

How to Best Communicate with Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing Patients

Hosted by ASL Interpreter Jamie Morris

Defining Deaf Culture

- deaf vs. Deaf. = audiological condition vs. set of social beliefs, behaviors, art, and values associated with communities influenced by deafness.
- Deafness is considered a different human experience, not a disability.
- Sign language as the main form of communication.
- Collectivist rather than individualist.
- Terminology is important.
 - Deaf-first.
 - Hard-of-hearing instead of hearing *impaired*.
- Direct (sometimes seen as blunt), and very informative.

Types of Deaf Interpretation

- American Sign Language
- Certified Deaf Interpretation
- English on the hands
- Lip Reading
- Home Signs
- Note passing

Dos & Don'ts:

Understand the importance of using medically qualified interpreters.

Don't rely on ad hoc interpreters.

Engage the patient directly through the interpreter.

Don't talk to the interpreter like the patient is not there, or start every sentence with "Please tell the patient this..."

Understand when it is appropriate to use VRI vs. an onsite interpreter.

Don't have a serious or lengthy discussion over video.

Ask the patient what mode of communication is best for them.

Don't assume that every patient understands ASL or can communicate effectively via VRI.