

# Nonverbal Communication: Impact on Patient-Provider Conversations

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Hosted by Sign Language Interpreter Kenny Houghtaling

## Nonverbal Communication Types & Functions

Facial expressions and gestures have five main functions:

1. To reinforce what is being said,
2. Conflict with the verbal message,
3. Replace what is being said,
4. Add to the verbal message or
5. Accent a certain part of the verbal message.

## Nonverbal Communication Across Cultures

- Facial expressions of emotion are universal across cultures
- Gestures can carry different meanings in different cultures  
For example, the thumbs up sign, meaning “good job” in the U.S, can be offensive in places like Australia, Greece & the Middle East.

## Nonverbal Communication in Healthcare

Affiliative nonverbal behaviors, (e.g., smiling, nodding & leaning forward), are associated w/ *increased patient satisfaction & adherence with health care plans.*

## Nonverbal Communication w/ LEP, Deaf & HoH Patients

- Nonverbal misunderstandings can diminish trust in the provider & patient engagement in care plans
- Meaningful conversations w/ Deaf, HoH & LEP patients can take place w/ the assistance of a qualified medical interpreter.
- Interpreters are culturally competent & equipped to clarify any cultural nuances, including differences in nonverbal cues.