



***Working with the Deaf Community:
Providing Deaf-friendly and
Accessible Services***

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**SafePlace is ending
sexual and domestic violence
through safety, healing, prevention, and social change.**

**24-hour Hotline
512.267.SAFE (7233)
512.927.9616 TTY for the Deaf community
www.SafePlace.org**



Terminology

- Deaf/deaf
- Hearing-Impaired
- Hard-of-Hearing (HOH)
- Deaf/Blind



Language

- English is a 2nd language for most Deaf people.
- Visual and mental images are central to American Sign Language (ASL).
- ASL's grammar and syntax involve body language, facial expressions, and signing space – don't assume physical gestures or expression are signs of aggression or violence.





Four Components of Deaf Culture

- Linguistic
- Political
- Social
- Audiological



Deafness and hearing loss are legally categorized as disabilities.



www.ada.gov

Ways Deaf People Communicate

- Video Phone
- Pager (text & email)
- Face-to-Face
- Relay Services (Video, Voice, & Instant Messaging)
- TTY



Communicating with Deaf Individuals Face-to-Face

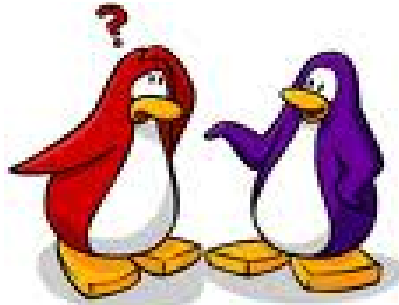
- Maintain eye contact
- Speak naturally & clearly
- Maintain relaxed posture
- Use facial expressions & gestures
- Be aware of 'visual noise'
- Be aware of slang and idioms
- Choose clothing with solid colors when possible
- Ask about preferred communication method(s)



ACTIVITY!



Deaf-friendly = Communication Accessibility



Accessibility at SafePlace

- Video Phones
- Interpreter Online
- In-person interpreters
- DVD at the Shelter
- Webspots in ASL



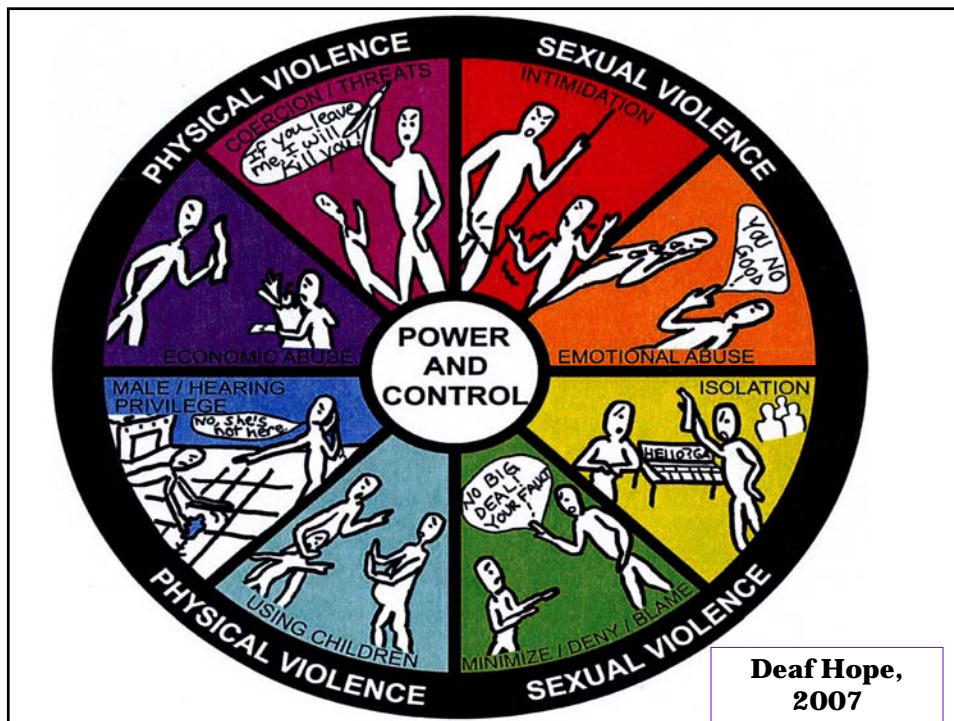
Written Communication with Deaf Individuals

- Written communication ability can also be influenced by the person's current level of trauma.
- Ask if the person would like to write by making paper and pen available during your interaction.
- Examples: "Monday night, 7:00pm meeting – can you come?" or "Need a doctor now?"



When using ASL interpreters...

- **Ask for individual preference for specific interpreters, when possible.**
- **Use 1st person and speak directly to the Deaf person.**
- **Avoid chit-chatting with the interpreter.**
- **Be aware that any and all side comments will be interpreted by the interpreter to the Deaf individual.**



Examples of Abuse Specific to Deaf People

- hearing privilege
- sneaking up behind
- cochlear implants
- turning out lights
- not allowing the learning of ASL
- taking away all communication devices
- no one in the family learning ASL

Questions





Resources

- Baker-Shenk, C., & Cokely, D. (1980). *American sign language*. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University Press.
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- Ladd, P. (2007). *Understanding deaf culture: In search of deafhood*. Tonawanda, NY: Multilingual Matters Ltd.
- Lane, H. (1999). *The mask of benevolence*. USA: DawnSignPress.
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- Sue, D.W., & Sue, D. (2008). *Counseling the culturally diverse: Theory and practice*. (5th ed.). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.



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