

Importance of Effective Communication Between Deaf and Hearing Individuals

RS
Research
Summarized

Why are effective communication strategies so important?

Communication strategies can affect one's ability to initiate and engage in peer interaction and cope with social conflict.¹ Communication is a two-way, interactive process: deaf and hearing individuals need clear and accessible communication for successful learning and working relationships. Effective communication can facilitate the following outcomes:

- Positive relationships with peers, strengthened identity, and increased overall well-being.^{1,2,9}
- Increased ability to recognize different thoughts and emotions.^{1,3,4}
- Development of complex linguistic and social skills.^{5,6,4,7,8}
- Meaningful participation in education and workplace environments.

What are some strategies to support effective communication?

Communication breakdown occurs when individuals have difficulty conveying or understanding the intended message.¹⁴ Preferred communication choices may vary depending on the individual and context, including availability of technology and accommodations. The following are effective strategies to reduce the impact of communication breakdowns:

- Ask individuals for their preferred communication strategies in the specific context.
- Prepare for upcoming interactions by thinking of vocabulary and phrases the conversation partner will likely use and practice that terminology ahead of time.¹⁵
- Avoid changing topics abruptly, focusing instead on smooth topic shifts and use of visual cues.¹⁶
- Provide opportunities for each individual to make original contributions to a conversation.¹⁷
- Check for understanding during communication, asking your conversation partner to identify if aspects of the conversation are unclear.^{18,19}
- When asked for clarification, revise the wording of the original statement.²⁰

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