**UNDERSTANDING THE LANGUAGE**

Each of our clients have their own preferred sign language mode that best fits their language needs.

Many years serving our clients we are familiar with their preferred mode. We have the knowledge as service provider to determine the appropriate cultural mediation mode while providing services to the clients.

It is also important to assign the best qualified Sign Language Interpreters who are professionals in knowing how to determine appropriate cultural mediation while providing services to the clients.

As service providers it is necessary to accommodate the mode need of the deaf person otherwise, the deaf person will not receive the message. The mismatch could cause the deaf person to receive the message incorrectly and could cause detrimental harm.

**What is Deaf Culture?**

"Deaf people as a linguistic minority have a common experience of life, and this manifests itself in Deaf culture. This includes beliefs, attitudes, history, norms, values, literary traditions, and art shared by Deaf people.

**What is the Deaf Community?**

“Deaf culture is at the heart of Deaf communities everywhere in the world. Each Deaf community is a cultural group which shares a sign language and a common heritage. Members of Deaf communities all around the world therefore identify themselves as members of a cultural and linguistic group. Identification with the Deaf community is a personal choice and is usually made independent of the individual’s hearing status, and the community is not automatically composed of all people who are Deaf.  The Deaf community may also include family members of Deaf people, sign language interpreters and people who work or socialize with Deaf people who identify with Deaf culture. A person is a member of the Deaf community if he or she self-identifies as a member of the Deaf community, and if other members accept that person as a member. Very often this acceptance is strongly linked to competence in a signed language.”

**What is the difference between deaf and Deaf?**

Deaf with the capitalized D represents people that are members of the Deaf Community, a linguistically unique community that used American Sign Language as their primary/preferred mode of communication. Deaf with the lower-case d (deaf) refers to people with any degree of hearing loss. Identity is something that is decided by the individual.

**Is Sign Language a Universal Language?**

Sign Language is NOT universal, different countries have their own sign languages.

**Can all Deaf people read lips?**

Reading lips is not something specifically that Deaf people can do, it is something that Deaf people have done and sometimes need to do in order to exist and participate in a conversation where signing is not an option. Most people cannot read lips, it is also virtually impossible to read lips accurately 100%.

**Can all Deaf people talk?**

No, it is a personal preference whether the Deaf person prefers to use their voice or not. There is much controversy surrounding this and history books to explain why. The short answer is that not all Deaf people took speech class, want to speak, feel comfortable speaking or have ever used their voice. It is after all, their choice.

**Why don’t all Deaf people wear hearing aids?**

Many Deaf persons use hearing aids and they work great for them, for others sound amplification does not work. It depends on where your hearing is in decibels. It is the individual’s choice, based on their body and preferences.

**Education for the Deaf**

MAINSTREAM EDUCATION: is going to a local high school with hearing students, the deaf student will most likely have an interpreter throughout the day interpreting what is being taught by the non-signing hearing teacher.

 RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS FOR THE DEAF: Deaf students learn alongside deaf peers, taught by a signing teacher. Many residential schools have dormitories and offer housing for students during the school year.

**How do Deaf people know when someone is at the door?**

Wireless doorbells that are attached to an alert system which sends a signal to their inside lights or lamps, every time sometime rings the doorbell the lights flashes off and on.

**How do Deaf people communicate on the phone?**

Teletype devices, Videophones, Facetime, Video Texting, Text Messaging, Skype, etc.

**How do I call a deaf person?**

Call the number they gave you; when you call, you will be automatically connected to them through an interpreter. You will hear the interpreter, but you are talking to the Deaf person. Meanwhile, on their end, the Deaf person will be looking at a video screen of the interpreter who will relay what you say. Please note for slight lag time; and when you get a call that says, "Interpreter with a call...." - do not assume it's a marketing call; it's actually coming from a deaf person. (From a Deaf person's experience: we get hung up on a lot because people assume it's prank calls or annoying marketing calls.)

**What is the Video Relay Service?**

It is a service provider that connects Deaf persons with certified interpreters to make calls, anytime, 24/7. There are many different companies that provide VRS, and deaf people can choose whichever they like the best. (Tip: "Best" means having great interpreters and easy-to-use interface.)

**What is an interpreter for?**

To facilitate communication between a Deaf and hearing person. There are also Certified Deaf Interpreters (CDI) who specialize in cultural and linguistic exchanges.

**How do I talk to a Deaf person when there is an interpreter?**

When using an interpreter, their role is to facilitate communication between the Deaf person and the non-signer. They will speak in first person as the Deaf person, you should look at the Deaf person and speak directly to them instead of “tell him or her”.

**How do I get a Deaf person’s attention?**

Waving your arm, tapping on the shoulder, using a third person to get their attention for you, flashing lights, tapping the table (to create a vibration) and tapping your foot on the floor (again, for vibrations).

**Is it rude to watch Deaf people signing?**

Yes. It is akin to eavesdropping, except you are staring directly at the people having the conversation, who are most likely very aware that you are staring at them. It is ok to say hi, and tell them you are learning sign language.

**How do I know how to communicate with a Deaf person?**

The deaf person will let you know their preferred method of communication, whether it is speaking, reading lips, gesturing, signing, writing, etc.

**How do Deaf people go to the movies?**

Some movies have captions, subtitles, special glasses that display the words or a box that is attached to the seat in front of you that displays the captions. Technology is constantly improving, this is what we have right now.

**How do Deaf people watch TV?**

With closed captions, if you’d like to turn them on: there is a button on your remote that says “CC” or find captioning options under Menu.

**How do Deaf people know if an ambulance or a cop is coming if they can’t hear the sirens?**

Deaf people are very visual, they will see the flashing lights and notice if all the other cars are pulling over.

**Do Deaf people have alarm clocks/ how do they wake up?**

Depending on the Deaf person, some are very light sensitive and will wake up from the sunlight, others have vibrating alarms they put under their pillow and many use their mobile phones.

**Do deaf people have to learn baby sign language before actual ASL?**

ASL is taught, naturally - just like any other languages. Deaf parents sign all the time with their babies (whether deaf or hearing) and they learn and acquire ASL. There are language acquisition milestones (for instance, by 8 months, you should be babbling, and at 10 months, forming a word or two), and so on - for any language. Sign language has the same milestones and babies babble with their hands before developing more to form better 'dexterity' of their hands and fingers to form more clear signs. It goes the same for spoken languages with hearing babies - they babble at first, then start to articulate.

**What is the difference between ASL and baby sign language?**

ASL is a complete language with its own complex grammatical system. "Baby signs" is actually a very simplified, cute version of ASL - it's basically borrowed from ASL for parents to communicate with their babies better as they are young and not yet forming the ability to speak.  Deaf babies start to sign earlier than hearing babies, so it is understandable that hearing parents would like to grab the opportunity to communicate with their babies in a visual way. Teaching your baby "baby signs" is awesome, and please keep this in mind: consider continuing to teach them ASL. Give them more than one language! It's even better.