

INTRODUCTION TO THE DEAF COMMUNITY

“Who are ‘Deaf People’?”

- Approximately one in one thousand children born live will have a Severe to profound hearing loss.
- Approximately two million school age children in the US are “Hearing Impaired” or Deaf.
- Approximately twenty one million people use ASL as a primary means of communication.
- Approximately three thousand people use ASL as a primary means of communication in New Mexico.

“How do people lose their hearing?”

- Causes vary: genetics, illness, accident, birth trauma, etc.
- Hearing losses are often differentiated as Mild, Moderate, Severe, or Profound.
- Many children are born deaf due to genetics or maternal illness like rubella.
Others lose hearing later due to illness like meningitis or otitis media.
- Hearing loss is generally defined as:
 - Conductive - damage to the outer or middle ear
 - Sensor neural - damage to the inner ear or VIII nerve
 - Mixed - a combination
 - Central - damage to the hearing centers of the brain.
- An Undiagnosed hearing loss is often confused with:
 - Learning Disability
 - Oppositional Defiant Behavior
 - Social Problems
 - Developmental Disability
 - Mental Illness
 - Autism

CULTURAL ISSUES

- The word “deaf, hearing impaired, and non-hearing” generally indicates an audiological hearing loss.
- The word “Deaf and Hard of Hearing” generally indicates membership in the cultural/language community.
- The proper word usages are **Deaf and/or Hard of Hearing in our society.**
- The Deaf Community has a shared culture, language, values, and history NOT Based on hearing loss, but on language use – American Sign Language (ASL).
- Most people with a hearing loss (about 80%) do not sign and do not have an affiliation with the Deaf community in the United States.
 - Most Deaf people in the US who attended a residential school or mainstreaming school acquire ASL as their primary language, and are more-or-less bilingual/bicultural in ASL and English.
- The Deaf Community has its’ own clubs, institutions, sporting events, political Action groups, and publications.
- Hearing professionals often view Deaf people as afflicted with “broken” ears, in need of Rehabilitation. Deaf people often see themselves as members of a close-knit linguistic Minority that is becoming more and more politically active and vocal.
- 90% of deaf children have hearing parents; 10% have Deaf or Hard of Hearing parents.
Most Children arrive at school having had little exposure to any language that is accessible to them. The few who have Deaf parents come to school having learned ASL from their parents as a first language. They in turn teach the other children ASL and Deaf cultural values. Until very recently, ASL was often forbidden in Deaf schools, and children were punished for signing. Deaf children were expected to learn to talk (in English). Deaf culture is unusual because it is largely transmitted from peer to peer (child to child) in the residential schools and mainstreaming schools.

INTRODUCTION TO THE DEAF COMMUNITY

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

-ORAL METHOD (also called Speech Reading or Lip Reading)

Just as with hearing individuals, some deaf people are quite proficient with certain skills, while others are not. Speech/Lip reading involves a lot of training and guesswork. Most Deaf people can read about one tenth of the words produced with the mouth. Generally, hearing people can probably speech read more easily than most deaf people? In honest perspective, Deaf and Hard of Hearing people missed about 35% to 50% of what hearing person said to them.

-AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE (ASL)

ASL is used in the United States and parts of Canada. Originally imported from France, it became mixed with native sign languages to eventually form what is used today. Each country has its own Sign Language. Mexico has five or more that have been identified. ASL is a visual/gestures language not dependent on English and very different from it. Its structure is in some respects more similar to Navajo than to English. However, there are 2000 different sign languages in worldwide and the concept of sign language is very similar to each other.

-MANUALLY CODED ENGLISH (MCE)

MCE was developed in the 1970's, and consists of ASL signs in English word order. There are many other "coded" systems for spoken English.

-TECHNOLOGICAL DEVICES

Often, technological devices can be used to aid communication between deaf people and hearing people. Examples are: Telecommunication Devices for the Deaf (TDD, TTY), hearing aids, captioning, etc.

What is an interpreter?

