

# INFORMATION SHEET

## Deaf/Hard of Hearing Patient Communication in the Hospital

[www.betterhearingaustralia.org.au](http://www.betterhearingaustralia.org.au)



Deaf and Hard of Hearing patients come from a variety of backgrounds and have a variety of cultural and communication needs. To prevent barriers to their access of services and medical errors, health care providers must ensure the communication needs and preferences of this population are met.

### Failure to Communicate

- Discriminates
- Can Isolate Patients
- Hinders an understanding of Directions

### Effective Communication

- Assures symptoms are understood
- Prevents misdiagnosis
- Promotes trust in caregivers

### Strategies

- Go over to the patient rather than call their name
- Gently tap them on the shoulder if you need to get their attention
- Wait until the patient can see you before speaking
- Never speak directly into the patient's ear
- Do not shout – it does not help
- Keep masks down if possible to add visual cues
- Provide the patient with pen and paper should they feel more comfortable writing their queries
- Avoid idioms and slang
- Ask open-ended questions to confirm instructions are understood
- Permit use of hearing aids, cochlear implants, glasses, during procedures and recovery
- Provide your patient with the **Better Hearing Australia Hospital Kit** available from BHA Canberra branch at [bhacanberra@gmail.com](mailto:bhacanberra@gmail.com) or 02 62514713
- Use the Better Hearing Australia **'I am Deaf'** and **'I am Hard of Hearing'** communication needs checklists available from your local branch, locate your branch at [www.betterhearingaustralia.org.au](http://www.betterhearingaustralia.org.au)

***“We can do anything you can do except hear” - Deaf and Hard of Hearing person***