments are working and you know how to couple (connect) to whatever assistive listening system is being used. For more information, review the "Step-by-Step Guide for Using Large Area Wireless Systems."
- Request accommodations (interpreters, CART, movie captioning, loop, FM or IR systems, note-takers, etc) in advance.
- Arrive early to select the most favorable seat and to talk with the presenter in advance about how to use the ALD provided. If you are attending a performance or a movie, arrive early to borrow the receiver you need and receive instructions on how to use it (if you are using telecoil-equipped hearing aids or cochlear implants and that the facility has a loop system, then you can simply use your hearing instrument telecoils as the receivers).
- Sit as close as possible to the person talking so that you can clearly see their face (speechreading). In large lecture halls equipped with video screens, position yourself so that you can see the person on the screen.
- At a lecture, ask the presenter to repeat any questions from the audience members before answering them. Make sure he or she uses a microphone when doing so.
- If someone is presenting a slide show, be sure that there is sufficient light on the presenter's face so that you can see what he or she is saying, but not too much to interfere with seeing the slides.
- If the presentation has a recorded script or music, make sure that is also sent through the assistive listening system so that you do not miss out on anything.
- Ensure that the lighting in the room makes it easy to see this person's face. (The light should not be shining in your eyes.)
- Make sure rules for communication are followed:
 - One person speaks at a time.
 - A new topic is not started until the current topic is finished.
 - All speakers use a microphone and use it correctly.

- Keep microphone close to mouth but not too close as it will cause distortion.
 - If a speaker says he or she has a loud voice and does not need a microphone, do NOT accept that comment. In rooms with reverberation, talking louder will not help.
- If attending a meeting:
 - Prepare an agenda and adhere to it.
 - Make the outcome/goal of the meeting clear.
 - Choose a time when the meeting will end.
 - Assign a moderator to keep the meeting running on schedule and to stop a discussion if people need to be reminded of the rules listed in outcome/goal of the meeting.
 - See if you can always meet in the same room so that you can set it up to your liking with regard to assistive technology, lighting (be sure lighting is good so you can see others' faces), room acoustics (quiet and echo-free).
 - Secure a note-taker, computer assisted note-taking (CAN), or captioning (Communication Access Real-time Translation/CART) if necessary.
 - If attending luncheon and dinner banquets:
 - Be sure that each presenter uses a microphone and that an assistive listening device is used (and that you have the proper receiver and coupling method).
 - Ask the presenter to repeat any questions from the audience before answering them.
 - When it's time to chat at the table, it's easiest if you bring your own ALD. In a noisy room a pressure zone microphone in the middle of the table will not work very well and it might be better to ask people to pass your FM transmitter around. There are also 2.4 GHz wireless systems that allow multiple microphones to be used so that you can hear three other people without having to pass around a microphone.
 - If there are several microphones amidst the audience where audience members can walk up to the microphones and ask questions, make sure they use them. If this is not possible, see if you can ask someone in the audience to use your personal FM microphone/transmitter to repeat audience questions to you through your FM system. Or simply ask the meeting facilitator to repeat the audience questions and comments through the microphone.
 - Instruct people to raise their hands to ask a question or to stand up when asking a question (helpful for speechreading).
 - If you don't understand something: Say something! But don't just say "what?" Repeat what you DID hear and ask the person to repeat what you did not.
 - If you still do not understand, ask the person to repeat it or to rephrase (reword, expand, or summarize – some words are more easily understood than others).

- Be sure that the talker speaks clearly and naturally and does not shout or exaggerate mouth movements.
- Ask the talker to spell key words or to say each digit individually.
- Confirm important points or facts by saying them back to the talker to be sure you received them correctly.
- Be sure that the conversation is not occurring amidst noise. If it is, then try to move yourself and the talker to a quieter area.

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