CCAC

Providing Services and Programming for Guests Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

**Tips for Communicating with Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Individuals:**

1. Make eye contact – it is harder to lipread when you’re not able to see the person’s face. Lipreading takes in cues from the entire face and also body language.
2. Don’t over enunciate (it makes it harder to lipread).
3. If the person doesn’t understand what you’re saying, rephrase by saying the same thing using different words.
4. Be aware of lighting and space: it is more difficult to lipread in dark spaces or if there is light behind you making it difficult to see your face, and if there are objects blocking a clear view (think large centerpieces at wedding seating).
5. Be aware of acoustics for those that rely on hearing aids, cochlear implants, etc. – quiet spaces are easier to hear and carry on a conversation than spaces with a lot of background noise.
6. It can be helpful to write down what you are saying – if someone is asking to communicate by writing, grab paper and pen.
7. Knowing the ABCs in American Sign Language will come in handy.
8. All individuals with hearing loss have distinct life experiences.
9. Identity is personal: A Culturally Deaf person may have a different sense of identity than someone who identifies as speaking deaf, hard of hearing or late deafened.
10. The phrase “hearing impaired” is no longer in vogue and considered politically incorrect. Acceptable: Deaf, deaf, hard of hearing, deaf and/or hard of hearing, late deafened, individual with hearing loss.
11. Don’t assume that all individuals with hearing loss know sign language. Some do not identify or associate with the signing deaf community (and may be offended if you sign to them).
12. In group conversations, it is hard to catch what everyone is saying. Inappropriate responses include: “never mind”, “I’ll tell you later”, “it’s not important” or worse, to stop talking altogether. If you are asked to repeat what is said, be courteous and repeat what was said.

Good example of experience of lipreading in group setting on YouTube:

“Deaf Awareness: Face Me When You Talk” (1 min, 23 sec video)

**American Sign Language Apps available through iTunes:**

iASL

ASL Pro

ASL Dictionary

Sign 4 Me

Signing Time Lite ASL

**Books:**

The Unheard by Josh Swiller

Swiller writes about coming to terms with his deafness while serving in the Peace Corps in Africa.

Neither Nor by Paul Jacobs

<http://gupress.gallaudet.edu/bookpage/NNbookpage.html>  (also listed on Amazon)

Jacobs is an Australian deaf man and writes about being caught in two different worlds.

I’ll Scream Later by Marlee Matlin, first deaf actress to win Academy Award. (Amazon)

The Feel of Silence by Bonnie Tucker

Tucker writes about her experience as one of the first deaf women to attend law school.

What's that Pig Outdoors by Henry Kisor

Train Go Sorry by Leah Hager Cohen, a child of deaf adults.

Reading Between the Lips by Lew Golan

**Documentary Films:**

-Sound and Fury, <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/soundandfury/index.html> (note – good list of additional resources on this site). A sequel was made titled, Sound and Fury: Six Years Later

-See What I'm Saying, http://www.seewhatimsayingmovie.com

-Through Deaf Eyes, http://www.pbs.org/weta/throughdeafeyes/about/

**Television and Movies:**

Switched at Birth, currently on ABC Family, stars several actors and actresses with hearing loss.

Project Runway, Season 12, especially final episodes. This season featured Justin LeBlanc, a deaf designer who wears a cochlear implant and his final collection was inspired by his cochlear implant experience.

Children of a Lesser God, Academy Award winning movie for which Marlee Matlin won an Oscar