

THE CANADIAN HEARING SOCIETY
Response to the Canadian Human Rights
Commission's Discussion Paper on
Legislative Review
Of the Employment Equity Act

15 February, 2002

THE CANADIAN HEARING SOCIETY
LA SOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE DE L'OUÏE



271 Spadina Road, Toronto, Ontario M5R 2V3
TTY: (416) 928-2527 Tel: (416) 964-9595 Fax: (416) 928-2506
E-mail: gmalkowski@chs.ca Website: www.chs.ca

Introduction

In 1997, the Supreme Court of Canada granted intervenor status to the Canadian Hearing Society (CHS), the Council of Canadians with Disabilities (CCD), the Canadian Association of the Deaf (CAD), and the Advocacy Resources Centre for Persons with Disabilities in the case *Eldridge v. British Columbia*. The Court ruled the failure to provide sign language interpretation where it is needed for effective communication in the delivery of health care services, social services, education and training and employment, violates the rights of deaf consumers. The Court further stated that governments cannot escape their constitutional obligations by passing on the responsibility of policy implementation to private entities not directly under the jurisdiction of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

In 2000, along with the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association and the Canadian Association of the Deaf, CHS was an intervenor in a case that involved deaf lawyer Scott Simser. Simser planned to take before a tribunal of the Canadian Human Rights Commission a case against the Tax Court of Canada. Negotiations prior to the hearing date resulted in a mutually satisfactory out-of-court agreement. On September 5, 2000, the Tax Court announced a landmark policy that acknowledges and accepts responsibility for arranging and paying for accommodation for deaf, deafened and hard of hearing lawyers, articling students and any parties they represent. Accommodation not only comprises of sign language interpretation and real-time captioning, but also embraces any other widely recognized method of accommodating the translation needs of deaf, deafened or hard of hearing persons. The Canadian Human Rights Commission is being encouraged to act systemically and have other court systems adopt similar policies.

The Advocacy Resource Centre for Persons with Disabilities (ARCH) and the Disabled Persons for Employment Equity Human Rights Group (DPEEHRG), along with CHS was recently on the negotiation committee that reached several mutually satisfactory out-of-court agreements with a number of bank and transportation employers such as Scotiabank and CIBC. Negotiations with other large employers continue and hopefully will be successful in reaching other significant and satisfactory out-of-court agreements, which are currently being monitored by the Canadian Human Rights Commission.

Even with landmark Supreme Court of Canada decisions such as *Eldridge*, *Meiorin*, and *Grismer* and recent amendments to the Canadian Human Rights, Canada Transportation and Employment Equity Acts, individual citizens still bear sole responsibility to fight for their right to access if service providers and employers fail to comply. This is costly in terms of time, money and dignity of consumers and the government bureaucracy. CHS

strongly supports better clarification and effective standards of the Canadian Human Rights Commission, in hopes that this will result in strengthening enforcement mechanisms; the existing legislation is insufficient in this regard. The Commission must establish better standards for the federal government, the broader public sector and the private sector, so that all employers covered by the Employment Equity Act, involved with intentional or unintentional practices of discrimination against persons with disabilities are eradicated.

CHS is pleased to have an opportunity to consult on behalf of our deaf, deafened and hard of hearing consumers and is encouraged that the the Canadian Human Rights Commission is committed to clarifying important standards and to improve the administration of the Commission's enforcement mandate in compliance with *Employment Equity Act*. The recommendations we put forth in this paper support those contained in a position paper being submitted by Toronto Employment Equity Practitioners Association (TEEPA). Our recommendations, however, will focus specifically on the needs of persons who are deaf, deafened and hard of hearing.

Systemic Discrimination

Historically, federal safety and hiring policies and regulations have excluded deaf, deafened and hard of hearing job seekers from even unskilled positions in janitorial, maintenance, food services and clerical work. However, deaf, deafened and hard of hearing individuals are in fact employed in a variety of fields, including skilled occupations such as carpentry or in professions such as medicine, law, politics, education or business.

