

**Accessibility Guide
to Businesses
& Service Providers**



CHS | SCO

CANADIAN HEARING SOCIETY
SOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE DE L'OUÏE



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FLOOR RESET

A, B, C Hallways
Science/Lab Arts Washrooms
Hallway
Washrooms

Floor 4
Floor Plan Diagram

Accessibility

Accessibility is not a destination, but an evolution. It means creating experiences where all people can enjoy barrier-free communication and full and active participation. How you achieve that will change as your organization, business, or facility grows.

Understanding your customers (patients/ students) and employees who are Deaf or have hearing loss is what we are all about

Solutions since 1940

With over 72 years of expertise, we have the resources to help you build your accessibility strategy. In these next pages you will find the information you need to understand your customers who are Deaf or have hearing loss and recognize the barriers they face and the solutions to break down those barriers.

The benefits are real.

There is enormous potential for healthy returns on investing in removing barriers.

Value-added services and products: Simple solutions benefit more than just your customers with disabilities or those who are Deaf or have hearing loss. For example, using “plain language” strategies in all your communications – making your messages as clear as possible – better serves everyone accessing your information. And that also means it better motivates people to choose your product or service.

Enhanced corporate reputation: Social responsibility initiatives – like a strategy to meet the needs of all your customers or clients – enhance your reputation within the community in which you do business. It can also be a powerful tool in recruiting and retaining talent in your organization.

Tapping into global markets: Most industrialized nations have legislation in place to ensure that persons with disabilities, Deaf people, and people with hearing loss, are able to participate actively and without barriers. By ensuring you are meeting or exceeding those requirements, you have the opportunity to tap into any market and attract global customers not served by their local markets.

Legal Requirements: In addition to a strong business case, there is also a growing body of legal rulings and legislation requiring your business and services to exclude no one. In Canada, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Canadian Human Rights Commission, and Supreme Court of Canada rulings all clearly mandate the legal responsibility of an organization, business or facility to be accessible.

Provincial Human Rights Commissions and Tribunals, along with legislation like the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) also set the ground rules for inclusive business practices and service provision.

Background information to help you on the road to accessibility

Prevalence of Hearing Loss

Did you know that nearly one out of every four adult Canadians reports having some hearing loss (CHS Awareness Survey 2002), although closer to 10% of people actually identify themselves as culturally Deaf, oral deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing?

Hearing loss is the third most prevalent chronic condition in older adults and the most widespread disability. Its prevalence rises with age. 46% of people aged 45-87 have hearing loss (Cruickshanks et al. 1998)

Couple these statistics with the fact that aging is the #1 cause of hearing loss, and the conclusion is clear that the incidence of hearing loss is poised to climb dramatically.

In addition, Canadians who identify themselves as culturally Deaf comprise more than 300,000 people across Canada (Canadian Association of the Deaf, 2007). American Sign Language (ASL) or la langue des signes québécoise (LSQ) is the first language of more people in Canada than most other non-official languages.

Know your customers with hearing loss

Culturally Deaf, oral deaf, deafened and hard of hearing people are individuals with a mild to profound hearing loss, with differing degrees of residual hearing. Some use a spoken language and some use a signed language, some use speechreading, hearing aids, communication devices, cochlear implants and or services such as interpreting and CART (Communication Access Realtime Translation).

Misperceptions

All Deaf, deafened and hard of hearing people are good speechreaders.

Many factors are involved in the success of speechreading (see page 10). People with hearing loss are not inherently better speechreaders.

Here are some definitions to help you become familiar with the terms you will read in this guide.

What do the terms deaf, culturally Deaf, oral deaf, deafened and hard of hearing mean?

deaf: This term is generally used to describe individuals with a severe to profound hearing loss, with little or no residual hearing. Some deaf people use a spoken language and speechreading, combined with their residual hearing and hearing aids, communication devices, and/or cochlear implants to communicate. Others use a signed language, such as American Sign Language (ASL) or la langue des signes québécoise (LSQ).

culturally Deaf: This term refers to individuals who identify with and participate in the language, culture, and community of Deaf people, based on a signed language. Deaf culture does not perceive hearing loss and deafness from a pathological point of view, but rather from a socio-cultural-linguistic point of view, indicated by a capital D as in “Deaf culture”. Culturally Deaf people may also use speech, residual hearing, hearing aids, speechreading and gesturing to communicate with people who do not sign.

oral deaf: This term is used to describe individuals with a severe to profound hearing loss, with little or no residual hearing. Oral deaf people primarily use speech to communicate, using their residual hearing and hearing aids or cochlear implants, communication devices, and/or speechreading as communication tools.