A qualified interpreter is one who is able to effectively bridge the communication needs of all participants.

Who needs interpreters?

The need for an interpreter depends on the situation and the people involved. Do not assume a consumer who is deaf needs an interpreter, but inform her/him that an interpreter can be made available if s/he prefers.

What kind of interpreter do I need?

Ask a consumer who is deaf or hard of hearing if an interpreter is desired. If so, ask what kind of interpreting is preferred. For example, a person who prefers to communicate through speech reading may want an oral interpreter. Someone who uses sign language may prefer an interpreter proficient in American Sign Language; another may prefer someone proficient in using one of the Manual Codes for English.

What is an interpreter's role?

When using a sign language or oral interpreter, speak directly to the person who is deaf or hard of hearing, not the interpreter. The interpreter is not a participant in an interview or meeting. S/he is there to facilitate communication between the hearing and deaf person. Do not try to involve the interpreter in any part of the discussion. This can be demeaning to the individual who is deaf or hard of hearing, and can divert attention from the focal point of the meeting. It is in violation of the interpreter's code of ethics to become personally involved in the process at any time – before, during, or after the interview/meeting.

Do I need to speak slowly?

Speak at your natural pace but be aware that the interpreter must hear and understand a complete thought before signing it. The interpreter will let you know if you should repeat or slow down. Turn taking in the conversation may be different from what you are used to. This is due to the lag time necessary for the interpreting process.

Should I look at and speak directly to the interpreter?

Communicate directly with the deaf person. Do not say, "tell her/him..." The deaf person's gaze will be primarily focused on the interpreter while "listening" to you, but she/he will glance back and forth at you to maintain a sense of direct communication.

Where should I stand or sit?

Usually it is best to position the interpreter next to you (the hearing person) opposite the deaf person. This makes it easy for the deaf person to see you and the interpreter in one line of vision.

What about group situations?

Semi-circles or circular seating arrangements are best for discussion formats. For large group situations such as conferences or performances, be sure to reserve seating in clear view of the interpreter for deaf participants and their families/friends.

Do I need to meet with the interpreter prior to the assignment?

It is helpful to meet with the interpreter fifteen to thirty minutes before the assignment begins. This is especially true at large conferences or meetings where a large number of participants are expected. If possible, provide the interpreter with pertinent materials prior to the scheduled assignment. Information such as an outline, agenda, prepared speeches, technical vocabulary, and background information enables the interpreter to properly prepare for the assignment.

Do interpreters specialize in certain areas?

Interpreters may have expertise and special training in some areas and not others. For example, some interpreters work primarily in medical settings, while others work mainly in court and legal settings. Familiarity with the subject and vocabulary, as well as appropriate education and training, is essential for effective interpreting.

USING AN INTERPRETER

Can any interpreter work in courts, or for police situations?

No. Only interpreters deemed qualified can or should interpret in court or police situations.

Why might some situations require more than one interpreter?

Interpreting is a very intense and tiring process. Studies show that an interpreter can only work continuously for twenty to thirty minutes before tiring and losing effectiveness. If a meeting or class will continue for over an hour, it is usually best to arrange for a second interpreter. Some situations may require the presence of a deaf "relay" interpreter.

Can deaf people become interpreters?

Yes. The professional term is "relay" or intermediary interpreter." The deaf interpreter works in conjunction with the hearing interpreter. There is a growing need for relay interpreters in critical situations such as court proceedings, psychiatric evaluations, or situations where the deaf consumer relies on visual-gestures means to communicate.

Where can I get training to become an interpreter?

There are colleges and universities in United States that provide people who want to become oral and sign languages interpreters. In New Mexico, University of New Mexico and Santa Fe Community College have interpreting training program.

HOW DO YOU COMMUNICATE WITH THE DEAF PEOPLE ON TTY?

Deaf people: they prefer to communicate via a machine called a TTY. It is a text telephone and it is a device that permits people to communicate where standard telephone system cannot be used without a sign language interpreter present.

