

Make Your Shelter Accessible!



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Ontario Association of the Deaf
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Introduction

The Ontario Association of the Deaf (OAD) received a grant from United Way to address issues affecting Deaf homeless people. The purpose of this project is to remove the barriers Deaf people experience in trying to access shelters. Another goal of this project is to develop partnerships between Deaf organizations and those agencies working with the homeless and underhoused communities.

OAD would like to thank the following who were on the Deaf Homeless Project Committee: Gilbert Lillie and Mike McAuley from Silent Voice, Sheree Wells from Humewood House, Jim Hardman from The Canadian Hearing Society (CHS), Laura Prong from CONNECT Counselling Services and Jessica Cano-Jáuregui from Bob Rumball Centre for the Deaf. Thanks to these individuals for their participation and hard work in developing this kit.

Our survey tells us that there have been numerous barriers experienced by Deaf people in shelters, including barriers to access and communication and lack of knowledge and understanding of the Deaf Culture and community among shelter staffs. Access, it does not mean simply entry, it means access to TTY (Teletypewriters) and sign language interpreters.

One of our goals was to develop this kit which includes instructions on how to work with Deaf people, how to provide support, and gain knowledge of Deaf Culture, which agencies are appropriate for referring Deaf clients and how to use BCRS (Bell Canada Relay Service) if you do not have a TTY (Teletypewriter), also known as TDD (Teletype Devices for the Deaf). Another goal was to develop a hands on workshop for shelter, staff and professionals, to learn how to meet Deaf people's needs. The focus will be on training and educating workers in agencies to help them gain the skills needed in order to improve the shelter system for Deaf people.

The correct terminology for the Deaf is Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Deafened. Hearing Impaired, Deaf and Mute, Deaf and Dumb, Hearing Handicapped are inappropriate terms and many people find them offensive.

The Deaf Community

Deaf people:

- ◆ Deaf people have their own language and culture
- ◆ Deaf people are separate and different from other physically challenged groups because they don't share the same language. The barrier they face is a communication barrier, not a physical barrier.
- ◆ Ten percent of Deaf people have Deaf parents and acquire cultural norms and values through the family unit; the remaining 90% adopt the culture in later life.
- ◆ Various groups within the Deaf community include culturally Deaf people; oral Deaf people, and those who become Deaf later in life.

Acquisition of information:

- ◆ Written English is a second language for most Deaf people; ASL (American Sign Language) is considered their natural first language.
- ◆ Deaf people tend to think in visual and logical concepts, not in auditory terms.
- ◆ 75% of the information acquired by hearing people comes from radio, television and other people's conversations; this information is rarely accessible to Deaf people.
- ◆ The most successful mode of learning for Deaf people seems to be Deaf to Deaf, ASL to ASL.
- ◆ Interpreting is not the ideal situation for communication, but the next-to-best method.

Sexual issues:

- ◆ Sexual orientation and activities of Deaf people parallel those of the general hearing gay/heterosexual population.
- ◆ Deaf youth have less biological knowledge, are more susceptible to sexual myths, and tend to engage in more risky sexual activities than their hearing peers.
- ◆ For some Deaf people, sex is viewed as a path towards social acceptance in the Deaf community.

Social issues:

- ◆ One fear within the Deaf community is the “Deaf grapevine” through which both positive and negative information is transmitted.
- ◆ The community tends to be conservative in its view toward gays, lesbians and other subgroups.

Why is American Sign Language so important in the Deaf community?

To understand the role of ASL in the Deaf community, we need to understand the context in which this community exists.

The single fact of being Deaf usually entails a whole set of shared experiences among Deaf people. The vast majority of Deaf people attend residential schools where Deaf students eat, sleep, study and play together. Throughout their school and adult years, Deaf people are also drawn together by numerous sport activities and events for Deaf people, including regional tournaments and the World Games for the Deaf. Special tours, newsletters, and school reunions are other means of drawing Deaf people together. The result of this continuous contact in academic, social, and job-related situations is that Deaf people have formed a cohesive and mutually supportive community.

