



Rochester Model Training Project

Assisting Women Who Are Abused in Our Deaf
and Hard of Hearing Community

Presented at The Children's Institute, Rochester

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and

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Rochester Model Training Project Collaborative

- ◆ Center for Disability Rights and Empire Justice Center
- ◆ Community Training Partners: *Advocacy Services for Abused Deaf Victims, Alternatives for Battered Women, Rochester/Monroe County Domestic Violence Consortium, Regional Center for Independent Living, Seventh Judicial District*



Our Presenters

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Domestic Violence and Disabilities: A Training and Technical Assistance Collaboration

- ◆ Empire Justice Center
- ◆ Center for Disability Rights
- ◆ New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence



Domestic Violence and Disabilities: A Training and Technical Assistance Collaboration

- ◆ Regional Cross-Trainings & Education
- ◆ Technical Assistance
- ◆ Accessibility Self-Assessment Tool for Domestic Violence Programs
- ◆ Listserv on Western New York Law Center
- ◆ Web-based Fact Sheets and Other Resources
- ◆ Rochester Model Training Project



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Today's Training Goals

- ◆ Promote understanding about the unique qualities of Deaf language & culture
- ◆ Increase awareness of domestic violence in the Deaf community
- ◆ Educate advocates about the rights of Deaf survivors and ADA accommodations
- ◆ Help local providers better meet the safety and communication needs of Deaf survivors seeking their services



Deaf Culture 101

- ◆ Medical Model of Deafness
 - Sensory deficiency
 - Seeks to overcome deficiency by surgery or auxiliary aid
- ◆ Cultural Model of Deafness
 - Community Identity
 - Unique shared language



Deaf Culture 101

◆ Don't Use:

- Hearing Impaired
- Deaf and Dumb
- Deaf-Mute

◆ Do Use:

- Deaf
- Hard-of-Hearing
- Late-Deafened



Deaf Culture 101

◆ Deaf

- Profound loss of hearing
- Primarily communicate in sign language
- Limited use of lip-reading
- Limited use of residual hearing



Deaf Culture 101

◆ Hard-of-Hearing

- Mild, moderate, or severe hearing loss
- May communicate through verbal speech or sign language.
- Moderate reliance on lip-reading
- Moderate reliance on residual hearing
- Often wear hearing aids (BTE, ITE, etc.)



Deaf Culture 101

◆ Late-Deafened

- Born and raised without significant hearing loss
- Primarily communicate through verbal speech, not sign language
- Begin to lose hearing later in life
- Significant reliance on lip-reading
- Significant reliance on residual hearing

