



Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund

MODULE # 3: Effective Communication

Improving Access to Health Care for People with Disabilities

A self-directed training for aging and disability organizations

3075 Adeline Street, Suite 210 • Berkeley, CA 94703 • 510.644.2555 • 510.841.8645 fax/tty •
1660 L Street, NW, Suite 700 • Washington, DC • www.dredf.org

Why is Effective Communication Important?

- Effective communication is critical so that:
 - People with disabilities can explain their health and long-term services and supports (LTSS) needs and ask questions in a manner that can be understood
 - People with disabilities can understand what their health plans and health care providers are saying to them about:
 - LTSS
 - Treatment options and plans
 - Preparation for tests
 - Understanding and following medication regimens
 - People with disabilities can get information from their health plan about covered benefits and services, LTSS, participating providers, and request accommodations or file complaints

Effective Communication with People who Have Sensory Disabilities

- Ensuring effective communication with people who have sensory disabilities may involve auxiliary aids and services. For example:
 - People who are deaf or have hearing loss might require
 - Qualified interpreters
 - Notetakers
 - Real-time captioning
 - Written materials
 - Assistive listening systems
 - Computer assisted real time transcription services (CART)
 - Open and closed captioning

Examples of Communication Problems and Solutions

Sign Language Interpreters

PROBLEM

Communicating with people who use Sign Language

SOLUTION



Sign Language Interpreters

- Like any other language interpreters, Sign Language interpreters translate English and American Sign Language (ASL) so people who are deaf and use ASL and people who can hear and speak English can communicate
- ASL is a visual-gestural language used by millions of Americans of all ages
- ASL is a rich and complete language that has a different grammatical structure than the English language



Assistive Listening Device

PROBLEM

Communicating with people who are hard of hearing

SOLUTION



Assistive Listening Device (ALD)

- Help amplify the sounds someone wants to hear, especially where there's a lot of background noise
- ALDs can be used with a hearing aid or cochlear implant to help a wearer hear certain sounds better
- With the development of digital and wireless technologies, more and more devices are becoming available to help people with hearing, voice, speech, and language impairments communicate effectively

CART

PROBLEM

Effective communication with people who are Deaf, hard of hearing, or who have certain cognitive or learning impairments

SOLUTION



CART

(Computer Aided Real-Time Transcription)

- Computer Aided Real-Time Transcription (CART) refers to the instant translation of the spoken word into English text using a stenotype machine, notebook computer and real-time software
- CART is a method to provide access to spoken communication for people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or who have certain cognitive or learning impairments
- The text produced by the CART service can be displayed on an individual's computer monitor, projected onto a screen, combined with a video presentation to appear as captions, or otherwise made available using other transmission and display systems

Text-to-Voice Relay Service

PROBLEM: Telephone access for people who have difficulty hearing or speaking

SOLUTION



Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS)

- Enables standard voice telephone users to talk to people who have difficulty hearing or speaking on the telephone.
 - Text-to-Voice Relay
 - A TTY/cell phone user calls a TRS relay center and types the number of the person he or she wishes to call
 - The communication assistant (CA) at the relay center then makes a voice telephone call to the other party to the call, and relays the call back and forth between the parties by speaking what a text user types, and typing what a voice telephone user speaks

Video Relay Service for ASL Users



Photo used courtesy Sorenson Communications

Video Relay Service (VRS)

- VRS is an Internet-based form of TRS that allows persons whose primary language is American Sign Language (ASL) to communicate with the communications assistant (CA) in ASL using video conferencing equipment
- The CA speaks what is signed to the called party, and signs the called party's response back to the caller
- VRS allows conversations to flow in near real time and in a faster and more natural manner than text-based TRS

Voice and Hearing Carry Over Relay Service

PROBLEM: Telephone Access for people who have difficulty hearing or speaking

SOLUTION



Voice and Hearing Carry Over

- Voice Carry Over

Voice Carry Over (VCO) is a type of TRS that allows a person with a hearing disability, but who wants to use his or her own voice, to speak directly to the called party and receive responses in text from the CA. No typing is required by the calling party. This service is particularly useful to older people who have lost their hearing, but who can still speak

- Hearing Carry Over

Hearing Carry Over (HCO) is a type of TRS that allows a person with a speech disability, but who wants to use his/her own hearing, to listen to the called party and type his/her part of the conversation on a TTY. The CA reads these words to the called party, and the caller hears responses directly from the called party

For TRS Dial 711

- Dial 711 to connect to certain forms of TRS anywhere in the United States.



