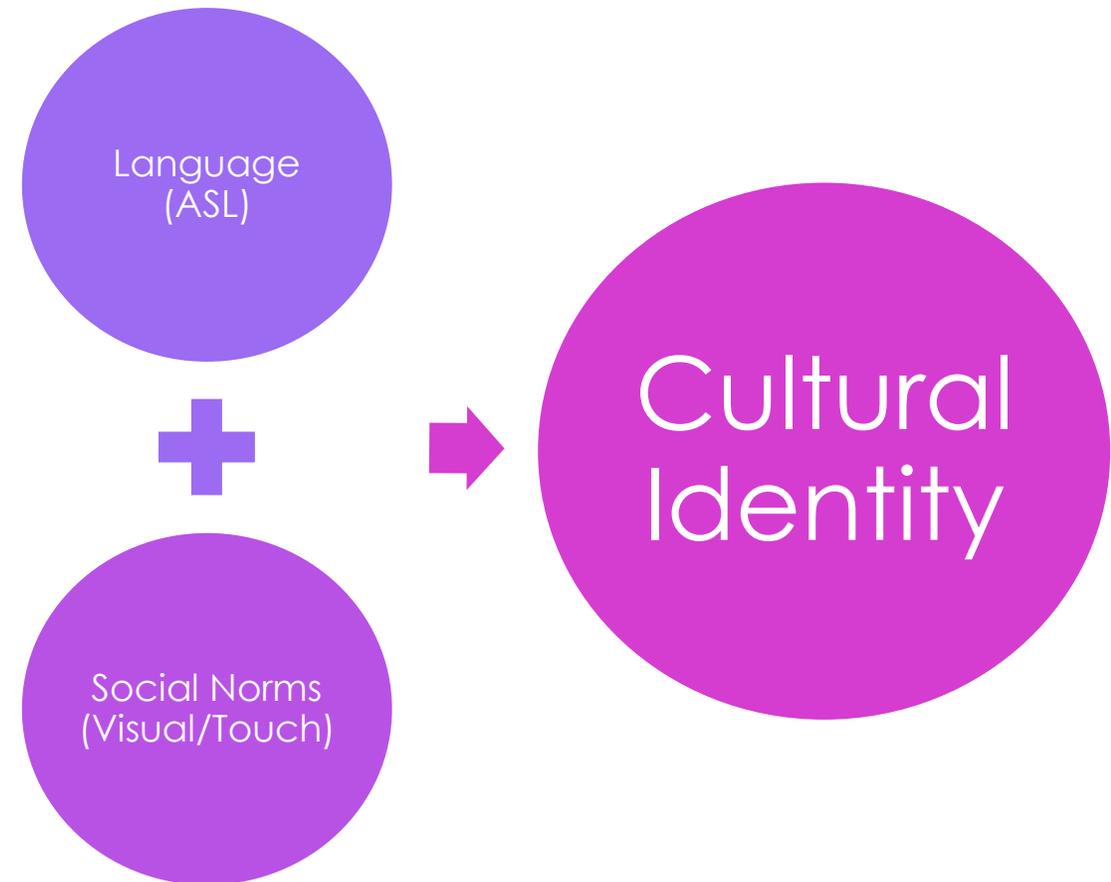


Best Practices with Deaf and Hard of Hearing Consumers: The Basics

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE INTERSECTION OF CULTURAL AND DISABILITY IDENTITIES WITHIN DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING COMMUNITIES, INCLUDING TIPS ON HOW TO APPROACH PROVIDING PERSON-CENTERED SERVICES AND REQUESTING ACCOMMODATIONS.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Communities

- ❖ Deaf (cultural identity)
- ❖ deaf
- ❖ DeafBlind (cultural identity)
- ❖ deaf-blind
- ❖ deaf with additional disabilities
- ❖ Late Deafened
- ❖ Hard of Hearing
- ❖ Children of Deaf Adults (CODAs)



Deafhood as a Cultural Identity

"DEAF CULTURE IS A SET OF LEARNED BEHAVIORS AND PERCEPTIONS THAT SHAPE THE VALUES AND NORMS OF DEAF PEOPLE BASED ON THEIR SHARED OR COMMON EXPERIENCES."

