

Information on Hearing Loss
PSIA-RM-AASI Adaptive Snowboard 2012-2013
Information provided by Beth Fox of the National Sports Center for the Disabled
www.nscd.org

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Factors in Hearing Loss:

Intensity (loudness) – A person with normal hearing can hear sounds as soft as 0-15 dB.

Frequency (pitch) – Most people have more of a loss at some frequencies than others. High frequency loss is more common than low frequency. High frequencies have more impact on clarity of speech and sound than low frequencies. See written chart for letters according to frequency.

Auditory Processing Disorder – the structures of the ear system are in tact, but the ability of the brain to process the sound is affected. Sounds are processed in the brainstem. Hearing may be inconsistent and may vary from day to day. A person may have difficulty analyzing, understanding, remembering, and locating sounds, and choosing which sounds to listen to.

Environmental issues – hearing is also affected by the presence of noise and the distance from the source of the sound.

Impact of noise – important factor because it can interfere with intelligible speech. Noise is located in the higher frequencies and interferes with the frequencies found in the clarity of speech. A person with normal hearing can usually distinguish between noise and speech whereas a person who is hard of hearing may not be able to do this.

Diagnoses

CHARGE Syndrome – This condition includes coloboma (defect or lesion of the eye) (C), heart defect (H), blockage of the nasal passage (A), retarded growth and development (R), genital abnormalities (G), ear abnormalities and/or deafness (E).

Conductive Hearing Loss – a loss of hearing due to a blockage or malfunction of the middle ear (e.g. otitis media or ear infection)

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Cytomegalovirus (CMV) – A herpes type of virus, which occurs continuously in the population. Manifestations of this disease may be minimal (e.g. rash and fever) or severe (e.g. microcephaly, mental retardation, and profound sensorineural hearing loss).

Sensorineural Hearing Loss – This hearing loss occurs because of damage or a defect of the inner ear (cochlea or auditory nerve).

Usher's Syndrome – A condition that includes congenital deafness (moderate to severe sensorineural hearing loss) and progressive loss of vision.

Communication Tips

Remember that hearing loss decreases, sometimes drastically, a person's ability to receive information through sound. Therefore, people who are hard of hearing or deaf depend heavily on their eyes to understand what others are saying to them. It is vital that you take some simple, sensible steps to help them see what you say as clearly as possible.

Some Do's and Don'ts :
For those individuals with are Hard of Hearing or Hearing loss

Do be aware that even a small hearing loss can hamper a person's ability to understand what you say. / Don't assume that a hearing aid corrects hearing loss.

Do get the attention of the person who has deafness or hearing loss before you begin to speak, and / don't begin speaking without it. It is acceptable to tap a person lightly on the shoulder or arm or to wave a hand gently in the person's direction to capture his or her attention.

Do face the person with a hearing loss and maintain eye contact throughout the conversation. / Don't talk directly to an interpreter, but always to the person with the hearing loss.

Do stand close to a person who is deaf or hard of hearing. Don't let any object obstruct the person's view of you. / Don't, for example, talk while you describe another skier that you are watching.

Do make sure the person who is deaf can clearly see your mouth and face. / Don't chew gum, speak from behind a high collar or neck gator, or hold your hands in front of your mouth while you speak.

Do stand in a well-lighted place. / Don't stand with your back to a light source such as a lamp, window, or the sun. This can cause a person to look into glare or the shadow that is cast over your face and makes it difficult to see your mouth and facial expressions.

Do try to converse in a quiet place. / Don't assume that background noise makes no difference.

Do speak and enunciate clearly and normally, and / don't exaggerate your lip movements.

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Do use your voice, but don't shout. Many people who are hard of hearing or deaf can get some information through sound, but shouting distorts both the sound of the words and the lip movements.

Do use facial expression and body language to clarify your message. / Don't be embarrassed to be expressive.

Do be sensitive to whether the person with a hearing loss understands the message being conveyed or is just being polite and nodding without following what you are saying. / Don't assume that a bland expression implies that the person is catching your message.

Do write technical or difficult vocabulary or concepts on a note pad the first time you present them. / Don't assume that a person who is deaf or hard of hearing can process long or unusual words.

Do use a notepad and pencil or visual aids as necessary. / Don't be embarrassed about writing things down.

Do rephrase sentences that participants with deafness don't understand. / Don't just repeat the same words over and over in the same sequence.

Do use total communication of speech, sign, facial expression, body language, and gestures when communicating with people who are deaf or hard of hearing. / Don't assume that all folks with hearing loss read lips.

Do have fun and be yourself!