



Optimizing Access for Deaf Survivors



Pendant by Sarah Young Bear-Brown

DeafHope

Based in San Francisco Bay Area

Services:

- Culturally responsive DVSV advocacy
- Language support
- Accompaniment (shelter, hospital, court, police interviews)
- Peer counseling and support group

Core values:

- Deaf and American Sign Language
- Social Justice
- Collectivism
- Confidentiality
- Survivor-centered, Trauma-informed care

Goals for Today

- Prioritize your self-care
- Engage! Ask your questions anytime (plus Q&A at the end)
- Learn about general dynamics in Deaf communities (not homogenous experience!)
- Identify audism and systems barriers
- Get some tips for effective communication

Marginalization of Deaf People

- Involuntary sterilization
- Eugenics, Holocaust
- Oralism, Alexander Graham Bell
- Physical punishment for use of ASL



Belief that hearing better than deaf;

1. audism is the hearing way of dominating, restructuring, and exercising authority over the deaf community

2. Advantages based on hearing ability.

3. It can apply to individuals who can speak spoken English over others who does not.

A person's worth solely depends on one's ability to speak spoken English.

Example: Brittany vs Sally. Sally can speak spoken English, Brittany is not as fluent in spoken English. Brittany is more qualified for the same job position Sally is applying for, yet Sally is chosen based on her ability to speak. Hollywood chooses hearing actors over deaf actress (SAB, most recent dilemma with Julianne while there are plenty of deaf actress/actors

As advocate see many situations embedded in system

SA survivors experience this in the CJ system often from the second they are involved in the CJ system.

deaf mothers are automatically assumed incompetent, unfit because they are deaf
Layer DV - double strike - many deaf mothers lost children to the systems just because deaf and DV

A little about me....



Aracelia Aguilar
Empowerment Director

- Established in January 2003 by women from the Deaf community
- Only Deaf-run, independent DV/SV agency in California
- Our mission at DeafHope is to end domestic and sexual violence in Deaf communities through empowerment, education and services.

- All DV/SV services except shelter (Solano to Santa Clara County)
- Shared leadership, team approach
 - DeafSAFE (Modesto to Redding)
- DV/SV program under NorCal Services for Deaf & Hard of Hearing
- Provides direct services to survivors of DV/SV & stalking in 24 counties since 2009
- All DV/SV services except shelter and legal counsel

Marginalization of Deaf People

Being deaf is an abnormality, a condition that should be cured or fixed



culture option is not included (use of ASL)
baby perceived as disabled and view as a
grieving process!

disabled framework as they need to be
fixed, that their culture/language/identity is not
valuable and wrong.

people with disabilities, deaf people are proud
of who they are, and reject the medical model

and any efforts to "fix" them.

challenge to be grouped in with disability communities, organizations and groups because communication access is a significant barrier.

Deaf professionals, advocates often confront isolation and rejection when working with disability professionals because of communication access. "We can't afford interpreters" is the regular message.

we often have success working with other language minority advocacy groups because of the

common experience of a linguistic and cultural identity. Unfortunately there are times where we still face barriers with linguistic minority advocates and Deaf survivors fall through the crack.

Marginalization of Deaf People



- Oral approach: lipreading and speech therapy
- Normality and assimilation
- Do not use sign language
- Cochlear Implants without access to language

Often the medical model support "fixing" concept when it comes to Deaf people.

This model is usually the first model introduced to hearing parents at the birth of their deaf child.

Deaf babies don't get unbiased options and they are often told that CI will make them hearing and normal again.

ASL is often not involved in those options.

Oral and lip-reading approach is heavily used.
Invest hours in speech tx over education and
normal childhood

They focus on the concept that hearing is
normal and the child needs to hear to be
normal.

It is critical to understand that the ability to
hear does not equal to language acquisition
via sound (use myself as an example.)



These are images of ci, device implanted into the brain with the intention to send sound

reality of a medical procedure on babies when parents are not given full information about risks/limitations/alternatives to ci

The medical system does not offer choice, restricts information about the

deaf community as an option, misleads
parents about the effectiveness of ci - playing
on their grief and ignorance. their child will not
become hearing

how deaf bodies are often patronized and
"used." relates very much to high rates of
violence done to deaf people. deaf people not
given autonomy or decision-making abilities.
not included in major educational and medical
research on deaf babies.

Let it be a personal choice

Audism:

a term coined by Tom Humphries in 1975

oppression and marginalization of Deaf individuals

“the notion that one is superior based on one’s ability to hear or behave in the manner of one who hears.”