Approximately 92% of Deaf people have hearing parents. Those parents use a verbal language (English), a language that the Deaf child can not hear or learn with ease. It is at school, with peers, that most personal and social information-sharing occurs and where close relationships are established through a language specially shaped for the eyes rather than the ears. A language passed on by Deaf parents whose children then teach it to other Deaf children.

At the heart of every community is language. This language embodies the thoughts and experiences of its users and they, in turn, learn about their culture and share it with their peers. Thus, Deaf people learn about their own culture and share their experience with each other through American Sign Language.

American Sign Language:

- ◆ ASL is a linguistically complete language in visual-gesture form.
- ◆ ASL has its own vocabulary, idioms, grammar and syntax that are different from the English language.
- ◆ The elements of ASL consist of handshapes, position, movement and orientation of the hands to the body.
- ◆ ASL also uses space, direction and speed of movements, and facial expressions to help convey meaning.
- ◆ To understand ASL, we need to understand the context in which the Deaf community exists.
- ◆ ASL embodies the thoughts and experiences of Deaf users through culture-sharing and learning.
- ◆ ASL is considered the native language of many Deaf people.
- ◆ Not all Deaf people identify with ASL as their primary language.
- ◆ Most important of all, ASL can be understood only through signing, not in writing.

Communication Tips

Deaf people communicate in different ways, depending on several factors: age at which deafness began, degree of deafness, language skills, speech abilities, personality, intelligence, family environment, and educational background.

Some Deaf people are more easily understood than others. Some use speech only, or a combination of sign language, finger spelling, speech, writing, body language and facial expression. You can communicate with Deaf people in several ways, and always remember they are more than willing to facilitate communication with you. The key is to find out which combination of techniques works best with each Deaf person you encounter. Keep in mind that it is not how you exchange ideas but that you try.

Communicating with Deaf People

What to do when a Deaf person comes into the agency/shelter:

One-to-One

- 1) Do not panic. Be calm and patient. Give them a chance to receive the help they need.
- 2) First, speak normally, asking what they need. Maintain eye contact. Do not exaggerate mouth movements.
- 3) If they do not understand, then try gesture. Use basic words to gesture, like eating, sleeping, need shelter and so on.
- 4) If that does not work, ask if they can write. Using your hands (One hand as a paper and the other hand to pretend to write on your hand) get them to write to you.
- 5) When writing, use simple sentences. Ask if they would like an interpreter. If the client does not want an interpreter, continue to

write back and forth.

6) Look directly at the Deaf person when communicating at all times. Eye contact is important!

Written Communication

- ◆ When using writing as a form of communication, take into consideration the Deaf person's English reading and writing skills.
- ◆ Look for a broad meaning in the Deaf person's writing. Ignore grammatical errors. Break down the person's sentences into point form for clarity.
- ◆ Keep your sentences simple, clear and to the point.
- ◆ Some Deaf people may have difficulty understanding unfamiliar vocabulary.
- ◆ Use closed questions.
- ◆ Often, asking the person to rephrase information is the best way to clear up misunderstandings.

Communicating with Hard of Hearing People

What to do when a Hard of Hearing person comes into the agency/ shelter:

One-to-One

Get the Hard of Hearing person's attention before speaking. Call out the person's name, if that is not successful, a tap on the shoulder, a wave, or another visual signal usually does the trick.

Key the Hard of Hearing person into the topic of discussion. Hard of Hearing people need to know what subject matter is to be discussed in order to pick up words that help them follow the conversation. This is especially important for Hard of Hearing people who depend on speechreading.

Speak slowly and clearly, but do not yell, exaggerate, or over-pronounce. Exaggeration and overemphasis of words distorts lip movements, making speechreading more difficult. Try to enunciate each word, without force or tension. Short sentences are easier to understand than long ones.

Look directly at the Hard of Hearing person when speaking. Avoid turning away to write on the board or pull something from a file.

Do not place anything in your mouth when speaking. Mustaches that obscure the lips, smoking, pencil chewing, and putting your hand in front of your face all make it difficult for a Hard of Hearing person to follow what is being said.

Maintain eye contact with a Hard of Hearing person. Eye contact conveys the feeling of direct communication. Even if an interpreter is present, maintain eye contact with a Hard of Hearing person.