How to use the TTY device: rather than talking into a telephone receiver, a TTY user types a message on the keyboard (similar to a typewriter and computer) and receives a message on a display screen.

To place a call, the user turns the TTY on-off switch to "on" position, dials the conventional telephone and places the telephone headset on the TTY coupler. The user then observes the patterns of lights on the monitor which indicate if the line is ringing, busy or has been answered by a TTY user on the receiving end. The caller then Types his message awaits a typed response.

To receive a call, a ringing and/or flashing signal light alert the user. When a phone is designated to receive both voice and TTY-based communications, the receiving party can recognize an incoming TTY call by the presence of high-pitched beeps or the absence of a response to a voiced greeting. When an incoming call requires a TTY, the user places the telephone handset on the TTY coupler, turns the TTY "on" and type a greeting.

How to answer a TTY call:

- Turn the TTY's switch on (Make sure that TTY is plugged in)
- Type, "Hello this is the social security office and this is John, How can I help you? GA" (no periods or commas are necessary, question marks are helpful)
- The caller will type their response. When they are finished with their sentence they will type GA (Go Ahead).
- Now you can type back. When you are finished your turn, Type GA.
- When you are ready to end the conversation, type a closing remark such as bye bye, then say GA to SK. This GA to SK lets other person that you are ready to sign off while ending your conversation.
- When you see SK back to you and if you done with the conversation you can say SKSK twice to let the caller know that you are hanging up now.

Abbreviation commonly used on TTY calls:

GA	"Go Ahead" (Your turn to type)
GA to SK	completing all messages and getting ready to hang up
Q	Question Mark
SK	"Stop keying" (end of conversation)
SKSK	Hanging up
TTY	Teletypewriter
XXX	Erasing the previous error
HLD	Hold (putting caller on hold)

Tips for effective communication on TTY:

- Please be patient
- Make sure you understand what the message was being conveyed.
- Look for broad conceptual meaning in the caller's typing, ignore their grammatical error.
- If you are unable to understand them, either ask them to call back via relay711 or set up an appointment for them to come in to see you. Be sure you assist in house appointment by getting a sign language interpreter set up.

HOW TO USE THE RELAY SERVICE

Nationwide: dial 711 if you are communicating by Voice,
Or dial 711 if you are communicating by TTY.

- Give the Communication Assistant (CA) the area code and phone number of
The person you wish to call.
- The CA will type the hearing person's conversation for he deaf person via TTY.
The CA will voice the deaf person's conversation to the hearing person.
- Speak SLOWLY, and speak DIRECTLY to the deaf person. Do not say
"Tell her/him..."
- All calls and information are confidential. The CA is prohibited from
Discussing your conversation with anyone.

What is American Sign Language?

American Sign Language (ASL) is a complete, complex language that employs signs made with the hands and other movements, including facial expressions and postures of the body. It is the first language of many deaf North Americans, and one of several communication options available to deaf people. ASL is said to be the fourth most commonly used language in the United States.

Is Sign Language the Same Around the World?

No one form of Sign language is universal. For example, British Sign Language (BSL) differs notably from ASL. Different sign languages are used in different countries or regions.

Where Did ASL Originate?

The exact beginnings of ASL are not clear. Many people believe that ASL came mostly from French Sign Language (FSL). Others claim that the foundation for ASL existed before FSL was introduced in America 1817. It was in that year that a French teacher names Laurent Clerc, brought to the United States by Thomas Gallaudet, founded in the first school for the deaf in Hartford, Connecticut. Clerc began teaching FSL to Americans, though many of his students were already fluent in their own forms of local, natural sign language. Today's ASL likely contains some of this early American signing. Which language had more to do with the formation of modern ASL is difficult to prove. Modern ASL and FSL share some elements, including a substantial amount of vocabulary. However, they are not mutually comprehensible.

How Does ASL Compare With Spoken Language?

