

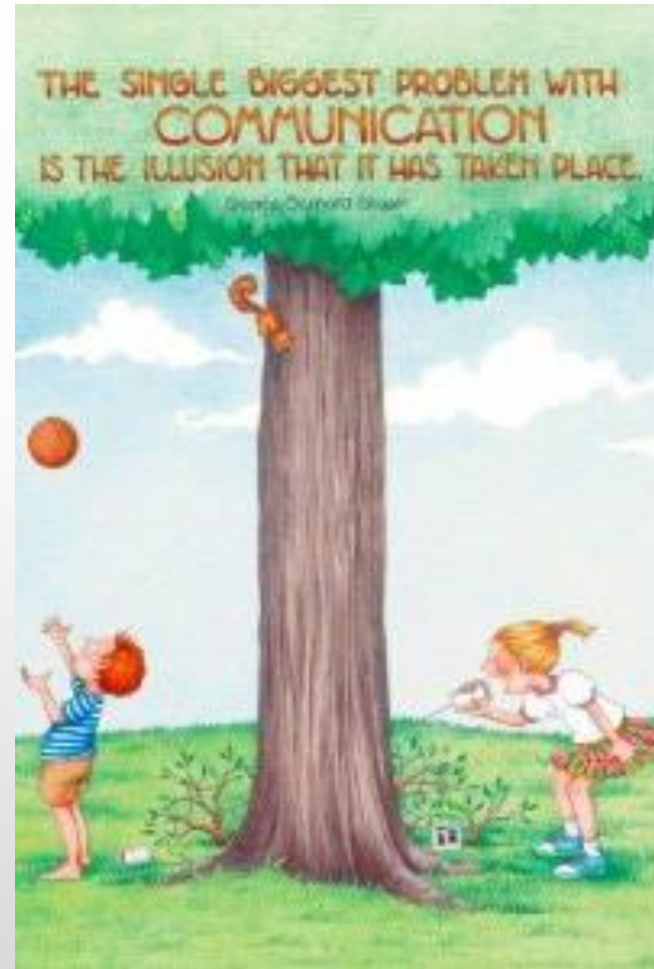
Considerations for Supporting Individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Goals

- To understand the pre-screening needed to ensure language access for individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing
- To have a working understanding of obtaining and teaming with interpreters
- To consider the unique ways that hearing loss affects daily life and the supports needed for success in the community
- To provide resources for further information and referral

Let's Start at the Very Beginning...

- **Deaf ≠ Non-Verbal**
- **Deaf ≠ Hard of Hearing**



Individuals who have hearing
loss experience life differently
than those who are non-verbal!

Access to services requires an understanding of the
individual's receptive and expressive
communication needs!

COMMITMENT
to
Effective Communication
Must be infused throughout services

Language Assessment

- If an individual is Deaf or Hard of Hearing a language assessment should be completed
- A language assessment is not the same as a speech evaluation
- A language assessment provides important insight into an individual's communication skills
- A language assessment provides recommendations as to the need for an interpreter.
- Call 502-782-6181 if help is needed with obtaining a language assessment.

Language Access

- Once a language assessment has been completed, the team should follow those recommendations for interpreters
- A person needs ongoing language access, not ONLY an interpreter for a meeting
- The team should consider how day to day language supports will be provided

Ensuring Effective Communication

Ask

- Is this person Deaf or Hard of Hearing?
- How does s/he best communicate?
- If s/he is Deaf, who are the preferred interpreters?
- Does s/he need a Certified Deaf interpreter in addition to an ASL interpreter?



Scheduling Interpreters

- Allow extra time for interviews/assessments where interpreters will be present
- Depending on location, interpreters should be scheduled at least two weeks in advance
- If possible, use the same interpreters for multiple interviews/assessments so that they become familiar with the questions and process/person
- Some individuals may require a Certified Deaf Interpreter to adapt the language into visual-gestural communication. This will maximize the possibility of full participation of the Deaf individual
- You can find individual interpreters through the KY Board of Interpreters: www.kbi.ky.gov
- Referral agencies can also coordinate interpreters and know both the interpreters and the consumers but will charge more
- Depending upon the timeframe for interpretation, a team of two interpreters may be needed to provide more accurate communication
- it is critical that you have qualified certified and licensed interpreters to aid learning the person's support needs. Someone who has taken a sign language class does not have the same skills and should not be used in this situation

What to Consider



Red Flag Statements

- “He hears just fine when we talk to him.”
- “She reads my lips fine. If she doesn’t understand, it’s because she doesn’t want to.”
- “We work with a lot of people who don’t talk. We just do the same things with him.”
- “He can’t communicate. He moves his hands around, but it doesn’t mean anything.”
- “She has her own sign language. Having an interpreter here won’t help.”

