

# 8 TIPS FOR IMPROVING COMMUNICATION WHEN WEARING A FACE COVERING



## BE AWARE

Is the person you're communicating with having trouble understanding you? Ask and adapt if needed.



## BE PATIENT

Face coverings block visual cues and muffle sounds that help us understand speech, which can make interactions frustrating.



## BE MINDFUL

Consider how physical distancing might affect your communication. As distance increases, sound levels decrease, and visual cues are more difficult to see.



## 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.



## TURN DOWN THE BACKGROUND VOLUME

Background noise can make conversation especially hard. When possible, move to a quieter spot or turn down the sound.



## COMMUNICATE ANOTHER WAY

Use a smartphone talk-to-text application or writing tools (paper/pen, whiteboard) to communicate.\*



## CONFIRM THAT YOUR STATEMENT IS CLEAR

Ask if your message has been understood.



## BRING A FRIEND OR BE A FRIEND

If it's essential that you comprehend important spoken details—during a 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 appointment or meeting.

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National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders

<https://www.nidcd.nih.gov>

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\*Learn more from The Hearing Loss Association of America's **Face Masks and Hearing Loss: Practical Tips and Strategies**.