

Including People Who Are Deaf in Holiday Fun



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The National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID), in New York, has produced a set of holiday tips to make the season merry for members of the workplace who have a hearing disability.

Invite employees who are deaf to be on the holiday party planning committee. Send party information that includes all details by memo or e-mail. Ask deaf employees if they would like to have an interpreter at the event. If the party or holiday luncheon is at a restaurant, pick an establishment that has a large, round table, so deaf employees are able to see everything.

At the party, to get the attention of a person who is deaf, wave, gently tap on a shoulder or arm, switch lights on and off, or tap on a nearby table or desk. Once you have the person's attention, ask what method of contact is preferred. Maintain eye contact when speaking. If you are called away by another guest, explain and excuse yourself.

Create activities that are visual with a holiday theme, such as charades or Pictionary. If playing a board game such as Trivial Pursuit, let the person with a hearing disability read the question first, then read it aloud for the hearing players. And don't forget to keep pen and paper handy to ease communication.

For more information on accommodations, contact the NTID Center on Employment, (716) 475-6219 (voice/TTY).