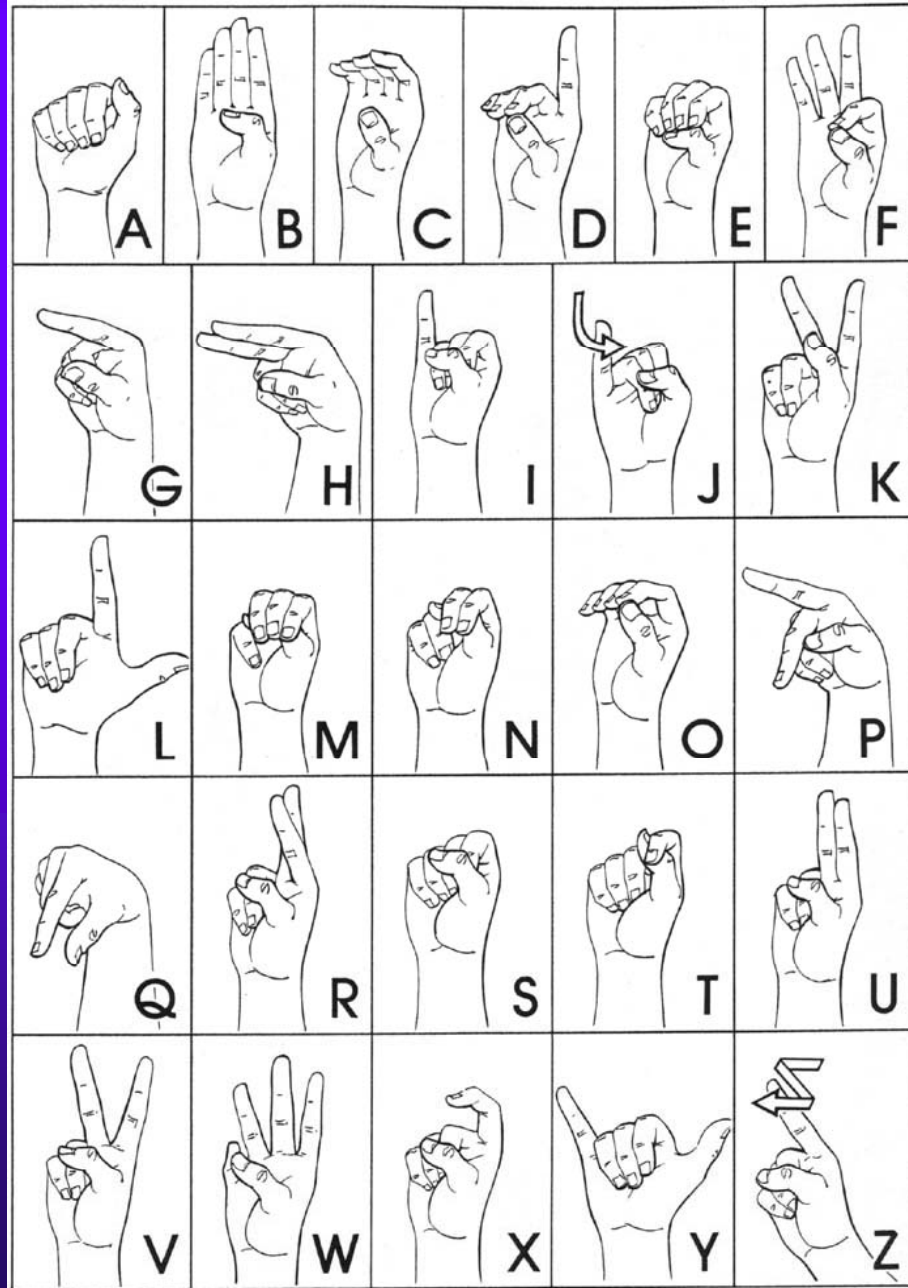


Deaf Culture 101

- ◆ Sign Language is not Universal
 - American Sign Language (ASL)
 - Pigeon-Signed English (PSE)
 - Signed Exact English (SEE)
- ◆ ASL uses word structure, grammar, and idioms that are different from written or spoken English
- ◆ Best Practice: Ask Deaf survivor how she prefers to communicate.



ASL Alphabet





How Do I Communicate With Deaf or HOH Survivors?

- ◆ Face-to-Face
- ◆ Sign Language Interpreters
- ◆ TTY/TTD
- ◆ Relay Services
 - Telephone
 - Internet
 - Video

Face to Face Communication

◆ Face-to-Face Communication Skills

Signing is generally the most effective way to communicate with many Deaf survivors.

- “Pen-and-paper” is generally not effective because written English is usually a second language for Deaf people.





Face to Face Communication

- ◆ DO get her attention by:
 - ✓ Waving
 - ✓ Making Eye Contact
 - ✓ Gentle Touching
 - ✓ Flickering the Lights (be conscious of seizure disorder concerns)



Face to Face Communication

- ◆ For More Effective Communication:

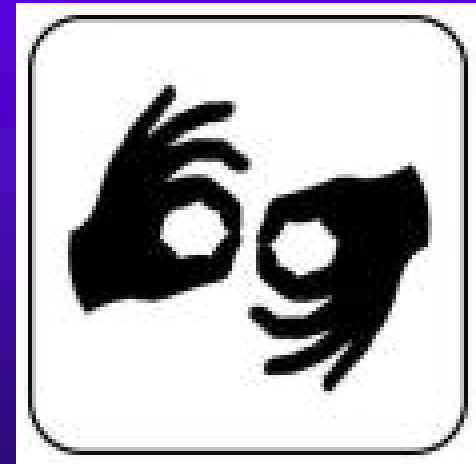
Do: Make eye contact, insure ample lighting, speak at comfortable speed/volume, repeat words if needed.

