

TIPS ON PRESENTING TO: Deaf, DeafBlind *and* Hard of Hearing Audiences



People who are Deaf, DeafBlind or Hard of Hearing have different learning approaches than hearing people.

Keep in mind the following as you prepare your presentation:

DO'S AND DON'TS OF PRESENTING:

- 1) **Do Use Visuals** – A Deaf or Hard of Hearing person receives information through their eyes more than sound. A DeafBlind person receives information through touch.
- 2) **Do Pace Yourself** – Provide time for the audience to take in the information through various means (interpreters, captioning, etc.). Allow time for interpretation.
- 3) **Do Not Speak While the Audience Looks at a Visual** – Do not speak and instruct the audience to look at something at the same time. The audience will need to look at the interpreter while you are talking. If they need to look at a PowerPoint, for example, pause so they can glance back and forth from the interpreter to the PowerPoint.
- 4) **Do Ensure There are No Visual or Auditory Distractions** – An example is a door that is open to a high-traffic hallway or background noise (which can be distracting for those who have some residual hearing).

ROOM SET-UP:



LIGHTING:

- **AVOID GLARES:** Ensure ample light, but not too bright. Do not have the audience sit facing a window, which causes a glare and makes it hard to see the presenter.
- **INTERPRETERS:** If an interpreter is being used, make sure they are well illuminated. If using a dark room to show a PowerPoint or film, keep a low light on the interpreter so the audience can still see the signing.
- **FOR DEAFBLIND:** Ask DeafBlind participants for their lighting and set-up preferences. Some may have specific seating needs and with low vision, may require dimmer or brighter light.

SEATING ARRANGEMENT:

- A circular or U-shape sitting arrangement where the participants can see each other is preferable.

COMMUNICATION: Establish communication expectations such as one person speaks at a time. Raise hands when taking turns to speak so the Deaf, DeafBlind or Hard of Hearing participant can quickly identify who is speaking. This also gives them more of a chance to join in the discussion too.

LIP READING: Even a very skilled lip reader can only catch about 25-30% of what is being said. Why? Many words look the same on the lips, faces are not always visible to lip-read if the presenter turns away or someone has their hand on their mouth, etc. Also, it is hard to keep focus on the lips for a long period of time due to eye strain.

SPEAKING: Speak in a normal pace and volume. Do not over enunciate.

DEAF CULTURE INTERACTION: It is common for a Deaf audience to interact and participate throughout a presentation. This assists in learning and is due to the nature of ASL and Deaf culture being a collective culture that values shared experiences.

ACCOMMODATIONS: Deaf and Hard of Hearing people frequently use communication accommodations. It is important for the presenter to be aware of the various types of accommodations and how to use them.

Types of accommodations that could be used:



INTERPRETERS: Interpreters are there to facilitate communication between the Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing audience and non-signing presenter. Interpreters are American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters. There may be times when Certified Deaf Interpreters (CDI) will be used or for added communication support and tactile interpreters for people who are DeafBlind. When using an interpreter, speak directly to the Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing person or audience. Do not say to the interpreter, "tell them/him/her." Send a copy of the information to be presented to the interpreter ahead of time so they can prepare for the assignment.

CART: Captioning at Real Time (CART) is used for those who prefer to read what is being said. A certified transcriber will type out the words the presenter speaks, which are then projected onto a larger screen for the audience to view. Allow time for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing person to scan the screen especially when a PowerPoint is also being used. Also, allow time for those who are DeafBlind and using tactile interpreters to translate the CART information if needed.

LOOP SYSTEM: LOOP is a listening enhancement technology using a coil system usually placed under the carpets in a room, allowing a hearing aid user to hear a presenter more clearly. A microphone will typically be worn by the presenter and participants sitting at tables will use table microphones.

LISTENING DEVICES: Various devices are available. A hearing aid user may ask you to wear a microphone that works with their devices.



MATERIALS: When possible, send the information to be presented to the audience beforehand so they can have time to review. Ask a DeafBlind person how they would like the material (example: large print or Braille.) You can contact Utah Division of Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired for information on converting your materials into Braille. www.usor.utah.gov/dsbvi

If you have any additional questions or concerns, call 801-657-5200.