deafened or late-deafened: These terms describe individuals who grow up hearing or hard of hearing and, either suddenly or gradually, experience a profound loss of hearing. Deafened adults usually cannot understand speech without technology, such as a cochlear implant, or visual clues such as Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART), computerized notetaking, speechreading, and/or a signed language. (These terms are further explained below.)

hard of hearing: This term is generally used to describe individuals who have a hearing loss that can range from mild to profound and use spoken language to communicate. Most hard of hearing people can understand some speech sounds with or without hearing aids or cochlear implants and often supplement their residual hearing with speechreading and communication devices. The term “person with hearing loss” is also used.

Misperceptions

All deaf people know a signed language.

Many Deaf people know and use a signed language. Some deafened and hard of hearing people know and use a signed language. Many people with a hearing loss do not know a signed language.

What are the concepts that I should understand first?

Ableism: Ableism is discrimination (in belief or practice) based on a person's abilities, whether developmental, learning, physical, psychiatric or sensory. Ableism is a form of discrimination that devalues and disregards people with disabilities.

Access: Access is the creation of an environment where people, regardless of their abilities, can communicate clearly and participate actively.

Accommodation: Accommodations are adjustments or modifications that remove any barriers to full communication and participation.

Audism: Audism is a form of ableism. Audism is discrimination against a person who is Deaf or hard of hearing. It holds the belief that a hearing person or a deaf person who behaves in a manner more similar to a hearing person (in appearance, communication and language use, and/or function) is more intelligent, qualified, well-developed, and successful than another individual who may be culturally Deaf, oral deaf, deafened or hard of hearing and may prefer to use a signed language or has an accent in the production of spoken language due to hearing loss or uses a communication accommodation unfamiliar and dissimilar to hearing people.

Deaf culture: Deaf culture refers to the language, values, identity, traditions, behavioural norms and shared experiences of Deaf people and signed languages (in Canada, American Sign Language and la langue des signes québécoise). Deaf culture offers a strong sense of belonging and takes a socio-cultural-linguistic point of view of deafness, rather than a medical perspective.

Misperceptions

A person who can speak cannot be deaf.

Some deaf individuals have clear and modulated speech. This does not preclude them from having a hearing loss or being Deaf.

What are the communication and language choices and technologies I should know?

American Sign Language (ASL) and la langue des signes québécoise (LSQ) – signed languages: In Canada, there are two main signed languages: ASL and LSQ. ASL and LSQ are fully formed languages with complex grammar and syntax (sign/word order). They are distinct from one another, from spoken languages and other signed languages. They use signs composed of movements of the hands and arms, eyes, face, head and body. ASL is used by Deaf people primarily in Canada and the United States. LSQ is used by Deaf people primarily in Quebec and other French Canadian communities.

Assistive Listening Devices (ALDs): ALDs help to reduce background noise and compensate for poor room acoustics or distance from the sound source. ALDs can be portable or permanently installed. They include FM, Infrared and loop systems. They are designed to connect to the public address system or any audio sound source and send the signal directly to hearing aid and wireless receivers worn by people with hearing loss. The receivers allow individuals to adjust the volume to their comfort level and can be used with a variety of headsets or neckloop listening accessories for those who have a T-switch compatible hearing aid. They are recommended for all meeting assemblies including tours, lectures, small to large meeting venues, classrooms, places of worship, etc.

Cochlear implants: A cochlear implant is an electronic device that can help to provide a sense of sound to someone who is deaf or hard of hearing. It consists of an external piece that sits behind the ear as well as a second piece that is surgically implanted under the skin and sends and receives electronic impulses from the auditory nerve to the brain. The sensation of sound from a cochlear implant is unique and requires people who use them to learn new ways of processing sound. Each implant user will experience different levels of success in processing sound and hearing spoken language.

Computerized Notetakers: Computerized notetakers facilitate communication by typing out the main points of discussions or presentations. A laptop computer is set-up near the person who will be accessing the notes so they can read the conversation as it scrolls on the screen. Unlike CART (Communication Access Realtime Translation, see page 17), this support is not a word-for-word, simultaneous transcription of the discussion.

Hearing Aids: Hearing aids are devices worn behind the ear, in the ear or in the ear canal and composed of a microphone, amplifier, receiver, battery, earmold (or the casing), hook and the tubing. Hearing Aids amplify sound – all sound. Although they amplify spoken language, they do not improve the clarity of how speech is heard by someone with a hearing loss. Even when sound and speech are amplified, it is not always possible to discern distinct words. Unlike glasses that can restore 20/20 vision, hearing aids do not restore hearing; they amplify sound. An imperfect solution to a complicated problem, hearing aids are effective in managing hearing loss for many people.

