

8 TIPS for Improving Communication When Wearing A Face Covering

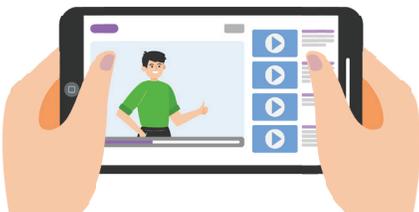
- 1 BE AWARE**
Is the person you're communicating with having trouble understanding you? Ask and adapt if needed.
- 2 BE PATIENT**
Face coverings block visual cues and muffle sounds that help us understand speech, which can make interactions frustrating.
- 3 BE MINDFUL**
Consider how physical distancing might affect your communication. As distance increases, sound levels decrease, and visual cues are more difficult to see.
- 4 BE LOUD AND CLEAR**
Speak up, but don't shout. Focus on speaking clearly. Consider wearing a clear face covering if possible. If you're having trouble understanding, ask the person you're talking with to speak louder. If you lip-read, ask those you interact with regularly to wear a clear face covering.
- 5 TURN DOWN THE BACKGROUND VOLUME**
Background noise can make conversation especially hard. When possible, move to a quieter spot or turn down the sound.
- 6 COMMUNICATE ANOTHER WAY**
Use a smartphone talk-to-text application or writing tools (paper/pen, whiteboard) to communicate.
- 7 CONFIRM THAT YOUR STATEMENT IS CLEAR**
Ask if your message has been understood.
- 8 BRING A FRIEND OR BE A FRIEND**
If it's essential that you comprehend important spoken details – during discussion with a health care provider, for example – consider bringing a friend or family member with you. Or, offer to come along to listen and take notes when a friend has an important meeting.



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TIPS to Improve Hearing Access During Virtual Sessions

1. Ask the patient and caregiver (when applicable) to state their names when speaking so captioners and attendees know who is talking.
2. If problems arise, stop the meeting and repair the apparent communication barrier(s) before moving on.
3. Provide transcripts/notes to the patient/caregiver promptly following the session.
4. The clinician's face should be visible at all times to allow for speech reading and use of facial cues.
5. Clinicians should avoid covering their mouths so that lip shape and facial expressions remain visible, thereby helping people follow what is being said.
6. Make sure only one person speaks at a time during the clinical encounter since multiple talkers can create confusion.
7. Use the hand-raising option since this can help to ensure that participants do not speak over one another.
8. Provide occasional recaps to assist those who have lost the thread of the conversation.
9. Speak with clarity at a normal pace and volume.
10. If a sign language interpreter is present, make sure to speak directly to the patient.
11. Establish a feedback process with meeting participants to ensure accommodations are continuously met and barriers addressed.
12. Make sure to reduce background noise on both ends.
13. Choose a video platform such as Google Meet that is HIPAA-compliant and has embedded real-time captioning/transcript capabilities.
14. Use a HIPAA-compliant chatroom format that accommodates multiple family members joining from remote locations.



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