



## Hearing Impairments: Facilitating Communication

**According to the World Health Organization (WHO), one in every four individuals, or around 2.5 billion people, across the world will experience mild-to-profound hearing loss by 2050.**

Over the past decade, statistics have shown that the number of people with hearing problems in Canada has continued to grow and that these problems are affecting an increasingly young population.

In Quebec, it is estimated that there are roughly 7 million people between the ages of 20 and 100+. Of these, 31 % have a hearing

problem, and of those, only 13.5% are people over the age of 70. While these numbers are surprising, it is also true that partial or complete hearing loss is a normal consequence of aging.

In the following factsheet, you will find advice and recommendations to facilitate discussions and enrich communication with a companion who is hearing impaired.

**Little Brothers**



## Did you know?

According to Audition Québec, people with hearing loss significantly improve their comprehension when they are able to see the facial expressions of the person they are talking to. As a result of the pandemic, several types of transparent masks that allow people with hearing impairments to lip read are now available.

There are many factors that can lead to hearing loss including heredity, disease, trauma and certain health conditions. People who work in a noisy environment can develop occupational hearing loss. It can also be the result of an accident or an operation. Hearing loss can be diagnosed at birth or manifest itself later in life.



## Good practices

- Make sure you have the person's attention before speaking to them;
- Face the hearing-impaired person directly, on the same level, look at them while you speak;
- Check if their hearing aid is on;
- Eliminate background noise. For example: ask to turn down the volume of the television or radio;
- Speak clearly, slowly, distinctly, use different words rather than repeating;
- Use short sentences, make sure the person has heard correctly by asking questions;
- If necessary, place yourself beside the person's "good ear";
- Make gestures, write or draw;
- Reassure the person by remaining calm;
- Refer to specialists for appropriate help if necessary;
- Maintain a safe environment.

## Attitudes to adopt

- Keep in mind that your thoughtful and caring presence makes all the difference.
- As a volunteer, you are the eyes of the organization. Share your observations: your coordinator is there to gather information about the person's condition and offer you perspective and support to face the challenges of the relationship.
- As a caregiver, you are not alone: share your observations with professionals and people you trust. Get information about how to access appropriate support.
- Take care of your own well-being and consult specialists to establish a trustworthy network.



## Things to avoid

- Standing against the light;
- Speaking louder than usual;
- Speaking too quickly and not articulating properly;
- Showing signs of impatience.

## Additional resources

**Audition Québec** : 438 806-9011 ou [info@auditionquebec.org](mailto:info@auditionquebec.org)  
<https://auditionquebec.org/communication/>  
(in French only)

**Hear Quebec** : 514 488-5532, ext. 4500  
[info@hearhear.org](mailto:info@hearhear.org)