What to Ask or Consider

- Do you know the person’s history and background regarding level of hearing?
- Do you know the individual’s best communication methods and what has been effective in the past?
- Has the individual been isolated from other signers for a long time? S/he may have had better signing skills that deteriorated with lack of use
- Has the agency ever used interpreters or staff who are *fluent* in sign language? If not, how do they know the individual’s capability in that area?
- If the individual is using assistive technology, is this done as adjunctive to other communication or in place of it?

Teaming Effectively with Interpreters

Pre-Session

- Ask interpreters to arrive at least fifteen minutes before the session begins. This gives you time to go over expectations and ask questions
- Give interpreters as much information about the session as feasible ahead of time so that they have time to review and familiarize
- Discuss the process you will use
- Discuss what you will do if there is a communication breakdown and the individual does not understand the interpreter or the process
- Review any name signs or acronyms you will be using

During the Session

- Allow the individual who is Deaf to set up the room to maximize communication effectiveness and comfort
- Have a dry erase board or paper/pen available in case some concepts are better done visually
- Remind each team member to take turns and allow lag time for the interpreter(s).
- Expect that the interview/meeting will take longer due to the interpreting process.
- Talk directly to the individual who is Deaf and do not say “tell him” or “ask her.”
- Avoid jargon or acronyms or explain them as you go.
- Take a break at the end of an hour to let the interpreters rest. Check in to make sure communication is happening effectively.
- It is the responsibility of everyone in the room – not just the interpreter – to assure that effective communication is happening.

Considerations for Supporting Deaf Persons In All Areas of Life

Home Living Activities

- If the staff does not sign and the individual does, doing “for” an individual is faster than trying to communicate. Things to think through:
 - Does this person have the opportunity to learn and practice the same skills that hearing peers do?
 - Laundry
 - Food Preparation
 - Housekeeping and Cleaning
 - Bathing
 - Operating Appliances
 - How does the staff communicate with the individual to fully convey strengths and needs? Is time shorter or longer than expected due to allowing time for reciprocal communication?
 - Providing visuals and sign language should be used prior to physical prompts in offering support
 - Individuals who are Deaf with additional disabilities are at a higher risk for physical abuse



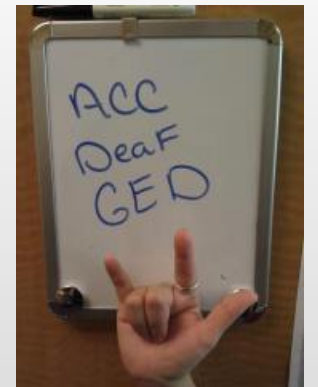
Community Living Activities

- How we as hearing individuals define “community” maybe different than how those who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing define their community.
 - Is transportation to Deaf community events provided?
 - Does the team know about Deaf community events and offer it as a choice?
 - Does the individual know about specialized public services where s/he can communicate directly in ASL?
 - Does the team arrange for interpreters or community access providers who sign so that the individual can fully participate?
- Individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing place a high value on face-to-face time with others who communicate the same way.
- The Deaf community is a tight-knit group; people often have the same friends from elementary school through adulthood
- Providing opportunities for individuals to connect with the Deaf community is essential to full integration into a person’s community of choice
- Hearing Loss Association of Kentucky also has chapters in Louisville, Lexington, and Bowling Green



Lifelong Learning Activities

- Individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing often have less access to the same array of services.
- They may be present at programs or events but not have the full benefit due to language access issues. Informed, self-determined choices require access to education and information.
 - Does the individual have peers with whom s/he can easily communicate and interact with?
 - Is s/he fully informed of options in an accessible format so that training/educational decisions can be made?
 - If assistive technology is used, does s/he have access to it in all environments? Does the staff know how to use the equipment and trouble-shoot any problems?
 - Has the team learned about or considered Deaf-friendly training/ educational settings?
 - Has health information been taught in accessible ways?



Employment Activities



- When asking about employment activities, consider...
 - Did / Does the individual have a Rehabilitation Counselor for the Deaf or a Communication Specialist?
 - If OVR provided interpreters for placement, has the employer continued needed language access after closure?
 - Were specialized job coaches considered or used?
 - If the person signs, how does s/he interact with coworkers and supervisors?
 - Does the individual know his/her rights related to accommodations?
 - Does s/he know how to get the needed accommodations?