In spoken language, the different sounds created by words and tones of voice (intonation) are the most important devices used to communicate. Sign language is based on the idea that sight is the most useful tool a deaf person has to communicate and receive information. Thus, ASL uses hand shape, position, and movement; body movement; gestures; facial expressions; and other visual cues to form its words. Like any other language, fluency in ASL happens only after a long period of study and practice.

Even though ASL is used in America, it is a language completely separate from English. It contains all the fundamental features a language needs to function on its own—it has its own rules for grammar, punctuation, and sentence order. ASL evolves as its users do, and it also allows for regional usage and jargon. Every language expresses its features differently; ASL is no exception. Whereas English speakers often signal a question by using a particular tone of voice, ASL users do by raising the eyebrow and widening the eyes. Sometimes, ASL users may ask a question by tilting their bodies forward while signaling with their eyes and eyebrows.

Just as with other languages, specific ways of expressing ideas in ASL vary as much as ASL users themselves do. ASL users may choose from synonyms to express common words. ASL also changes regionally, just as certain English words are spoken differently in different parts

of the country. Ethnicity, age, and gender are a few more factors that affect ASL usage and contribute to its variety.

Why Does ASL Become a First Language for Many Deaf People?

Parents are often the source of a child's early acquisition of language. A deaf child who is born to deaf parents who already use ASL will begin to acquire ASL as naturally as a hearing child picks up spoken language from hearing parents. However, a deaf child acquires language differently with hearing parents who have no prior experience with ASL. Some hearing parents choose to introduce sign language to their deaf children. Hearing parents who choose to learn sign language often learn it along with their child. Nine out of every ten children who are born deaf are born to parents who hear. Other communication models, based in spoken English, exist apart from ASL, including oral, auditory-verbal, and cued speech. As with any language, interaction with other children and adults is also a significant factor in acquisition.

Why Emphasize Early Language Learning?

Parents should introduce deaf children to language as early as possible. The earlier any child is exposed to and begins to acquire language, the better that child's communication skills will become. Research suggests that the first six months are the most crucial to a child's development of language skills. All newborns should be screened for deafness or hearing loss before they leave the hospital or within the first month of life. Very early discovery of a child's hearing loss or deafness provides parents with an opportunity to learn about communication options. Parents can then start their child's language learning process during this important stage of development.

What Does Recent Research Say about ASL and Other Sign Languages?

Some studies focus on the age of ASL acquisition. Age is a critical issue for people who acquire ASL, whether it is a first or second language. For a person to become fully competent in any language, exposure must begin as early as possible, preferably before school age. Other studies compare the skills of native signers and non-native signers to determine differences in language processing ability. Native signers of ASL consistently display more accomplished sign language ability than non-native signers, again emphasizing the importance of early exposure and acquisition.

Other studies focus on different ASL processing skills. Users of ASL have shown ability to process visual mental images differently than hearing users of English. Though English speakers possess the skills needed to process visual imagery, ASL users demonstrate faster processing ability—suggesting that sign language enhances certain processing functions of the human brain.

** Information gather from National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders.

How Do Deaf People....?

Know when a baby is crying or the phone is ringing? How do deaf people know when there's someone at the door, or if a smoke detector is going off? For all of these sounds, there are flashing-light signaling devices.

Wake up in the morning? For the people who don't wake up on their own, there are special alarm clocks attached to either a flashing light or a bed vibrator that is activated when the alarm goes off.

Understand TV? Many television shows are captioned. To be able to see these captions on screen, deaf people must have a device called a "decoder" attached to the TV. Captions appear like subtitles on the bottom of the screen so that deaf people can read what's being said. These captions also mention sounds that are off-screen, such as applause or a telephone ringing.

Talk on the phone? There is a special telecommunication device that enables deaf people to use the telephone. In the Deaf community this device is called a TTY (short for teletypewriter), while hearing business use the term TDD (Telecommunication Device for the Deaf). When the phone rings, the deaf person places the receiver on a coupler attached to the TTY device. The device has a small keyboard and the conversation takes place by typing back and forth.