The continued under-representation of these workers in the banking, communication, transportation and other industries, as well as federal departments and agencies, is well documented and provides evidence of deep-rooted systemic discrimination (i.e. Canadian Human Rights Commission's Employment Equity and Annual reports). Only strong regulations to the *Employment Equity Act* can remove the persistent barriers that prevent deaf, deafened and hard of hearing workers from becoming gainfully employed by federal departments and the corporations and agencies they regulate.

Deafness is not disease, disorder or health impairment, nor is it a threat to the health and safety of others. For example, research studies have shown that deaf and hard of hearing drivers have better safe-driving records. However, the Canadian Medical Association has taken the position that hearing loss poses threat to safe driving.

Deaf and hard of hearing employees generally have better punctuality and attendance records in the workplace than their hearing counterparts. The record also shows that if a few simple precautions are followed, deaf, deafened and hard of hearing employees pose no greater safety risk on the job than employees with normal hearing. Serious attitudinal barriers may be evident in the expectations, perceptions, beliefs and behaviours of employers regarding the employability and capability of deaf, deafened and hard of

hearing persons. An example is an employer's concern that training will take longer and be more difficult.

The continued underemployment of deaf individuals is a result of deep-rooted discrimination that progressive organizations are striving to have removed.

Barriers to Employment

Most providers of public services are in violation of the Supreme Court of Canada's Eldridge decision. They have failed to provide sign language interpreters and TTYs (telephone devices for deaf people) to make their offices accessible to deaf and hard of hearing Canadians. Such services include; health care, education, job interviews, social assistance, legal aid, etc.

While many government offices (i.e. local HRDC offices) and community organizations have TTYs, their employees are not trained how to use these devices, rendering them useless. Often these devices get disconnected or are neglected by new staff who are unfamiliar with the equipment.

The Federal Government is trying hard to avoid putting in place a comprehensive legislative initiative for barrier removal and barrier prevention. Without a "Canadians with Disabilities Act", deaf, deafened and hard of hearing persons will continue to constitute a marginalized and severely disadvantaged minority in Canadian society.

Employers and government staff need to be trained to develop more sensitive psychological and vocational aptitude testing procedures for deaf, deafened and hard of hearing employees or applicants. They also need to know of their legal responsibilities under the Canadian and Provincial Human Rights Codes and the Supreme Court of Canada's Eldridge decision

Statistics on Rate of Unemployment/Underemployment

20% of Deaf Canadians are employed; 41.9% are underemployed and 37.5% are unemployed (Canadian Association of the Deaf, CAD 1998)

85% of Deaf Ontarians are underemployed and unemployed (CAD, 1998)

48% of Deaf Canadians are unemployed (Canada Statistics, 1992)

Recent research studies indicate that large numbers of persons, especially deaf, deafened and hard of hearing consumers from northern and rural Ontario, are victims of layoffs from private business and government

Barriers to Training, Post Secondary Education and Professional Development

The Canadian Hearing Society is concerned about the serious decline in the enrollment of deaf and hard of hearing Canadians at both Canadian and foreign universities and colleges. Furthermore, educational institutions serving deaf and hard of hearing students at all levels are experiencing extreme difficulty recruiting qualified deaf and hard of hearing university and college graduates to fill staff teaching positions.

Deaf and hard of hearing consumers are frustrated that they are unable to commence or continue their post-secondary studies in Canada or the United States for the following reasons:

- Rising tuition costs
- Dramatic reductions in government funding
 - Changing from grants to loans
 - Imposing taxes on disability-related supports and out-of-country bursaries for students with disabilities. For example, students attending foreign post-secondary institutions receive Revenue Canada tax bills ranging from \$5,000 to \$10,000 each year.
- No government funding for sign language interpreters and captioners in private vocational schools.
- Changing admission requirements prevent deaf and hard of hearing students from entering teacher-training programs in the education of the deaf and hard of hearing. For example, deaf candidates with degrees from foreign or out-of-province schools must first obtain a Bachelor of Education degree from a university in their own province – even though these institutions are not accessible to deaf and hard of hearing students.
- Lack of accommodation funds to cover the cost of sign language interpreters for summer or part-time jobs for post-secondary students who are not clients of Human Resources Development Canada or provincial programs such as the Ontario Disability Support Program and Ontario Works.
- New barriers created by the Employability Assistance for Persons with Disabilities agreement (EAPD), which was signed in 1998 by the Minister of HRDC and Provincial and Territorial Ministers. The EAPD adversely affects deaf and hard of hearing post-secondary students in Canada, as well as those attending Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C. and the National Technical Institute for the Deaf in Rochester, New York, and appears to violate the Supreme Court of Canada's