Don't: Touch face, cover mouth, face other direction, speak fast/loud, sit in front of sunny window, exaggerate pronunciation.

Note: Lip-reading is 80% guesswork--only 20% of speech is visible on the lips.

Working With Sign Language Interpreters

- ◆ Speak and look directly at the survivor, not the interpreter
- ◆ Speak at a normal rate of speed
- ◆ Interpreter will sign everything voiced and voice everything signed
- ◆ Expect “lag time”
- ◆ Lighting considerations
- ◆ Seating arrangements





Working With Sign Language Interpreters

- ◆ Interpreters must keep all information confidential.
- ◆ Interpreters may have different skills—some better with ASL and some with signed English. Select the best person for the situation.
- ◆ Ask the survivor if she has interpreters she feels comfortable with. If so, try to use those persons.
- ◆ Ascertain that the interpreter is not allied with the abuser
- ◆ Is the interpreter “certified”?

Source: Handbook for Shelters Serving Deaf Women and Their Children, 2nd ed.,
Abused Deaf Women’s Advocacy Services, Seattle, WA.



Working With Sign Language Interpreters

- ◆ Interpreting is mentally and physically hard work—build in break times.
- ◆ Meetings or events lasting over 1 or 2 hours will require at least two interpreters.
- ◆ If you will be working with written materials, try to give the interpreter copies of the materials in advance for review.



A Survivor's Story



What is Domestic Violence?

A pattern of coercive tactics which can include physical, sexual, economic, and emotional abuse perpetrated by one partner against a current or former partner with the goal of establishing and maintaining **power and control** over the victim.



Domestic Violence In the Deaf Community

- ◆ The National Domestic Violence Hotline's TTY line receives about 3000 calls per year.
Source: Hotlines, Summer 2003 issue, National Domestic Violence Hotline.
- ◆ 25% of all Deaf women are victims of **abuse**. Source: Justice for All: A Domestic Violence Handbook for Deaf People, Abused Deaf Women's Advocacy Services, Seattle. WA.



Deaf Victims Face Many Barriers and Challenges

- ◆ Deaf people may not have been educated about domestic violence = victim/community may not know how to identify abuse, safely or appropriately respond to an incident, give her rights and options
- ◆ Lack of information may result in blaming the victim or support for the abuser
- ◆ Lack of outreach by service providers to the Deaf community or limited Deaf-specific services = lack of information and supports to the victim



Deaf Victims Face Many Barriers and Challenges

- ◆ Existing key service providers may not be fully accessible (i.e. no TTY, no interpreter or staffer who can communicate with her) = accessing services can be impossible or very difficult
- ◆ Crucial domestic violence information about her rights and options may be provided in English or in other languages or formats inaccessible to Deaf survivors



Power and Control Tactics

- ◆ Control her access to information--hide, disable or destroy TTY, hearing aids, pager, Sidekick, computer, captioned television
- ◆ Take away service animal
- ◆ Remove her to community with no Deaf services or people
- ◆ Threaten to ruin her reputation in the Deaf community



Power and Control Tactics

- ◆ Convince her that police, legal services, shelters and other service providers are not accessible, don't understand Deaf culture, don't have anyone she can communicate with, won't believe her, etc...
- ◆ This may be accurate—abuser will count on this and use it as a tool to manipulate her and maintain power and control