In order for a conversation to take place, there must be a TTY at both ends. However, some community agencies or businesses provide relay services to mediate communication between TTY and voice calls. A relay-service operator types what the hearing person says, and then reads aloud what the deaf person types.



THIRTY

Sign "THREE"; then form an "O" with the three fingers.



THIRTY-ONE

Sign "THREE"; move slightly to the right and sign "ONE."



THIRTY-TWO

Sign "THREE"; move slightly to the right and sign "TWO."



THIRTY-THREE

Sign "THREE" and swing it in an arc to the right.



THIRTY-FOUR

Sign "THREE"; move slightly to the right and sign "FOUR."



THIRTY-FIVE

Sign "THREE"; move slightly to the right and sign "FIVE."

Communicating with Deaf People: A Primer

This is designed as a basic guide for hearing people who want to communicate with deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals. It is condensed from the National Technical Institute for the Deaf's publication Celebrate Diversity.

Deaf Culture

Deaf culture is based on the heritage and traditions of the Deaf community. Features of Deaf culture include a shared language (American Sign Language) and customs; literature and art; intermarriage; and social, political, business and sport organizations. Not all people who are deaf participate in Deaf culture, just as not all people born Jewish participate in Jewish culture.

An Invisible Population

The man you nod to as you pass him working in his garden or the jogger whose path you cross every morning--any one of them may be deaf. Deafness is invisible. Be careful not to stereotype people. Deaf people differ from each other as much as hearing people do.

Communication

People communicate in many ways--through speech, writing, pictures and gestures. Hearing people supplement their spoken words with voice tone and inflection, facial expression and hand gestures. Most deaf people use sign language and fingerspelling. Some prefer to lipread and use their voices. Many use a combination of these methods.

Sign language is a visual language using a combination of hand movements and hand shapes to represent concepts, letters and words. American Sign Language (ASL) is a true language and has its own grammatical structure. It is cherished by the Deaf community for its beauty and ease of expressing and receiving both complex and abstract concepts. In fingerspelling, 26 hand shapes represent the letters of the alphabet and messages or individual words are spelled out. Slight pauses indicate the end of a word. Fingerspelling may be used in signed conversations to express a proper name or a particular term.

Residual Hearing and Hearing Aids

Hearing losses vary. Most deaf people have some residual hearing. The sounds they hear may seem faint, distorted or incomplete. Some deaf individuals have no residual hearing.

Hearing aids do not restore perfect hearing; they make sounds louder, but not clearer. Depending on the degree of hearing loss, deaf individuals may be able to use hearing aids to help understand speech sounds, monitor the loudness of their own voices and/or recognize environmental sounds. Not every deaf person wears a hearing aid; some do not find them beneficial, some do not feel comfortable using them, and others choose not to use them for personal or cultural reasons.

Lipreading

Lipreaders or speechreaders must watch not only the lips, but also the cheeks, teeth, tongue, neck and facial expression of the speaker. Still, only 40% of speech is visible, and many sounds look similar on the lips. Most people would find it impossible to tell the difference between words like "bat," "mat," "pat," "bad," "mad," "pad," "ban," "man," and "pan" from lipreading. Or combinations of words may look confusing to the lipreader: "I love fried eggs" and "I love Fridays," or "I'd like 15 stamps" and "I'd like 50 stamps." Very few deaf people can depend entirely on lipreading; some use a system of hand signals (cued speech) to guide lipreading.

Learning a Language

Some deaf people are born deaf or lose their hearing before they learn a spoken language. Others become deaf later in life because of illness, injury or congenital conditions. Ninety percent of deaf babies are born to hearing families; the 10 percent born to deaf families grow up learning sign language very much as hearing babies learn spoken language--by observing (instead of listening) and imitating. Learning English can be a slow process for children deafened before they learned a spoken language and who were raised without a visual language.

