

## DDD PREVENTION BULLETIN | COMMUNICATION



A person with an Intellectual Disability (ID) may have trouble speaking, hearing or understanding.

### **Tips on how to talk to a person with speech impairment:**

- Talk in a quiet area
- Ask short questions that require short answers or a choice of 2-3 items
- Avoid yes/no questions since people often nod when they do not understand
- Take your time and be patient. The person needs extra time to understand what you said
- Let the person speak for him or herself. WAIT, watch, and listen to them
- If the person has a communication aid, such as a picture board, encourage them to use it
- After trying to understand the person repeatedly, ask if it is OK to communicate through alternative means such as sign language, gestures, or writing it out for example

### **Talking to a person with a hearing impairment:**

- Make sure they are looking at you. Gently tap their shoulder if he or she is not facing you
- Wait before speaking. Give the person time to pay attention to you
- Look directly at the person and speak clearly in a normal tone of voice
- Use short, simple sentences
- Avoid chewing gum or eating while you talk
- Speak directly to the person and not the sign language interpreter or caregiver
- If you are trying to talk to someone who uses a Text Telephone (TTY), dial 711 to reach the national telecommunications relay service. This service can facilitate the call between you and an individual who uses a TTY
- Encourage the use of hearing aids



### **Remember:**

- Be patient
- Treat the individual with dignity, respect, and courtesy
- Focus on the “person” and not the “disability”
- Make efforts to understand what a person is saying instead of guessing as this can lead to frustration
- Contact a Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP) for more assistance