Power and Control Tactics

- ◆ Refuse to let her see or have Deaf friends
- ◆ Refuse to allow her to learn/use sign language
- ◆ Make fun of her speaking voice, her English language skills or other communication skills
- ◆ Emotional abuse—tell her she will lose custody of kids because she is Deaf, she is a “bad mother”, “dumb”, “illiterate”
- ◆ Intentionally misinterpret a conversation



Power and Control Tactics

- ◆ Attack her in the dark
- ◆ Impersonate victim (i.e. on TTY, relay) to gain access to information about her
- ◆ Calling her insulting and hurtful names related to her Deafness or hearing loss
- ◆ Monitor her TTY/Pager messages, internet or other communication activities
- ◆ *See DeafHope's Power and Control Wheel in materials for additional dynamics*




Utilizing Children of Deaf Battered Women As Interpreters

- ◆ NEVER NEVER NEVER use children to interpret for the parent!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
- relating the abusive incident(s) can further traumatize the child and child will feel responsible for mother's safety
- places the child in unsafe position with the abuser (possible retaliation)
- child may have limited vocabulary & is not a professional interpreter, so interpretation may not be accurate
- violates the mother's confidentiality



Utilizing Deaf Battered Woman's Friends or Family As Interpreters

- ◆ They may be aligned with the abuser
- ◆ She may not want them to know the intimate and painful stories of the abuse
- ◆ She may not want them involved in court case, counseling sessions, etc...
- ◆ They may not be certified interpreters and may interpret inaccurately
- ◆ Waiver of Attorney-Client privilege



Safety Planning With Deaf Survivors

- ◆ REMEMBER: English may be the survivor's second language—documents may need to be interpreted
- ◆ The Deaf community is small—confidentiality is crucial and she may feel unsafe using Deaf-specific services
- ◆ Abuser may impersonate victim using TTY—establish a “code word” so you know you can confirm you are speaking with survivor



Safety Planning With Deaf Survivors

- ◆ TTY's
 - Learn how to erase conversations that need to be kept confidential
- ◆ Understand and educate her about safety limitations with e-mail and other technology
- ◆ Pager/Sidekick: Be aware of GPS tracking capabilities
- ◆ Install alarm system and flashing light devices



Safety Planning for Deaf Survivors

- ◆ Call 9-1-1 for emergencies--they have TTYs in the call center
- ◆ Ask police to bring interpreters, if needed
- ◆ Talk to police in a place where the abuser can not see her signing
- ◆ Obtain a “panic button alarm”
- ◆ Always keep extra TTY batteries, hearing aid batteries, and pencil/paper for emergency communication



Safety Planning For Deaf Survivors

- ◆ Orders of Protection—can be obtained in Criminal Court, Family Court or Supreme Court (divorce cases).
- ◆ Draft orders to address her specific safety needs, such as limiting or disallowing abuser's contact with her via pager, Blackberry/Sidekick, TTY or relay service, or e-mail.



Confidentiality Concerns

- ◆ The Deaf world grapevine is quick – news travels fast!
- ◆ Difficult to keep secrets (i.e. plans to relocate, seek shelter, end a relationship)
- ◆ May feed survivor's reluctance to seek assistance
- ◆ Interpreters and confidentiality – required by their Code of Ethics (*see handouts*)



Law Enforcement Response

- ◆ Police intervention can:
 - ✓ give victim information about her legal rights and options & local domestic violence services
 - ✓ document a domestic violence incident, even if no arrest made
 - ✓ assist her with safety planning & assess need for medical care
 - ✓ promote offender accountability (making arrest or securing warrant for batterer)
 - ✓ connect victim with Victim Assistance Unit



Law Enforcement Response & Deaf Individuals

- ◆ As a governmental program, law enforcement agencies are bound by Title II of the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA requires “effective communication” with crime victims and offender)



Law Enforcement Response & “Effective Communication”

