

# Deaf or Hard of Hearing

THINK BIG 2017

DVR INTERACTIVE STATIONS

## Disability Overview

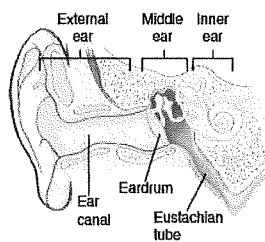
### Types of Hearing Loss

Hearing loss can be categorized by which part of the auditory system is damaged. There are three basic types of hearing loss: conductive hearing loss, sensorineural hearing loss, and mixed hearing loss.

**Conductive hearing loss** occurs when sound is not conducted efficiently through the outer ear canal to the eardrum and the tiny bones (ossicles) of the middle ear. Conductive hearing loss usually involves a reduction in sound level or the ability to hear faint sounds. This type of hearing loss can often be corrected medically or surgically.

**Sensorineural hearing loss (SNHL)** occurs when there is damage to the inner

ear (cochlea), or to the nerve pathways from the inner ear to the brain. Most of the time, SNHL cannot be medically or surgically corrected. This is the most common type of permanent hearing loss.



SNHL reduces the ability to hear faint sounds. Even when speech is loud enough to hear, it may still be unclear or sound muffled.

Sometimes a conductive hearing loss occurs in combination with a sensorineural hearing loss (SNHL). In other words, there may be damage in the outer or middle ear and in the inner ear (cochlea) or auditory nerve. When this occurs, the hearing loss is referred to as a **mixed hearing loss**.

**Degree of hearing loss** refers to the severity of the loss which can range from normal to profound.

Hearing loss can occur in both ears; **bilateral** or one ear; **unilateral**. The loss can be **symmetrical**; the same in both ears or **asymmetrical**; different in each ear. Hearing loss can progress over time or happen suddenly and in some cases fluctuate over time.

## Vocational Challenges

1. Discriminating sounds (i.e. frequencies, decibel levels, speech discrimination)
2. Understanding instructions
3. Communicating with peers
4. Speech clarity
5. Intelligibility/context meaning of sounds
6. Balance/Motor Coordination
7. Self-image
8. Deficits in school achievement
9. Problems in conceptualization
10. Tendency to make things very concrete
11. Potential barriers caused by other disabilities

# Considerations for Successfully Working Together

- Find out how the person communicates best.
- If the person uses an interpreter, address the person, not the interpreter.
- If the person reads lips, speak in a normal, not exaggerated, way.
- Short simple sentences are best. If the person lip-reads, avoid blocking their view of your face. Make sure the lighting is good.
- Gain the person's attention before starting a conversation. Depending on the situation, you can extend your arm and wave your hand, tap her on the shoulder or flicker the lights.
- If there is some doubt in your mind whether you were understood, rephrase your statement and assure that understanding has been reached.
- Know your internal processes for obtaining and paying for interpreting services since these often times need to be secured in advance and require sufficient notice.
- Be aware of situations where a person may be waiting for a service (transportation, a table, the start of an activity) where the common way to communicate is an announcement or the calling of the person's name. Advise them when their name is called.
- When talking, face the person. A quiet, well-lit room is most conducive to effective communication. If you are in front of the light source—such as a window—with your back to it, the glare may obscure your face and make it difficult for the person who is hard of hearing to speech read.
- Speak clearly.
- If you need to contact the Deaf or hearing impaired person, make sure you take note of the preferred method of notifying them.

## Resources

COLORADO COMMISSION FOR  
THE DEAF AND HARD OF  
HEARING  
1575 Sherman Street, Garden Level  
Denver, CO 0203  
720-457-3679 (Videophone)  
303-866-4824 (Voice)  
email.ccdhh@state.co.us  
[www.ccdhh.com](http://www.ccdhh.com)

Resources pertaining to Deaf and  
Hard of Hearing can be located on  
the Colorado Commission for the  
Deaf and Hard of Hearing at

[www.ccdhh.com](http://www.ccdhh.com)

Including but not limited to:

- Legal Services
- Colorado State Statutes
- Federal Laws
- Hearing Aid Resources

- ADA
- Employer Considerations
- Employment Considerations
- Director of Service Providers