



Communicating with Deaf/HH patrons



Methods of Communication

- Writing
 - Always have a paper and pen available for writing.
 - Writing is the simplest and most effective method of communication if you don't know sign language.
- Interpreter facilitated
 - Professional interpreters should be hired for any event or scheduled meeting.
 - Be sure to look at Deaf person, not interpreter.
- Signing/Finger Spelling
 - Use what signs you know, but follow up with written or interpreter facilitated communication to ensure understanding.
- Lip reading
 - Lip reading is most often a supplement to the above methods of communication, don't depend on it.
 - Don't exaggerate, speak at a normal pace and face the person directly.

Communication Tips

- Be patient with yourself and others.
- Ask for clarification, take your time.
- Make eye contact.
- Use facial expressions.
- Make sure your signing fills the 'big box'.

Tips on practicing Sign Language

- Sign the ABC's in word form, not alphabet. This helps wire your brain to understand different letter transitions.
- As you fingerspell, say the word, don't spell aloud (cat NOT C-A-T). (And don't get hung up on spelling accuracy.)
- Sign songs as practice.
- Find friends to practice with, start a group!
- Be patient with yourself as you learn.

Resources

- Local Resources – Sign Language Classes
 - Meetup Groups: www.meetup.com
 - Local Community Colleges
 - Local Continuing Education courses
- Internet Resources
 - RIT Resources: <https://www.rit.edu/ntid/educationalmaterials/>
 - ASL PRO Dictionary:- <http://www.aslpro.com/cgi-bin/aslpro/aslpro.cgi>
 - EHow Videos: http://www.ehow.com/videos-on_7605_american-sign-language-emotion-words.html
 - Through Deaf Eyes: <http://www.pbs.org/weta/throughdeafeyes/>
 - Project NADINE: <http://projectnadine.org/PN/ASLstory.html>