



Carrying the AA Message to the Hard of Hearing

All of the points made below have been received from members of our Fellowship to help raise awareness of the needs of hard of hearing AA members.

Many of the problems that arise can be rectified easily, but only if our members are reminded regularly about them. People are people, and if not reminded will soon fall back into their old routine.

We say often enough that we want the hand of AA to be there; when we share at meetings we need to make sure the voice of AA can be heard by those whose hearing is impaired.

- Deafness, ranging from mild to severe, is one of the most common physical disabilities with which we come into the rooms. It is invisible and therefore the least appreciated – and unfortunately easily forgotten.
- One in six of the population of the UK has some sort of hearing problem, so every group may have at least one deaf member.
- We as a Fellowship are responsible for carrying the AA message. A hearing impairment may affect a member's ability to receive it.
- It is of vital importance for members with disabilities to make their needs known.
- Remember that our own lack of awareness can be a problem to the hard of hearing whom we are trying to help to recover and participate in service.

At Meetings

- The greeters and those serving tea and coffee are often in the best position to ascertain whether a newcomer is hard of hearing and can alert the chairperson before the meeting starts.

- Be prepared to open a closed meeting if a deaf person wishes to bring along a sign language interpreter.
- We can aid lip reading by having a good level of lighting and ensuring that the speaker can be seen. Candle-lit or darkened meetings can be difficult for the deaf and visually impaired.
- The chairperson could remind sharers / members that there may be someone who is hard of hearing present. Groups can try to ensure that meetings are conducted in an orderly and uninterrupted fashion.
- Background noise – kettles, extractor fans etc. can be switched off.
- Consider the acoustics of the meeting room. Does it have an induction loop system? Very large meetings could consider buying a public address system. If you have either of these aids, are they included in the meeting's online listing and the Where to Find?
- If you are chatting with someone after the meeting and the noise level means it is difficult to hear, try moving somewhere quieter.

At Intergroup & Region

- Members giving reports might be asked to present them facing the audience.
- Do your service representatives and members make a point of passing on experience through the AA service structure how the message can be carried to hearing impaired members? This experience can be shared either at meetings or by submissions to Share and Roundabout.



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