Advancements continue to be made in hearing aid design to improve the ability to understand and differentiate between speech and sound, and to determine the direction from which they are coming.

Speechreading: Speechreading uses visual clues to understand a spoken message. The speechreader watches a speaker's lips, teeth and tongue, along with many other cues, such as facial expressions, gestures, context and body language. When used alone, the effectiveness of speechreading varies since more than half the movements involved in sound formation occur within the mouth and cannot be detected by the eye. 40 to 60 percent of English words are homophones (words which look identical on a speaker's face) and there is not a single sound that has a distinct lip/jaw movement/position of its own. 33 to 35 per cent of speechreading depends on many factors including visual acuity, personality and when hearing loss occurred. Speechreading is most successful when used in conjunction with other communication strategies.

Spoken language: Deaf, deafened and hard of hearing people who use spoken language speak for themselves. Their residual hearing is often augmented by hearing aid(s), cochlear implants, or other communication devices and/or speechreading. They may or may not have a noticeably unmodulated voice or "hearing loss accent" in their speech production.

Written/Typed and Read Communication: Writing back and forth on paper or typing back and forth using a device with a keyboard and display, or via text messaging, can be a convenient, portable, and effective means of communication with Deaf people or people with hearing loss. This type of communication tool is best suited to everyday, simple interactions (e.g. ordering at a restaurant, checking into a hotel, paying for a product in a retail outlet, etc.) but is not recommended for complex communication.

When writing back and forth use straightforward, conversational language, stating your point clearly. English (or French) is not the first language of all Canadians. The majority of culturally Deaf people function to a great extent bilingually – they are proficient, to a greater or lesser degree, in written English (or French) and ASL (or LSQ). ASL and LSQ do not have written forms and sometimes the written skills of a person whose first language is a signed language might appear stilted. A person's written English (or French) skill should not be perceived as an indicator of education, ability, or intelligence.

Communication Tips

Interpreters, captioning, and communication devices are just some of the ways you can create an environment of effective communication with your customers (patients/ students) and employees. Here are a few tips for communicating face-to-face with someone who is culturally Deaf, oral deaf, deafened or hard of hearing:



- Choose a well-lit area.
- Get the person's attention before you speak. A shoulder tap is appropriate if the person is near you, or wave your hand if s/he is at a distance.
- Ask the person if your surroundings are suitable and if s/he can understand you.
- Eliminate visual distractions for someone who is Deaf (e.g. standing in front of a bright window); and audio distractions for someone who is hard of hearing (e.g. turn off the radio or close the door to hallway conversations).
- Maintain eye contact by facing the person – don't look down or sideways.

Communication Tips



- Speak clearly and naturally, and at a moderate pace – don't shout.
- Keep your hands away from your face, do not chew gum or cover your mouth with your hand
- Body language helps to project the meaning of what you're saying; be animated. Use a lot of facial expressions/gestures.
- Rephrase rather than repeat when you are not understood.
- Be patient and be prepared to write things down if you are not being understood or you do not understand.
- Talk *to* the person, not *about* him/her, and not to the interpreter or CART writer.
- When in doubt, ask how to improve communication.

Misperceptions

There is one universal sign language.

There are over 100 signed languages in the world. They are as distinct from each other as the world's spoken languages are distinct from one another.

Barriers

Communication Barriers

Culturally Deaf, oral deaf, deafened and hard of hearing people face systemic barriers to communication and information every day. And when your customers (patients/students) or employees face barriers communicating with you, you in turn face barriers communicating with them. By making your workplace, business, products and services more accessible to Deaf people and people with hearing loss, you can break down those barriers.

Attitudinal Barriers

In addition to barriers to communication and information, and commonly experienced by Deaf, deafened and hard of hearing people, are serious attitudinal barriers. Examples of attitudinal barriers are lowered expectations of Deaf and hard of hearing people; perceptions and beliefs of reduced intelligence and capabilities of Deaf and hard of hearing people; and fear and avoidance of communicating with Deaf and hard of hearing people.

Misperceptions

Speech and language are the same thing.

There is a critical distinction to be made between language and how we produce or articulate language. In spoken language, gestures of the vocal cords, the mouth, and the tongue, etc. are used to “produce” language. In signed language, gestures of the hands, the body, and face, etc. are used to “produce” language. Language itself is something of the mind (or the brain). It can be used to think about things, plan arguments, and even practice telling a joke, etc., without ever being articulated in speech or sign.