Using Voice

Some deaf people use their voices and some do not. Most have had years of speech therapy and training, and some have developed clear speech. Many have developed speech that is understandable upon repetition but which is marked with unclear pronunciation or intonation. Some deaf people mouth words without voicing them. Whatever the choice of the individual, use of voice is not an indicator of intelligence or academic standing.

Customs and Courtesies of Conversation

Deaf people appreciate the efforts of hearing people to learn and use sign. The slow communication speed is a common experience of anyone learning a new language. A deaf person will understand a hearing person's message even with mistakes, just as a hearing person will usually understand the spoken message of a person just learning English who makes some mispronunciations and grammatical errors.

Good lighting, unobstructed vision and a non-distracting, non-glare background are essential environmental conditions for successful and comfortable visual-based communication. A table in the middle of the room forces people to stand in a circle and provides them with a full view of each other. Loud noise interferes with successful and comfortable auditory-based interaction.

Facial expressions are a critical part of communication because they convey the emotions and tone of the conversation. Signing without facial expression is similar to monotone speech. Also, using voice and mouth movement helps a deaf person who has some lipreading skills and/or residual hearing. However, a loud voice and exaggerated mouth movement interferes with understanding the voiced message.



ONE

Hold up the index finger.



TWO

Hold up the index and middle fingers.



THREE

Hold up the index finger, middle finger, and thumb.



FOUR

Hold up the four fingers (separated).



FIVE

Hold up the five fingers (separated).



SIX

Touch the tip of the thumb with the tip of the little finger (other fingers spread).



SEVEN

Touch the tip of the thumb with the tip of the fourth finger (other fingers spread).



EIGHT

Touch the tip of the thumb with the tip of the middle finger (other fingers spread).



NINE

Touch the tip of the thumb with the tip of the index finger (other fingers spread).



TEN

Shake the right "A" hand, thumb pointing up.



Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) Frequently Asked Questions

Federal Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) is now available to USDA employees and offers instant video interpreting for one-on-one meetings and appointments with managers, peers, or co-workers.

What is Video Remote Interpreting?

Video remote interpreting (VRI) is a form of sign language interpreting that allows people who are Deaf or hard of hearing to communicate with a hearing person at the same site via video instead of live, on-site interpreting. VRI is especially useful for small group settings when (1) there is a lack of available qualified interpreters, such as at a rural location; and (2) when an interpreter is needed immediately, and an on site interpreter is unavailable.

VRI works by using a videophone or web camera. The interpreter, who is typically at a call center, uses a headset to hear the hearing person. As the hearing person speaks, the interpreter signs everything said via a videophone or web camera. When the Deaf person replies in sign language via their web camera, the interpreter sees and voices the interpretation. The Deaf person and the hearing person can talk back and forth, as if the interpreter was in the same room.

What scenarios are best for using VRI?

While providing a viable option for interpreting services, VRI is not an all-inclusive replacement for on-site interpreting. In order to assure that equal access is achieved, the decision to use VRI should be made with input from all participants. VRI may not be appropriate for the following settings.

- Situations involving high interactivity;
- Situations with complex, or highly technical dialogue exchange;
- Situations involving communications of a sensitive nature (e.g. a performance review);
- Situations with a large group of attendees (e.g. events, programs, observances), or;
- Where there may be a weak internet link or other technology issues.

What are the benefits of Federal VRI?

- It provides the ability to communicate effectively and efficiently between hearing and Deaf employees using a certified sign language interpreter in small group settings.
- There is no need to reserve a live sign language interpreter in advance.
- It is possible to communicate from your own office space.
- There are no time limits, or minimums. Therefore, Federal VRI may be used for as little or as much time as needed.
- All calls are confidential and conversations are not recorded.
- Sign language interpreting is available in both English, and Spanish language (24 hours' notice is required for English/Spanish translation).



- VRI meets a number of security requirements including GSA IT Security Standards, and Federal Information Processing Standards (see <http://www.federalrelay.us/federal-vs-state-national> for more information).

How do I use Federal VRI?