- DR. BARBARA KANNAPELL

The values, behaviors, and traditions of Deaf culture include:

- ❖ Promoting an environment that supports vision as the primary sense used for communication at school, in the home, and in the community, as vision offers individuals who are deaf access to information about the world and the independence to drive, travel, work, and participate in every aspect of society.
- ❖ Valuing children who are deaf as the future of deaf people and Deaf culture.
- ❖ Support for bilingual ASL/English education of children who are deaf so they are competent in both languages.
- ❖ Inclusion of specific rules of behavior in communication in addition to the conventional rules of turn taking. For example, consistent eye contact and visual attention during a conversation is expected. In addition, a person using sign language has the floor during a conversation until he or she provides a visual indicator (pause, facial expression, etc.) that he or she is finished.
- ❖ Perpetuation of Deaf culture through a variety of traditions, including films, folklore, literature, athletics, poetry, celebrations, clubs, organizations, theaters, and school reunions. Deaf culture also includes some of its own "music" and poetry as well as dance.
- ❖ Inclusion of unique strategies for gaining a person's attention, such as:
 - gently tapping a person on the shoulder if he or she is not within the line of sight,
 - waving if the person is within the line of sight, or
 - flicking a light switch a few times to gain the attention of a group of people in a room.

Dispelling Myths

- ❖ American Sign Language (ASL) is NOT a universal language. There are hundreds of different signed languages including signing variations that can indicate regionality (like an accent).
- ❖ ASL is NOT a visual “version” of English. ASL has its own grammar structure (closer to the romance languages) and is a completely different language in its own right.
- ❖ Lip-reading without another supporting method of communication is NOT reliable.
- ❖ A majority of causes for hearing loss are NOT genetic; 90% of children born deaf have hearing parents.
- ❖ Hearing aids, cochlear implants, or other assistive devices are NOT “cures” and some people choose not to use them.
- ❖ Most people with hearing loss do NOT appreciate the term “hearing impaired;” those who identify as culturally Deaf see this as an offense.

Thinking About Accommodation

Deaf, DeafBlind, Deaf With Additional Disabilities

- ❖ American Sign Language Interpreters
- ❖ Tactile Interpreters
- ❖ Certified Deaf Interpreters (CDI)
- ❖ Video Relay Services (VRS)
- ❖ Video Remote Interpreting (VRI)
- ❖ Gesture

Tip: Don't be afraid to "act out" or mime with a Deaf consumer if you do not have an interpreter. Your consumer will appreciate your effort and may gain a lot of information just from your gestures and facial expressions.

Hard of Hearing, Late Deafened, deaf-blind

- ❖ Hearing Aids
- ❖ Cochlear Implants
- ❖ Captioning
- ❖ FM Amplification / Loop Technology
- ❖ Communication Access Real-Time (CART)

Tip: If your consumer relies on assistive technology to mitigate their hearing loss, try to maintain eye-contact whenever speaking. This will allow the consumer to better locate where sounds are originating from and provide them the opportunity to read your lips simultaneously, if lip-reading is a skill the consumer possesses.

Sign Language Interpreters

- Most assignments longer than 1 ½ hours requires a team of two interpreters.
- Interpreter(s) should be positioned next to or near the hearing person, across from the Deaf person.
- Lighting is important; make sure your interpreter(s) are not backlit by a window or other light source.
- Speak at your normal pace, the interpreter(s) will match your cadence and speech patterns; you don't need to slow down so the interpreter(s) can keep up.
- Communicate with the Deaf person directly; do not face the interpreter when conveying information to the consumer and refrain from saying to the interpreter, "tell them __," or , "do they __?"

Tactile Interpreters

- Tactile interpreters are used with DeafBlind consumers. This type of interpretation requires the consumer and interpreter(s) to feel handshapes and motion of signs.
- Tactile interpreters will sit face to face with the DeafBlind person.
- Some DeafBlind consumers will have varying levels of sight, interpreter(s) will sign up close to the consumer or within their limited field of sight rather than through touch.

Certified Deaf Interpreters (CDI)

- CDIs are interpreters that are Deaf themselves. They often have experience with signed languages other than ASL.
- CDIs are necessary when working with Deaf consumers with additional disabilities. They can mitigate signing styles that may be affected by a consumer's physical or mental disability.
- CDIs are highly skilled at conveying cultural information in their interpretation and should be used in high risk scenarios (i.e. child welfare interviews and assessments, assignments of a legal nature, situations where a Deaf consumer may be experiencing trauma).

