

TIPS for Teens/Young Adults

Words of Wisdom

- Be proud of who you are - the only thing that will hold you back is yourself if you allow it.
- Be honest with yourself - knowing your strengths and limitations can help you advocate for what you need.
- Maintain a sense of humor and balance in everything you do.
- Seek information about your hearing loss and what you can do to maximize your communication skills.
- Understand your communication and technology options.
- Develop a set of strategies to help you when communication breakdowns occur.
- Let people know your preferred mode of communication - misconceptions and assumptions can only lead to frustration and communication breakdowns.
- Understand and use your legal rights to help you obtain what you need to be successful.
- Develop knowledge of where you can get support (e.g., financial, emotional, educational, occupational) if and when it is needed.
- Develop a support system.

Finding Services after High School

Locating an Audiologist or New CI center after Leaving Home

Once you graduate from high school and decide where you are going to live or go to college, it is important to consider whether or not your current audiologist or cochlear implant center is within a reasonable driving distance. If you are staying local, you are in luck and can resume the services that you have. If you are moving a great distance, or out of state, it is necessary to locate a new audiologist or cochlear implant center.

Why? Even though you leave for college with working equipment, there is no guarantee that your equipment will not break down. It is best to get established with a new, local audiologist immediately so that you can have your personal hearing aids or cochlear implant serviced.

One way to locate a new audiologist is to find out if the college that you are attending has an audiology program. If so, you may be able to receive services on campus. If the college does not offer a program, you can locate an audiologist by researching the local yellow pages or searching websites. The American Academy of Audiology (AAA) has a website link that lets you find a licensed audiologist by city and state.webportal.audiology.org/Custom/FindAnAudiologist.aspx. In addition the American Speech and Hearing Association (ASHA) has a link to finding a certified audiologist by city and state. <http://www.asha.org/proserv/>

If you have a cochlear implant, ask your current cochlear implant center audiologist if they are aware of centers in the area that you are planning on moving or attending college. Another option is to contact the cochlear implant manufacturer and ask for contact information for cochlear implant centers for that area.

Locating Interpreter and Captioning Resources

If you are going to college you need to register with the Office of Accessibility/Disability in order to request sign language interpreting, captioning, or other support services. Documentation of your hearing loss will be required.

If you need a sign language interpreter for a medical, legal, or other service appointment, make sure that you indicate this when you schedule the appointment. Depending on the size of the office, these services may or may not be provided. If the office does not provide the service you may need to seek support through a local community disability agency. It is also a good idea to research on the internet the sign language and other services that are available in the area that you are moving to.

If you need a sign language interpreter for a job interview or job training, make sure you indicate this accommodation at the time you schedule the appointment. Most employment settings must provide the requested accommodations unless they meet the hardship criteria under ADA

Documentation of Important Information

It is difficult to remember when your hearing aids were last tested, what the results were, what type and model of technology you are currently wearing and what the warranties are. To keep all of this information together, start a notebook with all of your documentation. Purchase an inexpensive 3 ring binder with tabs to organize all of your information. Some ideas of sections (tabs) that you would want to organize include:

- **Contact information** of audiologists, ear specialists, interpreters, your Vocational Rehabilitation counselor, agencies and any other specialists. Include their names, address, phone number, and fax number.
- Your **audiograms and test results**. It is important to have a record of all of your hearing test results so that the next professional that works with you can understand if your hearing loss has remained stable, fluctuated, or is progressing. If you have copies of CI mappings, include those in this section.
- A record of your **hearing aid or CI model** including manufacturer warranties. If you have purchased hearing assistance technology, keep your model, purchase and warranty information in this section too. It is a good idea to keep your all of your receipts in case you need to return a defective unit.
- Copies of your **educational records**. The IEP (Individualized Education Plan), 504 plan, ITP (Individual Training Plan), or IPE (Individual Plan for Employment) should be kept in this section. If you filled out the Personal Profile and Accommodations Letter, print it out and keep in this section.
- Any **other information** that relates to your hearing loss and accommodations that you may need.

Tips for the Hearing Person

If you're a hearing person speaking with someone with a hearing loss, consider these tips:

1. Get the person's attention before you speak.
2. Do not put obstacles in front of your face. This includes coffee cups, hands, pencils, etc.
3. Do not have things in your mouth. This includes gum, candy, cigarettes, etc.

4. Speak clearly and at a moderate pace. Speak slowly, but naturally. Do not shout.
 5. Use facial expressions, gestures, mimes, and whatever else helps make your message visible.
 6. If you are not understood, try to say the same thing using different words. If that doesn't work, writing a few key words may help the person with hearing loss understand.
 7. If that doesn't work, write the whole sentence.
 8. When you change the subject, be sure the person with hearing loss knows what the new subject is.
 9. Do not stand with your back to a source of light.
 10. When in doubt, ask the person with hearing loss what you can do to improve communications!
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Tips for the Person with Hearing Loss

When communicating with a hearing person, consider these tips:

1. Pick an appropriate place to communicate; look for good lighting, limited background noise, and few distractions.
2. Anticipate difficult situations and enter them with an appropriate strategy. This includes trying to anticipate what terms might be used, what questions you might be asked, and communications to succeed.
3. Tell the hearing person how to best communicate with you. The person will appreciate knowing what to do.
4. Ask for rephrasing and written key words if you do not understand what is said.
5. If you don't understand something, be as specific as you can explaining what you missed. Say something like: "I understood everything up to the name of the street."
6. Try to arrange breaks if the conversation or meeting is long.
7. If you discover you've said something that doesn't fit the conversation (and you will), use humor to make everyone (including yourself) feel at ease. This doesn't mean you should make fun of yourself, but that you recognize the situation is amusing.
8. Don't monopolize the conversation; it is boring for everyone.

If it's just not working, arrange to try again when the probability of success is better, perhaps in a different environment or when you're less tired.

9. Do not bluff! If the conversation is important enough for you to participate, it's important enough for everyone to know communication.
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