Deaf users access Federal VRI services from a video phone or with a webcam, using Federal VRS software downloaded to the computer.

Video Phone Users

1. Dial 877-689-7775 on your video phone equipment
2. You will be connected to a VRI interpreter
 - a. If your video phone has audio capabilities, you may go ahead and start your call
 - b. If your video phone does not have audio capabilities provide the VRI Interpreter with the telephone number so that they may call back in to your meeting. You have the option to enable your video phone's speaker capabilities or the hearing person can speak through his/her cell phone or telephone in your office.
3. Simply begin your conversation!

Federal Video Relay Software (Webcam)

1. Download/Open the Federal Video Relay Software on your computer (If you have not already done so) [Download Software Here](#)
 - a. Ensure that your computer's microphone/audio capabilities are on (unmute your computer's microphone, ensure that the volume is turned up)
2. Dial 877-689-7775 to connect to the VRI Interpreter
3. Simply begin your conversation!

What are the Federal VRI hours of operation?

- Service is available on Monday through Friday from 7:00 am to 11:00 pm EST
- Service is available on all Federal Holidays!
- Please send an email to FedVRShelp@sprint.com for English/Spanish Translation. (24 hours notice is required).

Please send an email to federalrelay@sprint.com if you have any questions or concerns.

VRI should not be confused with [Video Relay Service \(VRS\)](#) [1], where a telephone conversation between two people at different locations is interpreted. For more information on relay services, go to https://www.fedvrs.us/supports/what_is_vrs.

Tips for Improving the VRI Experience

Environments suitable for traditional on-site interpreting may not be appropriate for VRI. Effective management of environmental demands by all parties will help facilitate effective



interpreting services. Consider and manage the following environmental controls before placing a VRI call.

- ✓ lighting
- ✓ environmental noise
- ✓ use of microphones (make sure it's "unmuted")
- ✓ seating arrangements should ensure sight lines to each video screen
- ✓ location of consumers in relationship to each other and to each camera
- ✓ location of cameras
- ✓ background movements
- ✓ clothing colors and patterns
- ✓ interpreter or participant idiosyncrasies
- ✓ Internet connection strength

Concluding Points

VRI is not an absolute substitute for face-to-face interpreting. Instead, it is a viable form of interpreting with characteristics that are setting specific, such as for one-on-one or small group meetings.. VRI can be used effectively by following guidelines set forth in this document, and by consulting with participants and other stakeholders.

Sources:

Standard Practice Paper: Video Remote Interpreting, Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID):
http://rid.org/UserFiles/File/pdfs/Standard_Practice_Papers/VRI_SPP.pdf.

National Association of the Deaf: Video Remote Interpreting:
<http://www.nad.org/issues/technology/vri>



COMMUNICATION TIPS

SPEAKING & LIP READING

Face the Deaf Person.

Maintain eye contact with the Deaf Person.

Be sure that there is a light source in front of you.

Do not stand in front of a light source such as a window.

Speak clearly. Enunciate words but do not exaggerate mouth movements.

Keep objects and hands away from your mouth.

Isolate or emphasize key words when appropriate.

Give the Deaf Person as many visual cues as you can.

Consider your choice of words: remember some are easier to lip-read than others.

Re-phrase rather than re-state words not understood by the Deaf Person.

VIA TDD OR TELEPHONE

Always ask the Deaf Person if they would prefer to use a TDD, if you have one available, or use an interpreter.

When talking through an interpreter always use the first or second person. Avoid using phrases such as "Tell her...or tell him..."

Allow for more time for communicating when using a TDD.

Use abbreviations when possible.

Allow the other person to respond periodically during your part of the communication.

Do not forget to use "GA" which indicates to the other party that it is their turn to type or "SK" to sign off.

When initiating or receiving a TDD/TTY call, always identify yourself immediately upon contact.

You should have a TDD available or use a Relay Service in order to communicate with a deaf person by phone.

If you use a Relay Service, always use the first person form. Avoid using phrases such as "Tell her or him...."