We're here to help: CHS Menu of Accessibility Solutions

A full menu of accessibility solutions are available to help you identify current communication barriers, meet accessibility needs and obligations, and ensure that your culturally Deaf, oral deaf, deafened and hard of hearing customers and employees have unrestricted, barrier-free access to your facility, workplace or service.

Facility Assessments

The built environment of your workplace or where your business or service is conducted can have a significant impact on how auditory information is relayed and received. On-site reviews will identify barriers and provide you with recommendations on how you can improve your services and building to ensure that you are providing an inclusive and safe environment to Deaf and hard of hearing customers (patients/students) and employees.

Workplace Accessibility Services

On-site workplace accommodation assessments provide you with the information you need to ensure Deaf and hard of hearing employees enjoy a barrier-free work environment. Through awareness seminars, CHS provides training and education to both staff and management around hearing loss, communication strategies, holding accessible meetings, and more.

Technology Assessments

Communication devices are effective means of improving communication in your business or organization. Communication technology assessments identify the current technology on the market and how it can assist your business, workplace, or facility in providing clear communication and enhancing your services. Assistive listening and communication systems are available for auditoriums, meeting rooms, and countr/ information areas. We can assess your current system(s) and provide recommendations on the most appropriate communications technology for your business, from emergency notifications systems to one-to-one interactions.

Communication Devices Program

For the most complete range of communication devices for the home, workplace and business, from visual smoke detectors, baby monitors, alarm clocks, amplified phones, TTYs (text telephones), visual signalling devices and emergency notification systems, contact CHS for communication device solutions.

Education and Training

Providing ongoing education and training to every member of your business or organization, from front line staff to senior management, is essential for maintaining the long-term effectiveness of your accessibility strategy. A deeper understanding of the diverse communication needs, barriers created by attitudes or misinformation and the latest communication technology, training will ensure that accessibility and inclusion are woven through every facet of your business or service.

Drawing from the expertise from over 17 CHS programs and services we design workshops to meet your unique needs.

American Sign Language (ASL) and la langue des signes québécoise (LSQ) Content Development

From translation, through to filming and editing, we can work with you to improve accessibility to your Deaf customers, patients, students and employees by developing ASL and LSQ content for your website, DVDs, online training, etc.

Ontario Interpreting Services

Professional signed language-spoken language interpreters are knowledgeable in the language and culture of Deaf and hearing people and provide communication in both a signed language and a spoken language:

When the exchange of information is crucial and complex, such as during a job interview or medical appointment, in an educational setting or business meeting, arranging a mortgage or reporting a crime, the most effective way to communicate with a person who uses a signed language is through a professional interpreter.

Since 1981, Ontario Interpreting Services (OIS) has been the leading provider of quality interpreting services, providing pre-booked and emergency ASL-English and LSQ-French interpreting services in over 25 communities in Ontario. OIS interpreters are internally screened, insured and supported through ongoing professional development activities.

Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) Services

When on-site interpreting is not available, VRI services may be an option.

VRI enables Deaf and hearing people in the same room to communicate through an interpreter who is located off-site via video conferencing technology. Trained interpreters provide service from private and secure individual suites.

Deaf Interpreters: Hearing interpreters will occasionally work in a team with a Deaf Interpreter (DI). Professionally trained Deaf interpreters are fluent in ASL or LSQ (native language users) as well as non-standard forms of ASL or LSQ.

Deaf and non-Deaf interpreters (hearing interpreters) work together as a professional team to facilitate the communication process. The following are situations where expertise of Deaf interpreters maybe required:

- 1) when Deaf children are involved
- 2) when the Deaf person uses a non-standard form of a signed language
- 3) when the Deaf person is extremely ill or has physical restrictions or cognitive limitations
- 4) during Mental health assessments and/or treatment
- 5) during police, court and other legal settings

Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART)

CART is the professional word-for-word transcription of speech to text in real time and provides Deaf, hard of hearing and deafened customers (patients/students) and employees full access to the spoken word.

CART services can be provided on-site or remotely. On-site CART services have a CART writer at the location where the appointment is taking place. Remote CART services involve the Deaf or hard of hearing person logging into a secure website that carries the CART transmission.

Users can access remote CART service from either one or multiple locations. CART transmissions can be displayed on individual laptop computers, large monitors or LCD projectors for the benefit of ALL participants in the meeting.

All CHS CART writers are affiliated with their professional association and transcribe at 180 to 225 words per minute and meet a 98% verbatim accuracy rate.