Late-Deafened People

The term “Late-Deafened” refers to people who became deaf later in life. They may lose their hearing at any age, suddenly, or over time, due to age, disease or accident.

Late-Deafened people may depend on more English-based communication and technology such as writing, computerized notetaking or real-time captioning. Computerized notetaking and Real-time captioning uses a laptop computer or screen to print the written English interpretation of the spoken word. It accurately represents content and intent of the message. As with ASL interpreters, notetakers or real-time captioners are present solely to facilitate communication. They do not interject personal opinions or act as advocates. Some Late-Deafened people use sign language and may request interpreters for their appointments.

Technology/Access

Answering a TTY call

Place the telephone handset on the TTY coupler with the phone wire to your left (if your TTY is not plugged directly into a phone line). You and the caller will type back and forth, using GA (go ahead) to signal to the other person to type, and SKSK (stop keying) to end the conversation. For more helpful TTY terms, look on page 17.



Using Bell Relay Service

The toll-free Bell Canada Relay Service (BCRS) transmits calls between voice and TTY callers. A relay operator types your message to a TTY user and reads you the user's response.

When you call BCRS, give the operator your name, area code and telephone number. Then give the name, area code and telephone number of the person you are calling. Speak slowly so the operator can type what you are saying. The operator will place the call and tell you to go ahead when the person you are calling answers.

Bell Canada Relay Service (24 hours, 7 days)

Voice to TTY: 1-800-855-0511

TTY to Voice: 711

Technical Devices Program

The Canadian Hearing Society

271 Spadina Road

Toronto, Ontario M5R 2V3

Monday to Friday - 9:00 to 5:00pm.

Voice: (416) 928-2503

TTY: (416) 928-2509

Fax: (416) 928-2526

www.chs.ca

How to Use Sign Language Interpreter Services

Who uses sign language interpreter services?

Deaf, hard of hearing and hearing individuals and groups such as agencies, organizations, schools, employers and businesses are all consumers of interpreter services. Interpreters facilitate communication between persons (Deaf and hard of hearing) who use sign language and persons who do not use sign language. For many Deaf people, this is customary means of communication.

Who pays for interpreter services?

Deaf people have a right to access community services. The fee for service is paid by the agency, service provider, school, hospital, employer, legal service, etc. The Deaf consumer is not expected to pay for accessibility. Interpreter services are part of the legal, financial, and moral obligations of society. Just as ramps and elevators are supplied for people in wheelchairs so too should sign language interpreters be supplied for Deaf and hard of hearing people.

The principle of accessibility is supported by the Ontario Human Rights Code, the 1997 Supreme Court Eldridge decision and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Where do I make the request?

You can contact any one of the Ontario Interpreter Services (OIS) offices at The Canadian Hearing Society (CHS) nearest you between 9:00am and 5:00pm Monday through Friday. Ask for the OIS Assignment Co-ordinator.

Voice: (416) 964-9595

TTY: (416) 964-0023

Notice is required to book an interpreter. How much notice?

There is a critical shortage of available interpreters. The more notice you can give, the greater the chances for finding an interpreter. CHS has at least one staff interpreter in most regional offices who does community interpreting. However, if the staff interpreter is not available, OIS has a registry of freelance interpreters who may be available for the assignment.

OIS recommends making non-emergency request at least 4 weeks in advance of the assignment. Every attempt will be made to fill your request; however, all requests are subject to the availability of interpreters. Priority will be given to those requests involving mental health, medical and legal matters.

Things you should tell the OIS Assignment Co-ordinator:

The following information is critical to process the request:

- 1) Your name and telephone number.
- 2) Date and time that you need an interpreter.
- 3) Length of assignment. (If more than two hours, two interpreters will be needed.)
- 4) Location of assignment, address, the name of the building, court of clinic, the floor and room number.
- 5) Type of assignment. (One-to-one meeting, group meeting, appointment, interview, lecture)
- 6) Nature of assignment. (medical/dental, mental health, employment, educational, social services, personal business, legal)
- 7) Estimated number of hearing persons and Deaf persons present.

