

WORKING WITH DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING VICTIMS/SURVIVORS

Deaf Culture

- Identify as a member of a culturally marginalized group
- American Sign Language and other countries' sign languages have grammar & syntax that **differ greatly** from spoken & written languages, including English
- Behavioral norms include maintaining eye contact, getting attention in **physical ways** e.g., waving hands, tapping on shoulders, stomping on the floor, & flicking lights
- Often use sign language interpreters for the purpose of facilitating communication in official capacities (victim services, law enforcement, hospitals, attorneys, etc.)
- Use videophones, texting, and/or email to make calls or send messages, including **in cases of emergency**
- Some may wear hearing aids, cochlear implants, or they may speak; this does **not** mean they can hear 100%

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

* Deaf and hard of hearing people are a protected class under the ADA. Title III entities, including nonprofit agencies, are required to "take appropriate steps to ensure that communications with people with disabilities are as effective as communications with others." They also "shall furnish appropriate auxiliary aids and services" to ensure that D/HH people have "equal opportunity to participate in, and enjoy the benefits of, a service, program, or activity." Auxiliary aids & services examples: qualified interpreters, assistive listening systems, and real-time captioning. For more information visit: www.ada.gov/effective-comm.htm

* "A public entity shall not rely on a minor child to interpret or facilitate communication except in an emergency involving an imminent threat to the safety or welfare of an individual or the public where there is no interpreter available." Use of a minor may lead to traumatization of the child.

* "A qualified interpreter "is able to interpret effectively, accurately, and impartially, both receptively and expressively, using any necessary specialized vocabulary." Colorado Revised Statute 13-90-(201-210) also requires the use of a legal certified interpreter in state courts.

Hard of Hearing Experiences

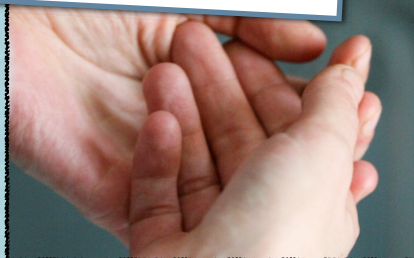
- **Variety** in level of acuity
- Some may identify with Deaf culture; **many others do not.**
- Some sign to some degree; **many others use spoken language**
- May use technological devices like hearing aids, captioned phones, Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART), etc.
- Technological devices are **not** a "cure" for any hearing loss; communication may still pose a challenge

D/HH PEOPLE'S VALUES:



EYES

- Need to maintain eye contact to follow intention; ASL grammar rules also involve eyebrow movement
- Visual learners



HANDS

- Necessary for sign language
- Gestures from non-signers give visual cues



WHY?

Eyes and hands = access to information, communication, and the rest of the world.



Communication Tips

Deaf

- Keep writing **simple**. English may not be their first language.
- Reduce visual “noise” when possible, allowing the victim to focus on your questions. Make sure your **face and body are illuminated**; do not stand in front of a bright light or shine a bright light into their eyes.
- Ask how they prefer to communicate. If requested, follow **agency protocol** for obtaining a certified sign language interpreter. Do **not** use a child or family member to interpret.
- When using an interpreter, face the Deaf person and speak directly, using **“you” statements** instead of “tell him/her.”



IMPORTANT TO NOTE

- * Some people are DeafBlind or have low vision. They may need additional accommodations such as tactile interpreters, Braille, screen readers, etc. for effective communication.
- * ASL is the 5th most commonly used non-English language in the United States!
- * In abusive relationships, the perpetrator will often **hide, destroy, or remove** the batteries from a technological device (e.g. videophone, cell phone) that the victim uses to contact friends, family, and/or emergency assistance. FYI, many videophones require a dedicated remote control in order to dial any number, including 911.
- * Some people may request a different interpreter even when a qualified one has already been assigned. This can be due to: the client knowing the interpreter on a personal basis (conflict of interest), the client's inability to understand that particular interpreter's signing style; or the client's appraisal that the interpreter is not voicing his/her statements accurately.
- * If you need an interpreter, check CCDHH's Resource Directory online for a list of ASL interpreter agencies. Talk with your agency about budgeting for interpreters annually; if at times there is a financial hardship, contact DOVE and we will try our best to support you in your efforts to provide communication access! Note: DOVE does not have interpreters on staff.

Hard of Hearing

- Ask how they prefer to communicate. On average, only **30% of speech can be read on the lips**. Many prefer not to rely solely on lip-reading.
- **Rephrase** your question if you are not understood the first time. Don't repeat the same thing over and over.
- **Reduce background noise** when possible. Hard of hearing people often rely on residual hearing for comprehension.
- **Face the victim** and use expressions and gestures to supplement your questions as much as possible.

Deaf Overcoming Violence through Empowerment

24-Hr Crisis Line: 303-831-7874
hotline@deafdove.org
www.deafdove.org

Rocky Mountain ADA Center

1-800-949-4232
www.adainformation.org

Domestic Violence Initiative Serving Women, Men and Children with Disabilities

Crisis Line: 303-839-5510
www.dvforwomen.org

Colorado Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

(communication technology devices,
interpreting agencies)

720-457-3679
email.ccdhh@state.co.us
[www.ccdhh.com//community/
resources.aspx](http://www.ccdhh.com//community/resources.aspx)

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Mental Health Center of Denver's Deaf Counseling Services

Mobile Crisis: 303-602-7220
accesscenter@mhcd.org
[mhcd.org/what-we-do/deaf-counseling-
services](http://mhcd.org/what-we-do/deaf-counseling-services)