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
  - Through Deaf Eyes: http://www.pbs.org/weta/throughdeafeyes/
  - Project NADINE: http://projectnadine.org/PN/ASLstory.html

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