Communication Access Conference Coordination

If you are planning a large conference or corporate event, or hosting community consultations, we can help you meet the communication access needs of your participants. Conference @ CHS provides ASL-English, LSQ-French interpreting services, CART and assistive listening systems to ensure everyone has access to all the information your event is offering.

Videoconferencing Services

Videoconferencing (vcon) uses audio/video telecommunications to bring people at difference sites together for meetings or presentations. This can be as simple as a conversation between two people in private offices or involve several sites with groups of people at different locations. It is a great communication tool for businesses, educational facilities, and employers – saving time and money by reducing travel. It is ideal for interviews, training sessions or meetings.

Emergency Situations



Quick recognition that someone is Deaf, deafened or hard of hearing is important to ensure appropriate actions are taken in emergency situations. In an emergency it is easy to forget that not everybody can hear you.

It is important to know how to communicate in situations of medical emergencies, those involving police, or when immediate access to a Deaf, deafened or hard of hearing person is required.

Be prepared to:

- use alternate ways of communicating
- ask questions (perhaps in writing) such as:
 - are you deaf
 - do you use sign language
 - do you want an interpreter
 - can you speak
 - do you read lips
 - can we write back and forth
- contact interpreting services (see page 19)
- use assistive listening devices
- communicate in a well-lit area and do not restrict the person's hands (needed for signing, writing or gesturing)
- respect the person's preferred way of communicating

CHS has the technology and services solutions to assist you in emergency situations.



How to book an ASL-English or LSQ-French Interpreter

- Call or email the CHS office nearest you, and ask for an OIS Assignment Coordinator. You can locate the office information on our website at chs.ca, locations.
- Give the OIS Assignment Coordinator the following information:
 - Name and telephone number of the consumers
 - Date, time and location of appointment
 - Name and phone number of contact person for the interpreter
 - The purpose of the appointment
 - The number of people who will be present
 - Special circumstances such as video recording, media coverage, etc.
- Call or email at least 2 weeks before your appointment. OIS needs as much notice as possible to book a signed language interpreter for you.
- For emergency requests, call the Call Centre at
Phone: 1-866-256-5142 or TTY: 1-866-831-4657; Email: ois@answerplus.ca
- For Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) request, contact vri@chs.ca.
- Any assignment that is longer than two hours, or is complex, requires two signed language interpreters.
- A Deaf interpreter may be booked if necessary.



Frequently Asked Questions

How can I call a Deaf person on the phone?

Purchase a TTY (text telephone) to make the call directly with a Deaf person who has a TTY. For more information, visit chs.ca/estore.

If you do not have a TTY, contact the local relay service (in Ontario and Quebec call the Bell Canada Relay Service). Check the front of your phone book for the toll-free relay service in your area.

How will I know if people are Deaf, deafened or hard of hearing?

People who are Deaf or have hearing loss may:

- tell you (using spoken language) that they have a hearing loss and recommend the best way to communicate
- point to their ear and shake their head
- use a note pad and pencil or make writing motions in the air
- move their lips without making any sound
- speak with a noticeably unmodulated voice (a hearing loss “accent” if you will)
- point to their hearing aid or cochlear implant
- use gestures
- have contacted you through a telephone relay service, interpreter or a third party, identifying themselves as Deaf or having hearing loss
- be accompanied by an interpreter or intervenor (if they are Deafblind) or have requested an interpreter or intervenor or CART be booked for the appointment
- present a COMMUNICARD indicating a hearing loss (graphic of card)

Isn't ASL just English on the hands?

American Sign Language (ASL) is a fully formed visual, spatial language with its own complex grammar and syntax distinct from English and other linear spoken languages and distinct from other signed languages. (For more information see page 9.)

Are there terms that I should not use to describe people with hearing loss?

The inability to hear affects neither intelligence nor the physical ability to produce sounds. The terms deaf mute and deaf and dumb are understandably inaccurate and particularly offensive phrases.

Although the term hearing impaired is widely used (by media, the public, even family members and people with hearing loss) it is not the preferred term used by The Canadian Hearing Society, the Canadian Association of the Deaf, or the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association. "Deaf", "deafened", "hard of hearing" and "people with hearing loss" are preferred terms.



Mission

The Canadian Hearing Society (CHS) is the leading provider of services, products, and information that remove barriers to communication, advance hearing health, and promote equity for people who are culturally Deaf, oral deaf, deafened, and hard of hearing.

Vision

A society where all people are respected, have full access to communication, and are able to participate without social, economic, or emotional barriers.

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CANADIAN HEARING SOCIETY
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