



Effective Strategies for Communicating With People Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing and/or Have Other Access and Functional Needs



Problem / Solution

Problem:

First Responders, emergency managers, and/or healthcare workers may have minimal experience or exposure to using visual communication needed by various groups with communication access and functional needs (especially those who are deaf or hard of hearing).



Problem / Solution

Solution: The State of FL and SPC/CPSI offers cost effective, face-to-face training around the State to responders, emergency management, and health care workers to increase awareness and highlight the need of a broad spectrum of visual communication needs, especially for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. The workshop is delivered by people who are deaf or hard of hearing who are education professionals who share their experiences and different communication needs.



Partnership

- The State of Florida, Department of Health
- St. Petersburg College, Center for Public Safety Innovation (SPC/CPSI)

Marketing video for Governor's Hurricane Conference (GHC – 2015):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rEBGyNS89Gw>



People with Hearing Loss

- One in every 10 Americans has hearing loss. (Source: CDC)
 - As baby boomers reach retirement age this number will nearly double (by the year 2030).
 - Noise induced hearing loss – returning veterans, personal music playing devices
 - Auditory communication abilities are reduced at or near a disaster or emergency incident.
- The majority of people with hearing loss require some form of alternate communication method.
 - Approximately 3 million people in Florida are deaf or hard of hearing. (Source: CDC)
 - The Center for Disease Control estimates that 16.1% of the population of Florida has some form of hearing loss – from mild loss to profound loss.



Communication Issues

For First Responders, Healthcare Workers, and People Who are D/HH/D-B:

- Legal Issues (law suits, violation of civil rights)
- Ethics
- Media problems
- Injury (to service providers or citizens)
- Death



Vulnerability in Emergency/Disaster



Report on Special Needs Assessment for Katrina Evacuees (SNAKE) Project - The most underserved group were those who are deaf or hard of hearing.



Communication Training Why Not Just Make a Video?

Scenarios to set the stage:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kSKZHZdfImc>

(Play excerpts only)

Solution:

Face to Face Training with Multiple Perspectives



Covered In All Modules - Perspectives

- The legal and ethical importance of effective communication for people who are deaf or hard of hearing and other access and functional needs
- The various sub-groups, including the communication needs of people who are deaf or hard of hearing
- Stress created by communication barriers
- Including people who are D/HH in emergency preparedness and response



What Needs to be Addressed

- Federal laws
- Providing effective communication and equal access
- DOJ: ADA guidelines for working with people who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing (D/HH)
- Liabilities
- **Activity:** Head-to-Toe Assessment
- Review Deaf/Hard of Hearing/Late-Deafened/Deaf-Blind (D/HH/D-B)
- Identifying someone who is D/HH/D-B
- Myth busting
- Strategies for communication
- Devices
- People Who are D/HH and other Access and Functional Needs
- Lip/Speech reading & **Activity**
- Hearing loss accommodations



What Needs to be Addressed

- American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters
- Respect and different philosophies of hearing loss
- Stressors, emotional barriers, and safety issues
- Using gestures
- D/HH in Emergencies and Disaster and Vulnerability and Preparedness
- Caption and public Information
- Evacuations
- Sheltering
- More in-depth on interpreters
- **Activity:** Interview/using an interpreter



What Works

- Participants worked with other first responders or health care workers.
- Participants worked in varying disciplines (hospitals, support agencies, police, fire, emergency management).
- Class size average was between 20-25 people, which was ideal class size for the opportunity for interaction and hands-on experience activities.
- AHCA Continuing Education Units were pre-approved for the training.



Delivery Cost Reduction

- Shared cost within State Agencies (Department of Health and Division of Emergency Management)
- Accommodations were paid by the State of FL Vocational Rehabilitation.
- SPC/CPSI waived ALL administrative costs, curriculum development costs, GHC marketing video cost, and some travel costs.
- Course was free to participating agency representatives.



FY 2014/2015 Delivery

- Delivered two, ½ day sessions at the 2015 Florida Governor's Hurricane Conference (GHC)
 - Excellent evaluations
 - Request for improvement – more time
 - Comment that the workshop didn't reach many responders who needed the information but their agency could not afford to send them to the GHC.



FY 2015/2016 Delivery

- Delivered two, ½ day sessions in Broward County.
 - Excellent evaluations
 - Request for improvement – more time
- Delivered two, full day sessions in Tallahassee (North Florida) and Alachua County (Central FL).



Course Objectives

- Explain the importance of effective communication for people who are deaf or hard of hearing (D/HH) and other access and functional needs.
- Describe the various sub-groups, including the communication needs of people who are deaf or hard of hearing (D/HH) .
- Discuss the additional stress responders and health care workers may experience when communicating with people who are deaf or hard of hearing (D/HH).
- Demonstrate ways to provide equal communication to people who are deaf or hard of hearing (D/HH) in emergencies or disasters.



About This Course

- This workshop is designed for effective communications strategies for responders and assisting people who are deaf or hard of hearing or have other communication needs. This training is provided by St. Petersburg College and the Center for Public Safety Innovation in partnership with the Florida Department of Health:
 - Feedback is crucial.
 - Pre-Tests, post-tests, and evaluations will assist in the ongoing evaluation and updates of this training.
- This may be a whole new world of acronyms and terms. Most should be defined in the back of the book given to participants (Glossary/Acronyms).
 - Repetition of terms and subjects is by design.



Icebreaker Interview Summary

1. During a brief interview with one other participant, stand at least fifteen feet away from each other and both parties should have candy in their mouth and ear plugs in their ears.
2. During the second half of the interview, take five steps toward each other and then turn facing away from each other.
3. Successfully obtain introduction information about another person with the above communication barriers.



Icebreaker Summary

Imagine the relationship between this activity and conducting an interview or contacting someone with hearing loss. Sharing information with someone who is deaf or hard of hearing has many challenges. Many of these challenges can be overcome through awareness, accommodations, and visual and effective communication.

Hopefully, this activity will help participants brainstorm the “what-ifs” of effective communication barriers with people who are deaf or hard of hearing.



After-Action

- Evaluations
- Debrief after each workshop
- After-Action Report to State
- Forward plans for training



Questions?



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