

Table 1. Strategies for addressing challenges and improving communication with HI patients in outpatient and inpatient settings.

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| Communication strategies | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Ask patient about their preferred method of communication.▪ Remember that not all HI patients use sign language or can lip read.▪ Use plain, common words. |
| Optimize face-to-face communication | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Face the patient and maintain eye-to-eye contact.▪ Ensure good lighting and avoid backlighting.▪ Minimize background noise.▪ Use clear masks or remove masks.▪ Speak at a normal pace, avoiding shouting or exaggerating.▪ Rephrase, instead of repeat, if not understood.▪ Reinforce spoken information with written summaries in simple language, diagrams, and teach-back communication. |
| Accessible communication technologies to supplement, not replace, human communication | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Offer on-site hearing amplifiers.▪ Use real-time speech-to-text captioning (e.g., CART) for patients who prefer text rather than sign language.▪ Secure messaging portals for follow-up questions.▪ Caption patient education videos.▪ Employ bedside communication tools, such as tablets or whiteboards (especially inpatient). |
| Institutional policies and training | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Document communication needs when scheduling and registration.▪ Avoid relying solely on voice calls or voicemail for scheduling and follow-up. |
| Education and training for healthcare teams | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Incorporate communication access training into medical school, residency, nursing, and allied health education. |