**Do’s and Don’ts for Interacting with Deaf or Hard of Hearing People**

In life you may come across a Deaf or Hard of Hearing Person, here are some tips on interacting with them:

**Do’s**

* To get a Deaf person’s attention, tap them on the shoulder, gently wave in front of them, or flick the light switch.
* Do keep eye contact. Breaking eye contact implies you’re not paying attention and is rude.
* Do use facial expressions to help convey your message. Expressions and body language convey the message more clearly than the spoken message.
* Ask what’s their preferred method of communication; whether it’s pen and paper, texting, lipreading, or sign language with an interpreter.
* Do call us Deaf or Hard of Hearing, or whatever the person prefers.
* Do include the Deaf person in a group conversation.
* Do communicate in your usual way, if we do not understand you, we’ll let you know.
* Do treat us as a unique individual with our own personality, interests, and views.
* If two Deaf people are signing and you need to pass them, just walk through at a normal pace.
* If using an Interpreter, or Relay Service, do address the deaf person directly.
* Do ensure there’s enough lighting for them to see you well.
* Do be patient.

**Don’ts**

* Don’t yell or enunciate your words. Instead speak normally and clearly.
* Don’t chew, have something in your mouth, or put your hands in front of your face while talking.
* Don’t call us “Deaf and Dumb”, “Deaf-Mute”, or “Hearing Impaired”.
* Don’t say things like “Never Mind”, “I’ll tell you later” or “it’s not important” when the Deaf person misses the conversation.
* Don’t question why the Deaf person doesn’t have hearing aids or a cochlear implant. That’s a very personal decision and really not for you to know.
* Don’t communicate as if the Deaf person is also stupid. Just because they can’t hear doesn’t mean their brain doesn’t work.
* Don’t pigeonhole the Deaf person. “All Deaf people are the same” is not true at all.
* If two people are signing and you need to pass them, don’t duck down or move the person over.
* If using an Interpreter, or Relay Service, don’t say “tell them...”, “does he...”
* Don’t stand in front of a light source.
* Don’t say “I’m sorry” when you find out a person is Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

Information courtesy of Confessions of a Deafblind Mother www.deafblindconfessions.com