Eldridge, Eaton, Mercier, Granovsky and Grismer decisions. Unlike its predecessor, the Vocational Rehabilitation for Disabled Persons agreement, the EAPD does not:

- provide grants to disabled students attending foreign institutions of higher learning.
 - subsidize tuition fees or other supports (e.g., tutors) for students attending Ontario universities and colleges.
 - subsidize accessibility supports (e.g., sign language interpreters and captioners) for students attending private vocational schools.
- Recent new Public Works Canada Interpretation Service policy will not provide hearing Federal Public Employees with sign language interpretation for deaf and hard of hearing Non-federal employee's presentation, meeting, professional development, training and business opportunities.

Statistics on Rate of Educational Level

Statistics Canada, 1992 reported as follows:

“ 2% of Deaf Canadians have University degrees, compared to 14% of the general population

13% of Deaf Canadians received college certificates/diplomas

8 % of Deaf Canadians obtained post secondary education

25% of Deaf Canadians received high school education

52% of Deaf Canadians obtained elementary education”

Ministry of Education and Training's Literacy Survey of Ontario's Deaf and Hard of Hearing Adults, 1998 reported that deaf, deafened and hard of hearing individuals are less likely to be employed and they earn less on the average than other Ontarians. This finding reflects their older age profile, their relatively low level of education, and their low literacy levels.

Specific Recommendations

CHS strongly recommends that the *Canadian Human Rights Commission* amend the regulations to require to include following:

1. Require employers to establish their own human resource disability advisory committees, including employees and community members with disabilities as defined in “Guide to the Audit Process for Employment Systems Review” for employees and community participation in the employment equity planning
2. Require employers to conduct Employment Systems Review, to monitor both employees hired when disabled, and those employees who became disabled after being hired.
3. Enforce employment equity legislation to comply with the equality decisions of the Supreme Court of Canada (i.e. the *Eldridge, Meiorin and Grismer*)
4. Enforce accessibility standards in the workplace and local HRDC offices.
5. A more efficient and expeditious enforcement process put in place, so that the burden of enforcement is not solely the consumer’s responsibility.

Furthermore, CHS recommends that regulations from the *Employment Equity Act* be amended to include the following practical suggestions:

1. Establish an action plan to remove existing barriers and prevent the creation of new barriers in all levels of HRDC and offices of employers for deaf, deafened and hard of hearing staff and consumers.
2. Implement cultural and disability sensitivity training that informs service providers and employers of the legal rights of deaf, deafened and hard of hearing persons.
3. Hire accommodation coordinators where a need to serve deaf, deafened and hard of hearing people is identified.
4. Have employers implement policies and procedures to accommodate all employees and job seekers who are deaf, deafened and hard of hearing.
5. Ensure prompt availability of qualified sign language interpreters and captioners for deaf, deafened and hard of hearing persons.
6. Become familiar with and use appropriate terminology to describe disabilities, including hearing loss and deafness.

7. Contact consumer organizations such as the Ontario Association of the Deaf, the Canadian Association of the Deaf, and the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association, and service agencies such as The Canadian Hearing Society for the provision of cultural sensitivity training, purchase of sign language interpreter services and other related communication supports and devices, and consultation on policy developments.

General Recommendations

To prevent an increase in the number of deaf and hard of hearing individuals forced onto welfare rolls and to counter the critical shortage of deaf and hard of hearing professionals across Canada, we strongly urge the Canadian Human Rights Commission to pressure the Hon. Jane Stewart, Minister, Human Resources Development Canada to send a directive to all provincial and territorial ministers responsible for post-secondary education and skills training to ensure that they are in compliance with the federal Supreme Court of Canada's decisions in *Eldridge, Eaton, Mercier, Granovsky and Grimser*. Provincial and territorial should be required to remove barriers facing deaf, deafened and hard of hearing post-secondary students, trainees and employees.