Remember as a child drive through mcdonalds with my mom deaf drove up to window had our order already written on paper passed to the worker at the window. Refused to accept the order - said you **MUST** speak your order into the machine

Family gatherings. Ill tell you later. Oh, she just talking about her experience at the store.

New form of oppression: Audism. Leaving Survivor out.

Abuser leaving information out. We allies, do the same when there is communication barrier

Survivors

Story: DDA office wont provide Interpreter and said we are not talking about the case and continue to discuss with the husband.

If your partner is hearing, family members will ask, “how is s/he doing” while you’re standing right there.

Audism can come in many forms:

- Intentional and unintentional exclusion from receiving information and making decisions
- Not providing accommodations or withholding resources
- Lower expectations of success
- Viewing hearing culture as superior to Deaf culture
- Imposing parental expectations of conformity
- Implicit negative bias regarding a Deaf person's intelligence, credibility, or capacity

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Cultural Model

- Diverse Deaf identities include: Deaf, deaf, DeafBlind, DeafDisabled, late-deafened, hard of hearing, dominant ASL, dominant English, bicultural
- Cultural norms/values
- Language
- Community
- Expressive arts
- Deaf and Disability



Introduce the term: hearing difference rather than hearing loss because we are no different, or a lesser being because of our hearing difference s. We just do not fit in the typical “hearing” box.

Cultural Norms: eye contact, attention getting, open and direct, hugs instead of handshakes, interest in other people’s connection with Deaf People

We are more frequent to touch because we give cues.

Sign language¹ is central to any Deaf person for their intellectual, social, linguistic and emotional growth but to truly internalize the language, they must have the culture that is embedded in the language

Poetry/Art: Signing 1-10 or using ABC handshape for a story. Art wit handshape.

As allies, educate yourself after this conference about deaf culture, go to deaf events, check out YouTube and other websites for videos and information.

- Syntax and grammar
- Spatial and visual rules
- Three dimensional, directional



Conveys information through eyes, face, head and shoulders. Can also convey subtle, concrete and abstract complex thoughts.

has all the features of any other language
standing too close

not universal (MSL, BSL)

Not signed english words

The car swerved and hit the tree (english) vs ASL visual. 3D example.

Examples of visual rules: hands waving, eye contact, lighting, etc

Liike I mentioned, their english proficiency does not determine their cognitive ability because they can communicate just fine with ASL.

Abusers will try to manipulate and say that's how we talk in ASL. Standing too close. Signing erraticly.

HERMIT CRAB'S TALE

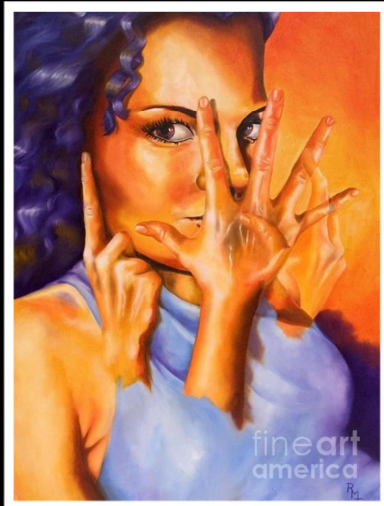
Dack Virnig, ASL Poet

Hospital uses their nurse who knows a little ASL to help interpret for police. There is communication breakdown between survivor and nurse. Survivor appears to become more distraught and uncooperative.

Remember SA is a very traumatic experience for anyone. When SA survivors share their story, their body

language and facial expression may be extreme to the point the professionals label them as uncooperative, too emotional, crazy. Those labels can lead the CJ system to automatically question their creditability.

The following exercises will give you a glimpse into the reality Deaf survivor.



- 90% of Deaf people are born to hearing parents, most of whom are not signers
- Approximately 10% of Deaf people learn culture and language from their family - Heritage Signers / CODAs
- Deaf culture is most often passed peer-to-peer rather than parent to child

Language/Cultural minority rather than disability

during the most crucial phase of language acquisition no one knew to use visual communication, there was the assumption that he was getting information hearing. When they learned my dad was deaf, his parents grieved, weren't sure what to do, turned to the

doctors for guidance. They were told they needed to make him as normal as possible. Not to allow him to use ASL. He went to regular schools with no interpreters and was expected to figure it out. Common experience. This is the reality deaf presenters explained language delay and lack of access to information, value of deaf peers and deaf schools.

