

Transcript for Communication Tips: When talking on the phone with people who are hard of hearing

Minnesota Department of Human Services logo displayed, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services. Communication Tips: When talking on the phone with people who are hard of hearing.

[Music Playing]

[Liz Brown DHHS Specialist speaking]

Today we're going to do a couple of role plays that will show you what not to do when you receive a call from someone who is hard of hearing and then what to do.

[Marie Koehler DHHS Regional manager speaking]

To keep you engaged we are going to exaggerate things just a bit. Of course we know that you would never make these kind of mistakes.

In reality these do's and don'ts should apply to all callers whether they have a hearing loss or not.

When thinking about a topic for this skit, we decided to do something very benign.

That being a caller with a hearing loss calling to order a pizza.

Keep in mind that the do's and don'ts of these tips that you're about to see apply to all customer service jobs, even those in the human service field.

Being a person with a hearing loss myself, I play the hard-of-hearing caller to a pizza place and Marie is the hearing person working at the pizza place taking the call.

[Phone rings]

[Talking very fast]

Marvelous and Magnificent Pizzeria, would you like today's special and would you like to top that off with our delicious and delectable cookie crumble pizza pie?

[Dual screen with Marie on the right in front of a pizza oven and Liz on the left in a house]

Um, I'm sorry. Is this the pizza place?

Sure is. What kind of pizza would you like? Can you make it quick? A customer just walked in the door.

Okay, I think I'd better tell you that I have a hearing loss and

I'm having a really hard time understanding you.

Can you please speak a bit clearer and more slowly?

[Over enunciating] I said, what kind of pizza would you like?

Whatever you just said was not helpful. Can you please turn the music down?

[Sighs] It's not that loud but...okay.

[Marie reaches off camera to turn down the volume] [Background music turns off]

Thank you. Anyway, what kind of crust do you have?

[Marie takes a drink from a plastic bottle that makes noises] Uh, [Clears throat] Yes, uh... We have thin, original and our marvelous thick crust.

Thin and marvelous thin crust? What's the difference?

No! I said marvelous thick crust.

Alright, I'm still confused, so... just give me an original crust, cheese pizza.

Do you want any toppings on that pizza?

Maybe, what do you have?

I'm just a temp and today is my first day. [Marie extends her phone towards the camera]. Let me ask. [Yells] Hey Chris, what kind of toppings do we have here?

[Chris speaking faintly] Mushrooms, onions, peppers, no wait, we're out of peppers, tomatoes, olives, sausage, pepperoni, chicken and Canadian bacon.

What he said...

Are you kidding? Since I have no idea what was just said,

I'll just have a medium, cheese pizza. How much will that cost?

[Marie puts a piece of gum in her mouth]

Ah sure, but first I have to tell you that our credit card reader is broken so you need to bring cash. Exact cash would be really nice. That'll be eleven and a quarter.

Okay, I'm sorry...how much?

Eleven and a quarter.

Eleven and a what?

A quarter.

You know, I think I'm just gonna cancel this order for now. Thanks anyway. [Liz hangs up her phone]

[Sighs] Geez, customers these days!

We will do a similar skit again, but this time with what to do when you receive a call from someone who is hard of hearing. Just remember, not everyone will identify themselves as someone with a hearing loss. So, if they struggle to understand you, if they're asking you to repeat over and over again, consider using some of these tactics.

[Phone rings] Marvelous and Magnificent Pizzeria, [Talking fast] would you like today's special and would you like to top that off with our delicious and delectable cookie crumble pizza pie?

Um, I'm sorry. Is this the pizza place?

Sure is. What kind of pizza would you like? And can you make it quick? We just had a customer walk in.

I think I'd better tell you that I have a hearing loss and I'm having a little bit of a hard time understanding you. Can you please speak a bit clearer and more slowly?

[Talking slower] Oh sure, and thanks for telling me. Is there anything else that I can do to help with the communication process? Just let me know.

Thank you. It would be helpful also if you could turn down the music. If there's something that I do not understand, maybe rephrase it or maybe spell it out.

Oh, no problem. Please hold. [Marie reaches off camera to turn down the volume]. [Background music turns off] Okay, I am back. What kind of pizza would you like?

I can hear and understand you much better, thank you. What kind of crust do you have?

We have thin, original and our marvelous thick crust.

Thin and marvelous thin crust. What's the difference?

Our thin is a one-eighth inch crust and the marvelous thick is a 2 inch crust. Kind of like a pan pizza or Chicago style pizza.

Now, that description was really helpful. I would like to try your marvelous thick crust pizza.

What kind of toppings would you like on your pizza?

What do you have?

I am just a temp and today is my first day. Let me grab the menu. [Marie grabs a restaurant menu]. Okay, for vegetables we have mushrooms, onions, peppers, no wait, I apologize, we are out of peppers, tomatoes, and olives. For meat we have sausage, pepperoni, chicken, and Canadian bacon.

Ok, I will have a medium mushroom, sausage and tomato pizza. How much will that be?

First, I need to tell you that our credit card reader is broken so please bring cash. Exact cash would be very helpful. Your total is fourteen and a quarter.

I'm sorry, how much again?

Fourteen and a quarter.

Ok, fourteen and a what?

Fourteen dollars and twenty five cents.

Ok, fourteen dollars and twenty five cents. Got it.

Will that be pickup or delivery?

I'll pick it up. What is your address?

Sure, we are located at 917 Maple Street. That is, Nine-One-Seven, Maple Street.

Ok, I understand the street number.

Ok, was that clear?

I understand the street number. Can you please repeat the street name?

Maple.

Ok, I still didn't catch that.

Maple, M as in Mary, A as in Apple, P as in Peter, L as in Little, E as in Eagle.

Got it. Maple. Thank you. When will the pizza be ready?

Ah, the pizza will be ready at 7:15. That is Seven-One-Five.

Thanks for your great customer service.

See you soon! Bye!

My pleasure...you're welcome! Bye.

Well, that felt good.

[Marie speaking in front of the brick pizza oven]

The moral of this skit is that no matter who you speak with on the telephone, treating them with respect, having a positive attitude, and speaking clearly with natural pauses results in better communication.

Using these tips should decrease the number of times a caller asks you to repeat what you've said and may actually speed up the communication process and reduce the number of misunderstandings that occur.

[Music]

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