Furthermore, CHS strongly recommends that the Federal Government introduce and pass into law a strong, effective and enforceable *Canadians with Disabilities Act* that will

- Strengthen the Employability Assistance for Persons with Disabilities programs,
- Enforce accessibility standards in all levels of HRDC offices, federal public offices and offices of Employers for deaf, deafened and hard of hearing staff and consumers
- Adopt the new proposed World Health Organization's definition of disability, which recognizes that people with certified or perceived impairments are disabled by society's failure to accommodate their needs.
- Require all employers with a minimum of fifty employees to establish human resource disability advisory committees, consisting of employees with disabilities and representatives from consumer disability organizations and service agencies serving deaf, deafened and hard of hearing persons. These committees would advise employers in following areas:
 - Occupational Group/Category
 - Recruitment
 - Selection
 - Hiring Development
 - Training
 - Promotion
 - Retention
 - Termination
 - Accommodation
 - Innovative Project

Appendix: The Canadian Hearing Society Accessibility Policy

CHS Meeting Accessibility Policy

The Canadian Hearing Society supports the rights of deaf, deafened and hard of hearing individuals and is committed to ensuring accessibility to information communicated during all staff and departmental meetings, workshops and other communication sessions.

It is therefore the CHS policy that any meetings, workshops or other sessions follow the attached guidelines for accessibility and communication. It is the responsibility of the designated Chairperson to ensure the policy is adhered to and that accessibility issues are prepared for prior to the commencement of the session in question.

1. Interpreters and Real Time Captionists/Notetakers

Every session will have sufficient interpreters and real time captionists/notetakers. Based on availability, a real time captionist will be the preference. Presenters must remember that the captionists/notetakers are in fixed positions due to equipment. All equipment, including any ALD's **must** be in good working condition. Should there be any problem with accessibility requirements e.g. interpreters or captionist/notetaker not available, equipment not working, the session will be cancelled. Furthermore, should accessibility requirements falter **during** the session e.g. equipment stops working, the session will be stopped until the required adjustments are made.

2. Facilities/Meeting Flow

Prior to beginning the session, the Chairperson will ensure that all physical adjustments are made e.g. blinds and lighting adjusted as required. The Chairperson will designate someone to keep a speakers list to assist with time management and the flow of the meeting.

3. Sightlines

Everyone (including interpreters, captionists/notetakers) must be able to see each other and the presentation clearly. Seating must be made available for those who lipread to ensure sightlines. Tall objects such as water bottles should be kept off the tables. Equipment must be positioned in the least restrictive spot.

4. Noise

Common background noises can interfere with hearing speech (for anyone). All present should avoid noises such as flipping pages, rocking chairs and sliding coffee mugs while speaking. Likewise, if the overhead projector is not being used, it should be turned off. Consider visual noise as well. One example is to avoid cluttering the wall directly behind the presenter with flip chart paper. Avoid mannerisms or bright clothing that create visual distractions.

5. Reading Time

Presenter should pause to allow participants to look at overheads, papers, or other visuals. **Stop speaking** and wait for the participants to resume eye contact.

What's the difference between "Communication Technology" and

"Assistive Devices"? They mean the same thing. Some people prefer to use the term "communication technology" instead of "assistive devices" to reflect the change in the use of this type of equipment. They are not only used by deaf, deafened and hard of hearing people, but by hearing people as well. Some everyday examples of communication technology include pagers (sound or vibratory) and e-mail.

Types of Communication Technology:

1. Alerting devices are designed to warn or to inform individuals of sounds they might not be able to hear. Devices that flash lights or vibrate are considered alerting devices. These can be used for notification signals for fire alarms, alarm clocks,

doorbells, ringing phones, etc.

2. **Assistive listening devices** are systems that amplify listening situations by increasing the capability of the hearing aid (FM Systems, audio loop systems and hardwired systems).

3. **Telecommunication devices** include two categories of technology that make it possible to communicate over the telephone. Auditory devices such as telephone amplifiers make the phone signals louder. The second category is text telephones also known as TTYs or TDDs , which enable phone conversations are conducted in print.

4. **Computer enhanced communication** refers to a range of computerized print options including real time captioning, notetaking, e-mail, closed captioning and pagers, etc.