When you are interacting with a deaf survivor, you cannot assume anything about their language use, you cannot assume (as the system usually does) that the way they use language is a reflection of their cognitive ability. Many times at DeafHope we see prosecutors unwilling to move forward with DVSV cases involving a deaf survivor because they don't believe they will be a

credible witness.

Fight over Deaf education

Forced to "mainstream" with teachers who don't know sign language and no Deaf peers

When I attended to CSDF I acquired more of my Deaf Culture identity there because I was not getting it through mainstreaming and my hearing parents. Deaf Culture like I mentioned earlier in the slides are crucial to our identity.

ASL-Influenced English

Q: Did you file a police report?

A: Yet.

Q: Did they hurt you?

A: Many hit me hit me, schedule.

Q: What happened after you were raped?

A: Me go hospital. Found out me stuck.

- 25% of spoken language is visible on the lips
- Closure skills: educated guesswork and context
- Bilingual Deaf people (ASL/English) have strong closure skills
- Deaf survivors may lose their closure skills when under stress and trauma

Lip reading and writing notes are not ideal for most communication

What is the first motor skills we lose when we have medical condition, or trauma in general? Speech. (think stroke)

Officers tend to read the written English out loud to hearing individuals when they

are in trauma. Is it fair to expect an individual who most likely have experience language deprivation as discussed in previous slides, in addition to audism and communication barriers in the system who is in trauma to be expected to read lips?

concept of closure skills

Do lip reading exercises: Six, Sex and peach, beach and ILY, olive juice

Try turning on the news tonight and mute one news segment and see how much you can catch and understand what the news person is talking about.

Now, when a survivor is in a crisis mode, their ability to lipread is impossible because they

are processing what just happened and expect to figure out what people are saying is not fair. Especially when sharing very sensitive information and it could easily be misunderstood and it could affect the survivor in court if it comes to that point.

DV and Deaf Survivors

- AUDISM - Systems predisposed against Deaf people / mothers
- Using audism and systemic barriers as a tactic
 - criticizing language use
 - preventing children from using ASL
 - controlling information, exclusion from decisions
- Abuse of Small community, Deaf Network
 - using personal reputation / power
 - hard to keep information private
 - multiple roles



Visual for LEP survivors

Safety Planning

- Deaf survivors not wanting to engage with system
- System Response causes more harm for Deaf Survivors
- Harm Reduction
- How to honor survivors where they are using SCA approach

Interpreters: You Get What You Pay For

The cost of paying for qualified interpreters can be high...

The price we pay for missed information, misunderstandings, and limited access is always higher.

SA Story: laying down on back vs laying down on stomach and interpreter interpreted it wrong and judge assumed survivor was changing her story and questioned her credibility.

Share my story of a rogue agency. Encourage them to contact us for interpreter recommendations to ensure that an qualified interpreter is provided for

SA survivors.

Share the story about how interpreter can interpret incorrectly: there are many signs for abuse (HIT). When a police officer interviews a survivor, they ask “ did the person sexually abuse you using the “hit” sign when the survivor was sexually assaulted by a drug and she was unconscious, hence no hitting to her knowledge occurred, so her answer based on the “HIT” concept would be no. This leads to a weaker case and ultimately, her case being dropped.

ADA law is critical. Ive seen where a judge tried to swear in a survivor without an interpreter and her lawyer had to educate the judge about ADA rights.

PRO TIPS:

- Ask the Deaf person for preferred interpreters (small community!)
- Book IN ADVANCE as possible
- Team of two for more than 45 minutes (otherwise risk of compromised quality)
- Industry standards: 2 hour minimum, 48 hour cancellation
- Resist audism, your natural draw to the hearing interpreter - center the person you are serving

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Video Remote Interpreting or Video Relay Services??