- ◆ *See* “Commonly Asked Questions About the ADA and Law Enforcement”, US Department of Justice, 1996
- ◆ *See* “Guide for Law Enforcement Officers When In Contact With People Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing”, US Department of Justice publication
- ◆ “First Response to Victims of Crime Who have a Disability” US Department of Justice, October 2002. *Handbooks available for download at:*

<http://www.ojp.gov/ovc/publications/infores/firstrep/2002/NCJ195500.pdf>



Courts and Attorneys

- ◆ Courts and attorneys are prohibited from discriminating against persons with disabilities as defined under the ADA
- ◆ Judiciary Law Section 390—*see handout*
- ◆ Attorneys (including law guardians) must be aware of nexus between effective communication and zealous representation—failure to provide accommodate = ethics violations and ADA violations
- ◆ Monroe County Bar Association's Deaf Equal Access Fund



Tips for Hearing Service Providers: Outreach to the Deaf Community

- ◆ Learn about Deaf culture and effective communication with Deaf people!
- ◆ Incorporate universal symbol signage on your brochures, agency website, in your reception areas





Tips for Hearing Service Providers: Outreach to the Deaf Community

- ◆ Assess your agency's accessibility to the Deaf community and compliance with the ADA (architectural and programmatic)—may require changes
- ◆ Do you have a TTY and are staff trained to use it? Will staff know how to accept or make a relay call?
- ◆ Is your website accessible and does it contain information about your agency's accessibility to Deaf persons (i.e. your TTY #) ?



Tips for Hearing Service Providers: Outreach to the Deaf Community

- ◆ Request support from the Deaf community to evaluate your agency policies and procedures, especially for battered Deaf women
- ◆ Set aside \$\$ in your budget for interpreters and equipment
- ◆ Create a special fund or write a grant to cover interpreting services or other access initiatives



Tips for Hearing Service Providers: Outreach to the Deaf Community

- ◆ Educate the Deaf community about your services--target outreach efforts and trainings to include Deaf service providers and Deaf community groups
- ◆ Make trainings & materials accessible—caption videos, use visual aids, hire interpreters
- ◆ Recruit Deaf community for membership on your Board and for staff or volunteer positions



Tips for Hearing Service Providers: Outreach to the Deaf Community

- ◆ Learn about the many service providers, churches, and community groups serving the Deaf community in the Greater Rochester area. A few resources:

DeafRochester and DeafNews: <http://www.Deafrochester.com/>

General information about Rochester's Deaf community and agencies:
<http://Deafness.about.com/cs/culturefeatures3/a/rochester.htm>



Tips for Hearing Service Providers: Outreach to the Deaf Community

DON'T make assumptions about the type of accommodations a Deaf or hard of hearing battered woman might need to effectively communicate with you.....

ASK her!



Tips for Deaf Service Providers Assisting Women Who Are Abused

- ◆ Educate staff about domestic violence-- invite domestic violence agencies to provide in-service trainings for your staff
- ◆ Co-sponsor domestic violence training events for the Deaf community with the local domestic violence providers
- ◆ Offer your expertise to domestic violence organizations as a volunteer or Board member



Tips for Deaf Service Providers Assisting Women Who Are Abused

- ◆ Offer to assist local service providers to become more “Deaf-friendly”
- ◆ Incorporate screening for domestic violence in your intake or service provision
- ◆ Establish protocols for disclosures of abuse
- ◆ Learn the many domestic violence service providers in Monroe County so you can make appropriate referrals--*see* R/MC DVC Resource Directory



The Rochester/Monroe County Domestic Violence Consortium

- ◆ What is the Consortium?
- ◆ Who can be a member?
- ◆ Continue today's conversation through Coordinated Community Response? -
-Consider establishing an ad-hoc Consortium Committee to examine the issue of domestic violence in Monroe County's Deaf community and our systemic response



*“Justice denied anywhere
diminishes justice
everywhere.”*

--Martin Luther King, Jr.



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