Communication Technology

Helpful Information

January 25, 2001

Communication Tips:

How to use Sign Language Interpreters Effectively

1. Speak at your natural pace but be aware that the interpreter may wait to hear and understand a complete thought before beginning to interpret. The interpreter will let you know if you need to repeat or slow down. Taking turns in a conversation may be slightly different from what you are used to. This is due to the lag time necessary for the interpreting process. The interpreter will interpret the intent and spirit of everything that is signed and spoken.
2. Look at and speak directly to the deaf person. Do not say, "Tell him" or "tell her". The deaf person will be watching the interpreter and glancing back and forth at you.
3. It is usually best to position the interpreter next to you (the hearing person) or the person presenting the information, opposite the deaf person. This makes it easy for the deaf person to see you and the interpreter in one line of vision.
4. In a group situation, semi-circle seating arrangements are best for discussion formats. For large group situations, such as conferences or performances, be sure to reserve a seating area near the front for deaf participants. This allows participants to clearly see the interpreter.
5. In advance of the assignment/meeting, provide the interpreter with materials such as outlines, agendas, technical vocabulary and a list of all the participants if possible. If it is a large meeting, it is helpful to have nametags or nameplates to aid the interpreter in identifying who is speaking. Remember to pause before giving your explanation of any visual aids so that the deaf person has time to see it, look back at the interpreter and still keep up with the information being presented.
6. Interpreters and hearing speakers should avoid standing with their backs to windows, bright lights or busy colourful designs. These backgrounds make it difficult to see and receive a clear message. A solid, dark coloured backdrop or background is recommended.

7. The interpreting process is very demanding. Two interpreters will be assigned to a job over two hours in length. Interpreters working in a team allow communication to flow smoothly and thereby minimize distractions to the meeting process. One interpreter will actively interpret for 20-30 minutes while the other provides back-up to the active interpreter. The interpreters switch every 20-30 minutes and require a break after approximately two hours of interpreting.

Communication Tips - Internal

(Revised January 23, 2001)

BEFORE the meeting starts, consult with presenter, captionists, interpreters and relevant participants about the best visual and sound set-up for the room and equipment. Give handouts to interpreters/captionists. Save seats with good sightlines for those who use interpreting/captioning services and speechread. Choose someone to look after the speaker's list. Nametags in large print are essential. If necessary, choose someone to chair the meeting.

Visual Materials: whenever possible, give handouts at the END of your presentation and use overhead materials during the presentation itself. Label handouts (ABC, etc.) and number the pages in each document. Refer to them as document A, page 12, for example.

Sightlines: all participants should keep water bottles and other large objects out of the way. Position yourself so that everyone can see.

Noise reduction (both sight and sound): all participants should keep noise to a minimum. Rustling papers, scraping cups, excessive rocking etc. are annoying and interfere with communication.

Turn-taking: begin AFTER you have been recognized by name by the person controlling the speaker's list. Remember, one person at a time.

Interpreting/Captioning: be aware of lag time. Slow down and pause as necessary. Glance at the interpreter/captionist to make sure s/he is ok. Spell out unusual names, etc.

Plain Language: be clear and concise with your message. Make your point at the beginning, and then go on with your explanation. This makes it easier to translate between ASL and English and avoids over-taxing our energy.

Reading time: pause to allow everyone to read handouts, visuals, etc. Resume your presentation AFTER eye contact is re-established.

Sensitivity: be aware of cross-cultural issues and take individual responsibility for resolving them if necessary. Use respectful terminology and phrases. Remember that jokes, slang, etc. don't translate well...explain them if you use them.

The following tips are helpful for participants, meeting planners and presenters. Adequate preparation and awareness enhances the interpreting and speechreading processes as well as overall communication for everyone involved.

TIPS that enhance getting the message through Speechreading

**If YOU
have a
hearing
loss
Speaking with
a person who
has a hearing
loss**

Pick the best spot to communicate. Avoid areas with noisy backgrounds like TV, air conditioners and crowds, as well as poorly lit areas.

**Get the person's attention before you speak. .
Face the person when speaking, and don't look down.**

Speak clearly and naturally, perhaps a little slower than usual.

Don't shout, it's embarrassing and can cause discomfort and distort speech.

