

Communicating effectively while wearing masks and physically distancing

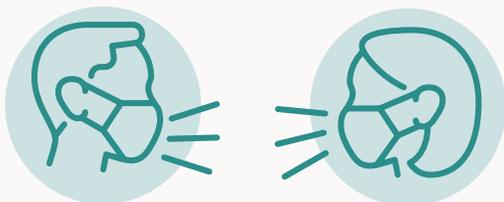


To create a unique meaningful and memorable experience, we need to develop a genuine connection with people.

COVID-19 has altered the way we interact with our guests with measures like social distancing and face coverings challenging how we create a sense of welcome and how we engage with people.

Difficulties arising from wearing masks include:

- Masks muffle sound, making it more difficult to understand what's being said
- Masks take away our ability to read lips and see facial expressions like a warm smile, which help us better understand what we're hearing
- Masks make it more difficult to understand what people are feeling
- Masks can make it hard for people who have communication, hearing or voice difficulties
- Masks can be uncomfortable for people who wear glasses, hearing aids, etc.



Communication challenges arising from physical distancing include:

- Speech can sound quieter because sound levels go down with distance
- Focusing your attention on speech can be harder at a distance with other sounds in the environment, like background music or other staff, guests talking, etc.
- We can't lean in or get closer to make sure we hear properly or to speak privately/quietly
- It's more difficult to see visual cues, such as facial expression and speakers' lips, at a distance.



Tips for communicating while wearing a mask or physically distancing

- Make sure you have your guest's attention.
- Face your guest directly, and make sure nothing is blocking your view.
- Smile, even through your mouth is covered, because people can "see" and feel your smile behind the mask.
- Good eye contact is now more important than ever.
- Speak a little louder, especially if you are wearing a cloth mask.
- Modulate the tone of your words to convey empathy, as relevant.
- Speak a little slower, rushed speech behind masks can interfere with understanding and frustrate a listener.
- Use simple language.
- Use your hands and open body language. Relax your shoulders, keep your hands out of your pockets or off your hips, and avoid crossing your arms in front of you.
- Use simple signs and gestures.
- Nod and shake your head to indicate you are listening and show what you mean.
- Expressive eyebrows. Look at the eyebrows of guests to help guide information and be aware of your own.
- Avoid multi-tasking to demonstrate active listening.
- Pay attention to verbal and non-verbal cues such as sighing, turning away from you, etc.
- Give people time to respond.
- Ask your guests if they understood you; if not, say it a different way or write it down.
- Reflect back what you heard.
- Move to a quiet place if you can.
- If you are talking to someone new, ask if there's anything you can do to make communication easier for both of you.



Raised eyebrows show listening and happiness. Eyebrows pinched together can indicate sadness. Eyebrows in a "V" can mean angry.