Health and Safety Activities



Under **Federal ADA LAW** this person has a **LEGAL RIGHT** to an interpreter

THE EMERGENCY INTERPRETER/CART SERVICE IS FOR EMERGENCIES ONLY! (1-800-249-9949)

Examples of emergencies are:

- ARRESTS
- HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM VISITS
- EMERGENCY PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATIONS
- ADMISSION TO A DETOX OR PSYCHIATRIC FACILITY

For all non-emergency calls for INTERPRETER/CART services, please call the MCDHH Interpreter Referral Department at 617-740-1600 Voice or 617-740-1700 TTY.



- Safety is often one of the biggest concerns hearing providers have when working with Deaf individuals
 - Does the person have a visual fire alarm in all settings?
 - Does s/he know how to use a VideoPhone or TTY to call 9-1-1?
- Health and Fitness
 - Does the individual have regular medical appointments with interpreters present?
 - Does s/he know the names of medications and what they are for?
 - Can s/he report side effects in a way that the team understands?
 - If hearing aids or cochlear implants are used, can s/he change the batteries? Clean the equipment? Are regular appointments made to ensure that everything is functioning correctly



Health Information

FOR PERSONS WHO ARE DEAF, DEAF-BLIND AND HARD OF HEARING: A WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA INITIATIVE

Home About Us Health Education Hospital Info Admissions Careers Privacy

OUR MISSION

RECOMMENDATION CARDS
Accommodations Card

Behavioral Health Behavioral Health Cards

Working People Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Topic of Interest

Let's talk about Equal Access

Subscribe

Recent Articles

Health Care Communication Access
How to Use a VideoPhone
Posted on March 18th, 2012 in Accessibility

Making Your Case
Posted on March 18th, 2012 in Accessibility

Signs and Symptoms of Dehydration
Posted on February 29th, 2012 in Health Services

Using Interpreter For All Services
Posted on January 18th, 2012 in Accessibility

Made with Weebly

Social Activities

- One of the more controversial aspects of Deaf Services is that many individuals who use ASL as a primary language consider our version of integration a more restrictive environment rather than the least restrictive environment
 - Can the individual socialize in his/her best language within her/his own home?
 - Do recreational activities include Deaf events such as captioned movies?
 - Does the individual have access to both hearing and Deaf/Hard of Hearing friends?
 - Are Deaf/Hard of Hearing friends welcome in the home?
 - Does s/he have access to a VideoPhone, iPhone, or other technology to contact friends and family?
 - Does staff know Deaf cultural norms including use of personal space, touch, and Deaf etiquette?
 - Is the individual exposed to others who communicate the same way as potential partners?
 - Is s/he informed about volunteer activities and provided language access to engage in them?



Legal and Civic Issues



- Advocacy skills can be a challenging topic for Deaf Services since individuals who advocate effectively will cost providers more money in terms of access. This will be difficult to assess in a large team if all members are not aware of ADA obligations and willing to do what is right to make sure they are followed.
- Does the individual know the difference between rights and responsibilities?
 - Is s/he held accountable for actions?
- Some DHHS providers consider lack of language access traumatizing to Deaf individuals as well as being an ADA violation
 - If the individual self advocates for greater access, does s/he have the needs met?
 - Would having a waiver but not getting language access to those services be considered exploitation?
- How do the providers assess what effective communication looks like for the individual and how to provide it?

Exceptional Medical/Behavioral Support

Medical Supports

- Has language access during medical procedures been addressed?
 - Is the person able to provide informed consent regarding medical procedures?
 - Are procedures explained in a clear way?
 - Does the individual have choice in what procedures happen to him/her?

Behavioral Supports

- Lack of communication access often manifests itself in behavior
- Notice a red flag if the individual is exhibiting aggression or self injurious behavior
 - Check for communication access in the setting(s) in which behaviors occur
 - Recommend / Refer to services if the behaviors may be reduced or eliminated with appropriate language access
 - Just as medical rule outs are important for mental health, so too are communication rule outs for mental health / DD services with Deaf or Hard of Hearing individuals

For more information or consultation regarding
Deaf or Hard of Hearing individuals, contact:

Michelle Niehaus, LCSW
Program Administrator
Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services
KY Division of Behavioral Health
(502) 564-4456 x4521
Michelle.Niehaus@ky.gov