Video Relay Service (VRS)

- VRS is how Deaf people use telephones; the Deaf person has a videophone and when they dial a number, an interpreter shows up on their screen to place and interpret the call, the person on the other end of the line answers the phone and hears the voice of the interpreter that the Deaf person can see.
- This service is provided by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).
- If you receive a phone call that begins with, "This is interpreter number 12345, I have a Deaf person who is placing a call," do not hang up, continue to converse as though you are having a one on one conversation.

Captions

- Do not present a video that does not have captions embedded for your Deaf or Hard of Hearing Consumer or for the general public.
- Automated captioning provided by platforms like “YouTube” are notoriously inaccurate and should not be relied upon.
- Captioning can be added to any video by a private company for a one-time fee. Please see the “Resources” slide for more information.

Communication Access Real-Time (CART)

- CART is essentially live captioning. It can be provided either on or off site and in one on one, small group, or large audience settings.
- CART is the preferred accommodation type for Hard of Hearing consumers that use assistive technologies (i.e. hearing aids, cochlear implants, loop systems, etc.) in group settings.
- CART is also useful for deaf-blind consumers who can follow along with the captioning up close on their personal device (i.e. smart-phone, tablet, laptop).
- Make sure that the CART provider can accurately hear what is being said. This may require moving microphones or changing seating arrangements.

FM Amplification / Loop Technology

- FM Amplification requires two receivers; one with headphones, and the other with an external microphone. The two receivers will be set to the same channel, the Hard of Hearing consumer will wear the headphones with one receiver while the speaker will wear the microphone with the other receiver.
- Some buildings and rooms are equipped with Loop Technology; microphones are placed strategically and feed into a frequency channel that a consumer with a Loop system can then tune into.

Tip: There are many types of accommodation available for Deaf and Hard of Hearing consumers and it can be hard to determine which one(s) are the best fit for your consumer. If you don't know which type of accommodation to request, ask your consumer. They will already know what they prefer, and they may even have some particular suggestions regarding which interpreters they work well with or which captioners they find to be the most accurate.

Why is Accessibility and Accommodation Important?

Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities are very close-knit and sharing information is a tenet of Deaf Culture. If your services are not accessible, it will not take long for word to spread throughout the community. Consumers will often give up trying to access your services and find other ways to meet their needs or go without services, some may file complaints.

As employees of the public sector we have a duty to uphold federal and state regulations that require us to provide accommodations consumers deem necessary.

Tip: Is your website accessible? Are your employees accessible?

Here are some quick solutions:

- Include a highly visible email address for consumers to contact you, not just a phone number.
- Consider text messaging as a viable way for consumers to contact you or connect with your services.
- Avoid jargon or acronyms when communicating with a consumer; if you do use an acronym, make sure to clearly indicate what it stands for and what the entity does.
- It may be confusing in the beginning to indicate what services a Deaf consumer is in need of; hang in there and keep asking clarifying questions. Linguistically the topic of a conversation begins very broad in ASL and specifics are identified later, it is the opposite in English.

Requesting Accommodation

Oregon Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services currently offers the coordination of the following accommodations:

- ❖ ASL Interpreters
- ❖ CDIs
- ❖ Tactile Interpreters
- ❖ Post-production video captioning
- ❖ CART
- ❖ **COMING SOON:** Video Remote Interpreting

Requests for accommodation can be made here:

<http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/BUSINESS-SERVICES/ODHHS/Pages/ECS.aspx>

Resources

- ❖ Oregon Deaf and Hard of Hearing Advisory Committee (ODHHS)
- ❖ Oregon Association of the Deaf (OAD)
- ❖ Hearing Loss Association of America – Oregon (HLAA-OR)
- ❖ Oregon School for the Deaf (OSD)
- ❖ Regional Resource Center on Deafness – Western Oregon University (RRCDD)
- ❖ Oregon Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (ORID)
- ❖ Northwest ADA Center
- ❖ National Association of the Deaf (NAD)
- ❖ Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID)
- ❖ Gallaudet University

thank you



Thank you!

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