



## BONUS ARTICLE

### 5 ways to support coworkers with hearing loss

It's likely that you work with a person who has hearing loss. The condition impacts 15 percent of Americans and 60 percent of those affected are in the workforce or an educational setting, according to the Hearing Loss Association of America. To enhance communication and support those with hearing loss:

1. **Speak clearly and precisely.** Talking louder is not always helpful, as shouting distorts the voice. Instead, speak clearly, at a moderate pace.
2. **Face the person you are speaking to.** A person with hearing loss may be using lip reading to fill in gaps during a conversation. When masks are required, wear a clear mask to aid in lip reading.
3. **Don't cover your mouth.** Try not to put your hand over your mouth when you're speaking.
4. **Keep background noise to a minimum.** Other conversations, music, and other sounds make it more difficult to understand what's being said. You may want to move your conversation to a quieter area that



absorbs sound. A room with plush carpeting, soft furniture, and noise absorbing panels is better than an area with solid surfaces, like tile or steel.

5. **Rephrase.** If a coworker does not understand what was said, rephrase and repeat the information.

Taking time to follow these simple steps when interacting with coworkers will improve communication and make everyone's workday more productive. ♦