**Do not cover your lips when speaking. .
Give clues when changing the subject. .
Don't be "deadpan." Body language helps project the meaning of what is being said. Be animated and use lots of facial expression.**

Write things down if you're not being understood, especially key words.

**Tell others about your hearing loss. .
Provide feedback to the speaker. When you don't understand, ask for it to be repeated or rephrased.**

**Look for visual clues to what is being said. .
Tell others how best to talk to you. .
Share responsibility for communication. . .
Keep a sense of humour. . .
Be patient, positive and relaxed! . .**

Communication Tips: Speechreading

Revised January 23, 2001

Communication Tips – in Meetings

Clear communication is based on a common language. There are times when a common language does not exist between people. In these situations, an interpreter, captioner or notetaker can facilitate communication.

The language of most Deaf Canadians is American Sign Language (ASL). ASL is a visual language with its own grammar and syntax that is completely different from English. A sign

language interpreter can bridge the communication gap between ASL and English.

Professional

sign language interpreters are knowledgeable in the language and culture of both Deaf and

hearing people. They provide communication in both ASL and spoken English.

Both computerized notetaking and real-time captioning are support services requested by deaf,

deafened and hard of hearing consumers who prefer the print mode for their communication

needs. Neither service is a substitute for sign language interpreting. It is the consumer's choice

which method of communication they wish to use.

The following are tips and guidelines on how to use sign language interpreters and captionists/notetakers effectively in a meeting.

Before the meeting starts:

Consult with the chair, presenter, captionists, interpreters and relevant participants about the best visual and sound set-up for the room and equipment. Give handouts to interpreters/captionists before the start of the meeting. Keep seats with good sightlines for those who use the interpreting/captioning services.

Choose someone to look after the speaker's list. Give the interpreter/captionist a list of all participants.

Sightlines:

All participants should keep water bottles and other large objects out of the way.

Position yourself so that everyone can see.

Noise reduction (both sight and sound):

All participants should keep noise to a minimum. Rustling papers, tapping fingers on the table, etc are annoying and interfere with communication.

No side conversations:

Besides being impolite and noisy, it also interferes with access and complicates the interpreter/captionist's role of maintaining the conversation.

Turn-taking:

When you wish to speak or sign, please raise your hand. The chair or person maintaining the speaker's list will recognize your time by name. Remember, one person at a time. An interpreter/captionist can not be facilitating for more than one speaker/conversation at a time.

Communication Tips: One-to-One

1. Don't assume that a hearing aid corrects hearing loss. Even a small hearing loss can make it difficult to hear speech.
2. Get the person's attention before you begin to speak, and don't start speaking without it. It is perfectly acceptable to tap a person lightly on the shoulder or arm or to wave a hand gently in the person's direction to attract his or her attention.
3. Do face the person and maintain eye contact throughout the conversation. Don't talk directly to the interpreter, but always face and speak to the individual.
4. Make sure the person can clearly see your mouth and face. Don't eat, chew gum or hold your hand in front of your mouth/face when you talk
5. Speak and enunciate clearly and normally, but don't exaggerate your lip movements and don't shout.
6. Use facial expressions and body language to clarify your message.
7. Don't talk, while for example, pointing to a passage in a book. Stop speaking and let the person read what you have pointed out. Resume speaking when s/he is finished reading and has resumed eye contact with you (or interpreter).
8. Keep pen and paper handy so that you can write your message or key words if necessary. Rephrase sentences that the listener did not understand.
9. If you have some signing skills, do not assume you are well understood. You may still need to book an interpreter or captionist. Check ahead of time with the individual to see which service s/he prefers (if any).
10. Be aware that English may be a second language for some people. Speak and write in everyday plain language.

Introduction: Deaf, deafened and hard of hearing people depend very heavily on their eyes in the communication process It is vital that you take some simple, sensible steps to ensure that what you say is as clear as possible and that your behavior is sensitive.

Communication Tips:

How to use Real Time Captioning or Notetaking Services Effectively

Computerized notetaking is not a verbatim (word for word) print representation of the spoken material. A notetaker summarizes what is spoken while still maintaining accuracy and the intent of the speaker. A good notetaker can capture approximately 85 words a minute. Notetakers use a laptop computer with a standard keyboard and software, which they provide. Lag time is always several seconds before print appears onscreen.

