

How do they...??

...wake up in morning if they can't hear the alarm clock?

There are visual alarm clocks with flashing lights instead of auditory alarms. Another popular device is a bed shaker. One part goes under the mattress and the other attaches to the alarm clock. When the alarm goes off, the bed actually shakes to wake the person up.

...talk on the phone?

Individuals with a mild to moderate hearing loss may be able to talk on the phone by using a phone with sound amplification. Individuals with a profound hearing loss may use a variety of methods. With today's technology the most popular is a video phone, which uses the Internet to link to another video phone. With this device individuals who are deaf can call directly to another signer or they can call a relay interpreter who will then call a hearing person and interpret what the deaf individual is signing. Text messaging via cell phones and pagers is also a standard form of communication for individuals with a hearing loss.

...know when the fire alarm is going off or if someone is knocking at the door?

Dorm rooms should be equipped with visual smoke alarms and door knockers. A visual smoke alarm will flash brightly when the alarm in the building goes off to alert those who cannot hear it. Door knockers use a different flashing light to alert a person when someone is knocking.

...access information in group situations?

Individuals with a hearing loss may choose to access information in a variety of ways. Some use interpreters and others use lipreading. Still others may use real time captioning or assistive listening devices.

Resources

Orientation to Serving College Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.
www.pepnet.org (go to "Online Trainings")

A Basic American Sign Language Dictionary
www.masterstech-home.com/ASLDict.html

ASL and Deaf Culture Info
www.aslinfo.com/

Described and Captioned Media Program
www.cfv.org

The Faculty Room: Deaf or Hard of Hearing
www.washington.edu/doit/Faculty/Strategies/Disability/Hearing/



For More Information,
Contact:

Postsecondary Education
Programs Network (PEPNet)
www.pepnet.org

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Living on Campus

I have a deaf
student in my
dorm!
What do I do?



Information for RAs
and Residence Hall
Supervisors

The Essentials

Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing are just like other students except they don't hear as well. They come in all shapes and sizes and call themselves by many names such as: deaf, hard of hearing, or hearing impaired. Just remember the student is a person first - if you treat her as you would anyone else, you're off to a good start!

The biggest issue you'll face in a dorm setting is communication. Not all individuals with a hearing loss communicate in the same way. Some communication options are sign language, writing notes, and lipreading/ speaking. Ask the student how he identifies himself and what his preferred method of communication is.

As you get to know the resident with a hearing loss, you may have additional questions about access. The disability services office on your campus will be happy to provide additional information and support.

Courtesy Points

- ◆ Have an interpreter or other access services at all dorm meetings.
- ◆ Show only captioned movies.
- ◆ Keep the closed captions turned on in the TV room.
- ◆ Encourage all students to learn some sign language.
- ◆ Include the students who are deaf. Never say, "It's not important, I'll tell you later."

Myths about hearing loss

Hearing aids enable a person with a hearing loss to hear normally.

Hearing aids are able to amplify sound and, in some cases, block background noise. Depending on the type and severity of hearing loss, hearing aids may or may not be beneficial. Hearing aids may allow an individual who is deaf to identify loud noises but not recognize speech.

All individuals with a hearing loss can lipread well.

Many people assume that lipreading is a natural skill that people develop to compensate for hearing loss. In reality, lipreading is very difficult and does not happen easily. It is a skill like playing the piano or learning to snow ski. Many words look alike on the mouth. Because of this, a person who lipreads relies heavily on sentence context and residual hearing. Only 20% of the information is actually visible on the mouth. All the rest is guess work.

All people with a hearing loss know sign language.

Individuals with a hearing loss communicate in a variety of ways. Some learn sign language and communicate through interpreters. Some prefer to lipread and speak for themselves. Ask the student how she prefers to communicate. This may change depending on the situation.

There is only one form of sign language.

Sign language is not universal. Each country uses a different sign language just like they use a different spoken language. Within the U.S. there are two main forms of sign language: American Sign Language (ASL) and signed English.

If I speak slowly and loudly I will be easier to lipread.

Lipreading is made even more difficult if a person exaggerates mouth movements, which occurs when one tries to speak too slowly. An increase in volume level is also distracting. Having a hearing loss can be like listening to a radio station which is not coming in well. If you turn up the volume, the static doesn't get better. It only gets louder.

Individuals who are Deaf aren't very smart because they don't understand what I say and they sound funny when they talk.

People with a hearing loss may not pronounce words clearly because they cannot hear themselves speak. This is not a sign of lower intelligence. Imagine if you tried to learn Chinese by watching others speak it, but could not hear it yourself. You would misunderstand many things and probably sound funny if you did try to speak it.

I don't need an interpreter for short dorm meetings.

If the student communicates through sign language, you will need an interpreter for ALL dorm meetings. After all, if the information is important enough to call a meeting, then all residents need access to it. Contact the disability service office on your campus to schedule an interpreter.

Communication Tips

- Get the individual's attention before beginning to speak and look directly at the person when speaking.
- Speak slowly and clearly; don't exaggerate or overemphasize mouth movements.
- Use body language and facial expression.
- Maintain eye contact.
- If you have a problem being understood, try re-phrasing what you're saying.
- Because many words look exactly the same on the mouth, try writing when you have trouble communicating.
- Make sure the lighting in the room is appropriate - not too dark and no glaring backlight.
- Don't be impatient - the communication process may be slower than what's typical.