uses same technology and interfaces as VRS
PAID, contracted service

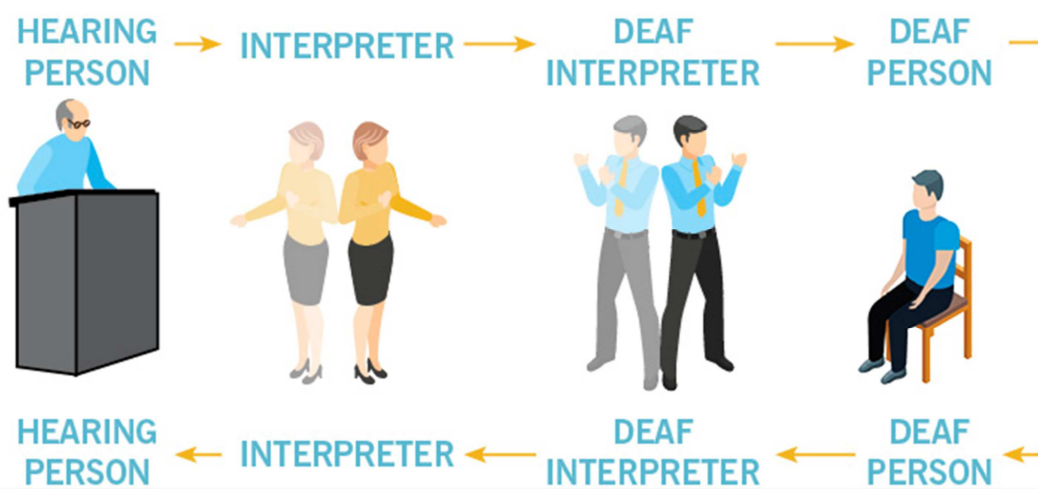
Not as regulated as VRS

Useful for emergency or short in person meetings

Deaf Interpreters (DI)

- WHY is it best practice to have DI??
- Most ASL Interpreters are non-native signers
- Deaf person certified by RID (for court proceedings)
- Fluent in both English and American Sign Language
- Has extensive understanding of Deaf culture
- Experience processing the message in a way best understood by that Deaf person (Deaf Disabled, non-ASL, etc.)
- George's Story

DEAF INTERPRETING THE PROCESS:



video: a facebook video went viral on how a CDI interprets in a hospital setting



Best Practices

- Communication tools
- Accessibility tools/tips
- How can we create effective communication and culturally responsive interactions with Deaf survivors?

NO Cultural Competency - Build Capacity

- Deaf Allyship is not an end goal, it is a lifelong process of learning
- Always ask survivors about accommodations they need – don't assume
- Foster relationships with Deaf people, Deaf service providers and hearing and Deaf interpreters
- Be visible - show that you are committed to providing interpreters, send the message that people are priceless
- Plan for access in your budget

It should be your first question to ask the survivor what accommodation she needs rather than determine which method is more convenient for you. This breaks the oppression cycle.

Foster relationship by learning more about their community and language (take ASL classes)

Deaf community is small so their experience with your service is important.

If you wonder why no Deaf survivor is not coming in? Possibly because not accessible or had a bad experience with the agency.

“If you build it, they will come” Share DeafHope’s story of becoming a part of FJC.

Access for Deaf survivors

1. Line item for language access including interpreters in budget
2. Set up videophone in a private location and learn how it works
3. Install safety equipment such as smoke alarms with flashing lights
4. Make sure televisions and videos have closed captioning
5. Provide accommodations during orientation, one-on-one meetings, house meetings, etc.
6. Revise policies to be inclusive of Deaf survivors

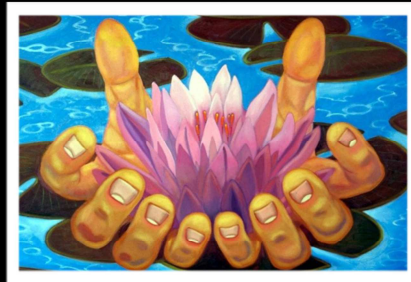
Shelter related accommodations:

Setting up TTY's in locked staff office – Deaf client who did not have access to using the phone while all other clients have access to a payphone
It is not reasonable to require the Deaf survivor to attend meetings without an interpreter.

Handout?

Co-Advocacy Model

Work with advocates from the Deaf community and other communities that the survivor is a part of to develop creative solutions for support and safety



DeafSAFE is here to work with you in collaboration to synergize our resources.

I rarely request ASL interpreters for community events. Why? Because I'm so tired of the typical response: "No, sorry. We don't have money for that. Maybe you could find someone to volunteer?" That response always feels like a punch in the stomach. The underlying message I hear is: "You cost money. You are too expensive. You're not worth the cost or time."

Drago Renteria, Chicax Trans Deaf Activist

What message does it send about the value of a person

Plan ahead for access and create a line item for interpreters in your budgets. Remember that you will usually need two teaming together to prevent fatigue and and inaccuracies in the interpretation. You may need a cdi (make note to do your homework if

this is a new term)

Resources

- [Key Considerations for Serving Deaf Survivors](#)
- [Deaf Interpreters](#)
- [DVSV Education Videos in ASL](#)
- [National Deaf DVSV Hotline](#)
- [Deaf DVSV Agencies](#)

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Thank you!

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