A real-time captioner uses a court reporting steno machine that is coded to type verbatim text with minimal keystrokes. The steno machine is connected to a laptop computer equipped with specialized software that reinterprets the steno machine's code into readable English. Real-time captioning can keep up with the pace of human speech, typically 220 words a minute. Captioners provide their own steno machine, laptop computer and software. Lag time is zero or minimal. With both services, the printed output is projected onto a TV, computer monitor and/or overhead screen. The meeting/event coordinator usually supplies these. A data projector will be needed if an overhead screen is used. Of the two services, real-time captioning is the most effective accommodation, but it is more costly. Current rates in the GTA for notetaking and captioning are \$45/hour and \$156/hour respectively. However, for assignments of greater than two hours, a second notetaker will be required, while a captioner can work unaccompanied for approximately six hours. As with sign language interpreters, both notetakers and captionists require appropriate breaks at scheduled intervals. To help notetakers and captionists perform effectively, they must be provided at least 24 hours in advance with meeting/event materials, including an agenda or program, a list of participants/speakers, any documents to be presented or discussed, any prepared speeches and a list of unusual words or acronyms that may be used. Captionists and notetakers, alike pre-record this information into their computers and assign codes so that information is printed at the stroke of a key or two.

Communication Tips for External Presenters

1. **Working with sign language interpreters and captionists:** they need advance copies of your presentation, handout etc. Include a word list, name spellings and unusual terminology.
2. **Eye Contact:** look directly at the person who is speaking or signing (not the interpreter/captionist) and maintain a high level of eye contact with Deaf, deafened or hard of hearing participants. Be aware that lipreaders need to be able to see your face clearly at all times. Do not turn your back or cover your face when speaking.

3. **Visual materials:** whenever possible, give handouts at the END of your presentation. If its not possible, then label them documents A-B-C and number the pages so that you can refer to them as document A, page 3, for example. When referring to flipcharts or diagrams, point to the item, pause 2-3 seconds, then explain it once you have re-established full eye contact with the participants.
4. **Sightlines:** everyone should keep water bottles and other large objects out of the way. Position yourself so that everyone can see you clearly. Position equipment to the least restrictive spot.
5. **Noise reduction:** common background noises can interfere with hearing speech (for anyone). All present should avoid noises such as flipping pages, rocking chairs and sliding coffee mugs while speaking. Likewise, if the overhead projector is not being used, turn it off. Consider visual noise as well. One example is to avoid cluttering the wall directly behind the presenter with flip chart paper. Avoid mannerisms or bright clothing that create visual distractions.
6. **Turn-taking** one person speaks/signs at a time. The presenter should call on participants by name (not just pointing) so that the interpreters/captionists can follow. If 2-3 people begin speaking/signing at the same time, the presenter should remind everyone to go one at a time.
7. **Lag time:** be aware that the interpreters/captionists are slightly behind your speaking pace. Glance at them and pause as necessary. You may notice that Deaf, deafened and hard of hearing participants laugh last or are the last to raise their hands to ask a question or to answer a question. If so, hold off choosing someone to answer until the interpreter/captionists are finished.
8. **Plain language:** be clear and concise with your message. Use everyday words. Make your point at the beginning then go on with your explanation. This makes it easier to translate between ASL and English. Spell out unusual names, because the interpreter/captionists won't know how to spell them unless you tell them.

Speechreading:

Part of the Communication Process

Almost everyone occasionally speechreads to some degree whether or not they are aware of it. Speechreading is an important supplement to hearing because many high frequency sounds that are sometimes difficult to hear are formed at the front of the mouth where they can be seen. It is also an important contribution to the communication process for people with normal hearing in difficult listening situations. Combining what we are able to hear with visible speech cues improves communication. People with hearing loss can make use of these visual speech cues to improve overall communication. Speechreading, however, can never be a substitute for hearing because even under the best of conditions:

- Only 25-30% of the sounds are visible on the lips.**

- Only 25-30% of speech signals can be seen on the lips. The rest of the sounds are made in the back of the mouth and cannot be seen.**
- Many sounds look alike when they are formed on the mouth. Don't assume that all deaf, deafened and hard of hearing people can speechread easily or well. It is a skill that must be learned and it requires concentration. Even under ideal conditions usually 25-30% of your message may be obtained.**

FACTORS WHICH AFFECT SPEECHREADING

1. Speaker

- Lack of eye-contact with the listener before beginning to speak**
- Pronunciation and speech patterns, accents**
- Intensity, projection, speed and tone of voice**
- Facial expressions and body language, facial hair**
- Motion, pacing, etc.**
- Obstacles around the mouth; such as hands, food, gum, etc.**

TTY vs. TDD, what's the difference?

