

Jessica Harris Interpreting Services, Inc.

Committed to providing Quality & Professional Sign Language Interpreting Services to Florida.

COMMUNICATION TIPS

Before Your Interpreter Arrives: Some Do's & Don'ts

Deaf people depend very heavily on their eyes to understand what people are saying. It is vital that you take some simple steps to help them *see* what you are saying.

Do get the deaf person's attention before you begin to speak, and don't start speaking without it. It is perfectly acceptable to tap a person lightly on the shoulder or arm or to wave a hand or small piece of paper gently in the person's direction to attract his or her attention.

Do stand close to the deaf person. Don't let any object obstruct the person's view of you. Face the deaf person and maintain eye contact.

Do make sure the deaf person can clearly see your mouth and face. Don't chew gum or hold your hands in front of your mouth while talking.

Do stand in a well lighted place. Don't stand with your back to a light source such as a lamp or window. This throws your face into a shadow and makes it difficult to see clearly.

Do try to converse in a quiet place. Don't assume the background noise makes no difference.

Do speak and enunciate clearly and normally, but don't exaggerate your lip movements. Do use facial expressions and body language to clarify your message. Don't be embarrassed to be expressive.

Do have pencil and paper for simple English questions, and use visual aids as necessary until your interpreter arrives. The average deaf person reads English below a 4th grade reading level.

Do use your voice, but don't shout. Many deaf people can get some information through sound, but shouting distorts both the sound of words and lip movements. Highly skilled Lip Readers still only receive less than 30% from the lips.

Do be sensitive to whether a deaf person is understanding or just being polite and nodding without following what you're saying. Don't assume that a bland expression implies a deaf person is catching what you say or a nod to a yes/no question means they understand.

Do use some Open-ended Questions that solicit more than a yes or no answer to determine how much the deaf person understands.

Do rephrase sentences that are not understood. Don't just repeat the same words over and over in the same sequence.

Do equip your facility with TDD's, Alarm Flashers, Television Closed Captioning, and other useful communication devices. Don't cut them off from vital information these devices provide.

Do not use family members as an interpreter. Even if they are skilled enough to use sign, they are often too emotionally or personally involved to interpret "effectively, accurately, and impartially." This can cause problems in maintaining a person's right to privacy and confidentiality.

9113 Ridge Rd # 40
New Port Richey, FL 34654
www.JHinterpretingservices.com

727-271-0160 Ph
888-228-7575 Fax
JHarris@JHinterpretingservices.com