

Tips to help people understand your speech

Tips for speakers:

- **Face the person** you are speaking with. This means the listener can observe nonverbal cues like body language and lip read.
- **Slow down** your talking. This helps to stop the sounds running together.
- Pronounce all sounds as **clearly** as possible in a **loud voice**.
- Set up your environment with **minimal background noise**, where possible.
- Use short sentences and give yourself time to breathe. e.g. "I am hungry. (Breath) Is it lunchtime? (Breath)"
- Save time and energy by using **key words**. This highlights the topic of your message to support the listener.



Tips for listeners:

- Use **subtle prompts to remind them** that you are having difficulty understanding them – *don't pretend to understand if you did not hear the message*. e.g. "I can't quite understand; can you tell me the main word?"
- **Check for understanding:** "You want your shoes taken off, yes?" "I understand that you don't like this device because it's too slow, is this correct?"
- When **offering choices**, label them as "1,2,3/a,b,c" so that they can confirm their answer easily. e.g. Alright do you want to a) go back to the study, b) have a nap or c) something else?
- Set up your environment with **minimal background noise**, where possible. Turn items like a TV/Radio off while talking so you do not have to compete with other noises.
- IF you are struggling to understand the key words, **get the client to spell it out** on a spelling board, on the person's computer/device or with their voice.
- Save time and energy by **prompting the client to use key words to communicate**. e.g. 'can you tell me the main word?'