Both terms refer to the same device for making phone calls to/from deaf, deafened and hard of hearing people or other people who are unable to use a voice phone. TTY is short for "Teletypewriter" and it is the older and more accepted term. TDD is a short, which stands for the newer term "Telecommunication Device for the Deaf". Generally, TDD is not well accepted because it implies that the device is used only by deaf, deafened and hard of hearing people. In fact, devices are used and owned by many hearing people, some with voice difficulties and others with deaf family members, for example.

How long should I let the phone ring when I make a TTY call?

Generally, you should let the TTY ring about 10 times, or more, before hanging up. Due to the fact that many deaf, deafened and hard of hearing people cannot hear the phone ringing and must rely on a flashing light to alert them to a ringing phone. Lights are strategically placed, but they may not be visible from every area in the home/office.

What's that beeping sound I hear when I pick up the phone?

CHS has designated phone lines. One for voice calls and another for TTY calls. Sometimes callers get mixed up and a TTY call comes through on the voice line. When that happens, you hear a series of beeps. If possible, connect to the TTY and inform the caller of the correct number to dial next time.

Why do I have to immediately identify myself when I answer a TTY call?

TTY users cannot identify you by hearing your voice. As a courtesy, you should always state your name at the first possible opportunity, preferably when you answer the call. Some offices have a pre-recorded message for the TTY that automatically ends with a GA. In these cases, you will have to wait until the caller has typed, then when it is your turn to type again, identify yourself.

What do GA, HD and SK mean?

They signal turn taking in a TTY conversation.

- GA** is used at the end of your turn in the conversation, to indicate to the other person that they can "go ahead" to respond because only one person at a time can

Using a TTY: Helpful Information

Information collected from *GA and SK
Etiquette Guidelines for Telecommunications
in the Deaf Community* by S. Cagle and K. Cagle.
January 25, 2001

Real Time Captioning vs. Notetaking

By Nancy MacCallum, Executive Assistant

What is the difference between real time captioning and notetaking access for deaf, deafened and hard of hearing people?

Both computerized notetaking and real-time captioning are support services requested by deaf, deafened and hard of hearing consumers who prefer the print mode for their communication and/or information needs. Neither service is a substitute for sign language interpreting.

Computerized notetaking is not a verbatim (word for word) print representation of the spoken material. A notetaker summarizes what is spoken while still maintaining accuracy and the intent of the speaker. A good notetaker can capture approximately 85 words a minute. Notetakers use a laptop computer with a standard keyboard and software, which they provide.

A real-time captioner uses a court reporting steno machine that is coded to type verbatim text with minimal keystrokes. The steno machine is connected to a laptop computer equipped with specialized software that reinterprets the steno machine's code into readable English. Real-time captioning can keep up with the pace of human speech, typically 220 words a minute. Captioners provide their own steno machine, laptop computer and software.

With both services, the printed output is projected onto a TV, computer monitor and/or overhead screen. These are usually supplied by the meeting/event coordinator. A data projector will be needed if an overhead screen is used.

Of the two services, real-time captioning is the most effective accommodation, but it is more costly. Current rates in the Greater Toronto Area for notetaking and captioning are \$45/hour and \$115/hour respectively. However, for assignments of greater than two hours, a second notetaker will be required, while a captioner can work unaccompanied for approximately six hours. As with sign language interpreters, both notetakers and captioners require appropriate breaks at scheduled intervals.

To help notetakers and captioners perform effectively, they must be provided at least 24 hours in advance with meeting/event materials, including an agenda or program, a list of participants/speakers, any documents to be presented or discussed, any prepared speeches, and a list of unusual words or acronyms that may be used.

Reprinted from NETMA!, December 2000