- 8) Names of the Deaf persons and their preferences for interpreters, if known. (Often Deaf people have a specific interpreter they prefer. Request interpreters will be contacted to honor these preferences. If there is an interpreter you prefer not to work with, feel free to inform OIS.)
- 9) Contact person (whom the interpreter could contact if necessary) and phone number.
- 10) Special equipment to be used (microphone, overhead projectors, and video).
- 11) Materials that can be sent to the interpreter in advance (handouts, agenda, and texts).
- 12) Billing information. (name of person to whom the bill is sent; department, organization, address)
- 13) Whether it is a one-time assignment or an ongoing assignment. (If it is the latter, please specify for how long.)

Your ability to supply as much information as possible will permit OIS to begin searching for an interpreter immediately. OIS will notify you as soon as the assignment as been filled.

Cancellation or change of request:

Please report any changes or cancellations as soon as possible. Since interpreters are in high demand, this information will assist in a more efficient use of interpreters.

If cancellations are not made 48 hours before the scheduled assignment, you will be billed.

The cost:

OIS has a fee for service policy. Organizations, businesses, government and service providers, including hospitals, are responsible for the cost of making their service accessible and are charged a fee for service by OIS regardless of who requests the interpreter: 2-hour minimum, \$45/hr for non-profits, \$50/hr for all other assignments.

Can I give feedback about the interpreter?

Yes. You can share feedback, compliments and complaints, with the Regional Director at CHS office nearest you or the OIS Provincial Director at the Toronto head office of CHS. With your permission, the feedback will be shared with the interpreter.

Difference between Interpreter and Signer

Interpreter

- ◆ A certified, trained professional.
- ◆ Bound by Code of Ethics; will protect client confidentiality.
- ◆ Trained to facilitate communication.
- ◆ Stays within his/her role as expected of any interpreter.
- ◆ Interprets everything that is said or signed.
- ◆ Skilled with interpreting, transliterating, sign to voice, and voice to sign.
- ◆ Has various communications and signing modes.
- ◆ Has knowledge of deafness/culture.

Signer/Communicator

- ◆ Not certified; not trained professionally
- ◆ Often is a friend or family member.
- ◆ Not bound by the Code of Ethics; no client confidentiality.
- ◆ No idea of the interpreter's role.

- ◆ Unable to say or sign everything.
- ◆ No skills with interpreting, transliterating, sign to voice, or voice to sign.
- ◆ Limited or basic signing only.
- ◆ No knowledge of deafness/culture.

Some Helpful TTY Terms

| | |
|------|--|
| ASAP | - As soon as possible! |
| CD | - Could |
| CUL | - See you later |
| GA | - Go ahead (your turn to talk) |
| HD | - Hold Please |
| MSG | - Message |
| MTG | - Meeting |
| NBR | - Number |
| OIC | - Oh, I see |
| OPR | - Operator |
| PLS | - Please |
| Q | - Question mark (“SO WHEN WILL WE MEET Q GA”) |
| R | - Are |
| SHD | - Should |
| SK | - Goodbye |
| SKSK | - Stop Keying, means end of conversation |
| TMW | - Tomorrow |
| TTY | - Teletypewriter |
| UR | - Your |

SUGGEST READING “GA & SK EQUIETTE”

Contact Agencies

Bob Rumball Centre for the Deaf

2395 Bayview Ave.

North York, Ontario M2L 1A2

(TTY): (416) 449-2728

(V): (416) 449-9651

(F): (416) 449-8881

www.bobrumball.org

- * Happy Hands Preschool
- * Adult Residential Program
- * Internal Residential Program
- * Supportive Independent Living Program
- * Senior Services
- * Adult Education & Training
- * Vocational Training
- * Sign Language Services
- * Volunteer Services
- * Fundraising Department
- * Dietary/Housekeeping

Canadian Association of the Deaf:

251 Bank Street Unit 203

Ottawa, Ontario K2P 1X3

(TTY): (613) 565-2882

(V): (613) 565-2882

(F): (613) 565-1207

www.cad.ca

- * Provides major Library and Resource Centre on Deafness
- * Promotes & Protects rights, needs and concerns for Deaf Canadians
- * Consultation & Information
- * Research on Deaf Issues
- * Offers assistance to Deaf organizations & service agencies
- * Provides Advocacy Services

The Canadian Hearing Society:

