

ABOUT DEAF COMMUNITY AND DEAF CULTURE



DEAF COMMUNITY

The Deaf community is made up of persons, both deaf and hearing, who embrace a common Deaf culture, sign language and other social traits.





DEAF CULTURE

A way of life and self-identity that Deaf people follow or share in areas such as social beliefs, behaviours, literary traditions, history, values and institutions which are linked by their deafness. Sign language is used as the main mode of communication.



LEVELS OF HEARING LOSS

Hearing loss is defined as being partially or completely unable to hear sounds in one or both ears.

			
MILD	MODERATE	SEVERE	PROFOUND
Unable to hear soft sound. Understanding speech may be difficult in a noisy environment.	Unable to hear soft and moderately loud sound. Understanding speech is difficult in background noise.	Unable to hear people speaking at a normal conversational level. Even loud speech is difficult to hear or understand.	Only able to hear very loud sounds. Most sounds are difficult to hear or distinguish.

ACCESSIBILITY FOR DEAF PEOPLE



COMMUNICATION

- Sign Language Interpreter
- Notetaker
- Communication Access Real-time Translation (CART)



INFORMATION

- Captioning
- Subtitling
- Visual and textual information



ASSISTIVE DEVICES

- Hearing aid
- Cochlear implant
- Vibrating alarm clock



BUILT ENVIRONMENT

- Visual fire alarms
- Visual door alarms
- Textual announcements

DOs AND DON'Ts WHEN INTERACTING WITH THE DEAF



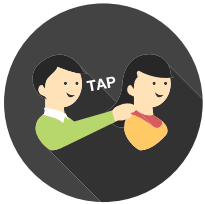
GET COMMUNICATION SUPPORT.

Deaf people have the full and equal access to information in the classroom and workplace. Do call for a sign language interpreter for important discussions or meetings on important matters, such as medical, legal or safety issues.



SPEAK CLEARLY, BUT DON'T SHOUT.

Do not slow down or enunciate your speech. Use natural facial expressions and gestures. If the deaf person can't understand what you're saying, rephrase your words or find another way such as writing. Maintain eye contact throughout the conversation. Do not cover your face while communicating with a deaf person.



DON'T THROW OBJECTS TO GET A DEAF PERSON'S ATTENTION.

Wave your hand in the deaf person's line of vision. If you are close enough, tap the deaf person on the shoulder or upper arm. To get the attention of a group of deaf people, be creative – try switching off and on the lights or stomping on the floor.



DON'T LEAVE A DEAF PERSON OUT OF A CONVERSATION WITH HEARING PEOPLE.

If you know sign language and are in a group activity with Deaf and hearing people who cannot sign, do sign and speak at the same time so that everyone is included in the conversations.



DON'T GET UPSET IF DEAF PEOPLE ARE BEING TOO LOUD.

Sometimes Deaf people don't realise how loud they are being. If you need them to quiet down, just tap them on the shoulder and politely let them know.



DON'T EAVESDROP ON A SIGNED CONVERSATION.

Do not stare at Deaf persons who are engaged in a signed conversation. It is akin to eavesdropping on a spoken conversation and considered rude.

TERMS USED TO REFER TO PEOPLE WITH HEARING LOSS

✓ APPROPRIATE TERMS

Using appropriate term shows respect and accords dignity to the community.



deaf

(with a small letter d)

General term used to describe people with hearing loss of varying degrees, regardless of the communication mode they use (such as sign language, speaking or lip reading).



Deaf

(with a capital D)

Describes people with hearing loss who use sign language to communicate, and who identify themselves as members of a Deaf community and culture. They are more likely to have been born or become deaf early in life, and use sign language as their preferred communication mode.



Hard-of-hearing

Describes people with hearing loss which is usually acquired post-lingually and who prefer to communicate via speech.

✗ INAPPROPRIATE TERMS

These terms should never be used because they are outdated and extremely offensive.



hearing impaired

Often used to refer to people with hearing loss. But note it is viewed negatively by the Deaf community because of its linkage to medical terminology. The preferred terms are either “Deaf” or “Hard of hearing”.



deaf and dumb

A deaf person is not dumb. Deaf people are the same as other people except they cannot hear as well.



deaf mute

A person who is mute is unable to talk. Deaf people have functioning vocal cords. In fact, some have very good speech.

If you wish to differentiate the Deaf and Hard-of-hearing with those who are not, use the terms “hearing people” or “hearing”. Do not use the word “normal”.