271 Spadina Road
Toronto, Ontario M5R 2V3
(TTY): (416) 928-2505
(V): (416) 928-2504
(F): (416) 928-2523
www.chs.ca

- * Employment Services
- * General Social Services
- * Hearing Health Care Counselling (Seniors)
- * Marketing Communications
- * Ontario Interpreter Services
- * Audiology
- * CET Management Training
- * Educational Support Services (ESS)
- * Hearing Aid Program (HAP)
- * Hearing Help Classes
- * Literacy & Basic Skills
- * Sign Language Services
- * Technical Devices Program
- * Regional Offices

Canadian National Institute for the Blind:

1929 Bayview Ave.
Toronto, Ontario M4G 3E8
(TTY): (416) 480-7036
(V): (416) 480-7417
(F): (416) 480-7699
www.cnib.ca

- * Literacy Services
- * Case Management
- * Mobility Services
- * Intervenor Services

CONNECT Counselling Services:

271 Spadina Road, 4th Floor

Toronto, Ontario M5R 2V3

(TTY): (416) 928-2511

(V): (416) 928-2512

(F): (416) 928-2513

connect@chs.ca

Mental Health Services for Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Deafened adults over 16 years old.

- * Counselling
- * Offers Assessment (Psychological)
- * Psychotherapy
- * Case Management
- * Mental Health
- * Wellness Education Consultation

Education Wife Assault

427 Bloor St. West, Box 7

Toronto, Ontario M5S 1X7

(TTY): (416) 968-3372

(V): (416) 968-3422

(FAX): (416) 968-2026

- * Educational Activities
- * Information/Referral Services
- * Research Services
- * Community Projects
- * Language of service: English & ASL interpreters provided with notice.

Goal: Ontario Literacy for Deaf People (G.O.L.D.):

150 Central Park Dr. Suite 106

Brampton, Ontario L6T 2T9

(TTY): (905)458-0499

(V): (905) 458-0286

(F): (905) 458-9348

- * Fall & Spring Conferences
- * Provides Workshops
- * Deaf Literacy
- * Communicates with MTCU (Ministry of Training for Colleges & Universities)

Ontario Association for the Deaf:

271 Spadina Road, 3rd Floor
Toronto, Ontario M5R 2V3
(TTY): (416) 513-1893
(F): (416) 413-4822
www.deafontario.org

- * Criminal Justice Issues
- * Advocating Rights
- * Women Against Violence
- * Deaf Outreach Project: HIV/AIDS, Advocacy, Provides Workshops and presentations on HIV/AIDS, Refers to Doctors, provides Interpreter services (HIV/AIDS related only)
- * Deaf Homeless Project
- * Immigration Issues

Silent Voice:

699 Coxwell Ave.
Toronto, Ontario M4C 3C1
(TTY): (416) 463-3928
(V): (416) 463-1104
(F): (416) 778-1876

- * Special Assistance: Filling out English Forms, making voice Telephone calls or making Community referrals
- * Family Communication Programs
- * Youth Program and Community
- * Sign Language Summer Program
- * Saturday Program
- * Tax Clinic

- * Apartment Search
- * Legal Clinic (with Flemington Legal Services)
- * Resumes

Helpful Checklist for Accessibility

- ◆ KIT developed by OAD
- ◆ Light strobes for alarm sounds
- ◆ Clock alarm with light strobe or flashing lamp
- ◆ Baby cry alarm with light strobe or flashing lamp
- ◆ Door knock or buzzer with light strobe or flashing lamp
- ◆ TTY readily available and in viewable areas
- ◆ TTY numbers list for emergency contacts readily available
- ◆ Interpreter contact list readily.
- ◆ Provide closed-captioned TV and videos.
- ◆ Informational KITS or brochures in plain English and visual graphics readily available, as well as videos with Closed Captioning or ASL
- ◆ List of social activities in Deaf community—calendar of events
- ◆ List of food banks available with locations
- ◆ List of second hand stores or places that provides free clothing, furniture, etc.

Resources

National AIDS Training Seminar for the Deaf Community.
Taking Responsibility: Training the Educators.
Hollywood, California: 1992

Ontario Association of the Deaf. Working with Deaf
Patients: A guide for Medical Professionals.
Toronto: 2000