Picture Communication

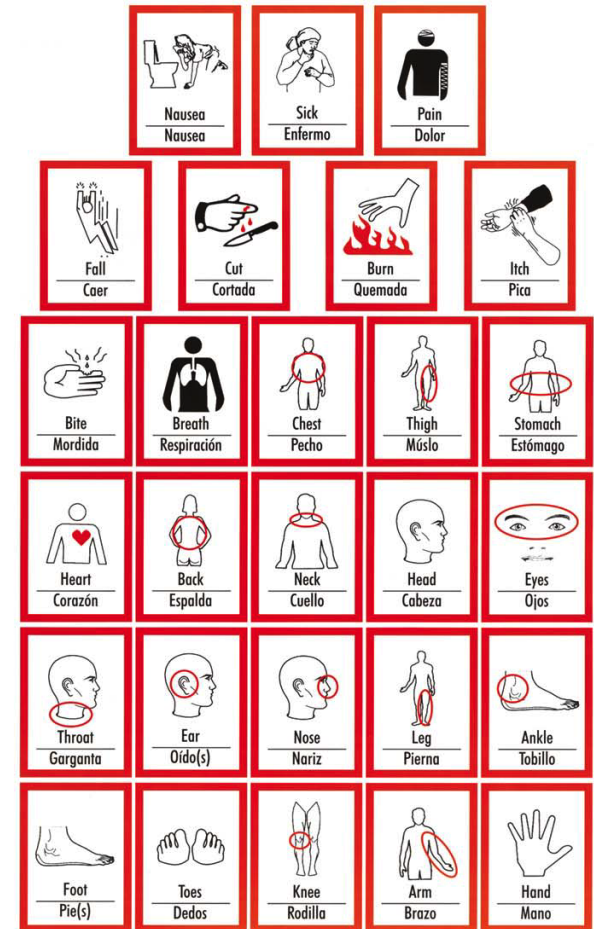
PROBLEM

Complicated Communication

SOLUTION



**Point To The Picture
to Communicate**



A B C (CH) D E F G H I J K L (LL) M
N (Ñ) O P Q R (RR) S T U V W X Y Z

Picture Communication Tools

- Drawings that can be used with people whose first language is not English, such as those who communicate using ASL, who do not communicate verbally, or who have cognitive or intellectual limitations. They do not replace the need for interpreters but can be particularly useful for everyday communication in health care and other settings

Effective Communication with People who Have Sensory Disabilities

- Ensuring effective communication with people who have sensory disabilities may involve auxiliary aids and services. For example:
 - People who are blind or have low vision might require:
 - Qualified readers
 - Notetakers
 - Texts in digital formats
 - CDs
 - Audio recordings
 - Braille materials
 - Large print materials

Print Materials

PROBLEM

Print Name _____ SS# _____
Last Name First Name Middle Initial

Uniform Health Assessment Form

Each applicant must have a history and physical performed prior to consideration or appointment as part of the credentialing and privileging process. It is assumed that the applicant's examining practitioner will directly review the health information with the applicant.

This Uniform Health Assessment Form, which conforms to New York State Title 10 Health Code 405.3(b)(10)(11), has been developed by the Monroe County Medical Society, in conjunction with hospitals and other health care facilities in the Finger Lakes region. **Use of this form will enable the applicant's examining practitioner to complete a Uniform Health Assessment Form, only once, and then submit photocopies to relevant facilities/organizations.** This eliminates the need to complete multiple forms for multiple organizations.

This section to be completed by the applicant:

Permission by Medical/Dental Staff Applicant: I give permission to _____ to complete this history and physical examination form in accordance with New York State regulations for the health care facilities:

Applicant's Signature Date

This section, through page 2, is to be completed by examining practitioner. The examination shall be of sufficient scope to ensure that no person shall assume his/her duties unless he/she is free from health impairment which is a potential risk to the patient or which might interfere with the performance of his/her duties.

Medical History

Physical Examination

Medical: _____	Weight: _____ Height: _____
_____	Blood Pressure: _____
Surgical: _____	Vision: Corrected _____ Uncorrected _____
_____	Lymph Glands: _____
Review of Systems: _____	Ears, Throat & Hearing: _____
_____	Chest: _____
Allergies (including latex): _____	Heart: _____
_____	Abdomen: _____
Medications: _____	Back and Extremities: _____
_____	Identified Health Problems That Are A Potential Risk To Patients: _____
Habits (includes addiction to depressants, stimulants narcotics, alcohol or other drugs or substances which may alter the individuals behavior): _____	Other: _____
_____	_____
_____	_____



Alternative Print Formats

SOLUTIONS

- Print materials in alternative formats
 - Braille
 - Large print

**Large
Print**



Digital and Audio Formats

SOLUTIONS

- Print materials in alternative formats



Meet Rashida

- Rashida is a 67 y/o woman
- She has been Deaf since birth
- She recently injured her back in a fall. She now needs to use a walker and also needs help dressing, bathing, and doing housework
- She has requested that her managed care plan provide a Sign Language interpreter so she can participate in a meeting with her care team who will be discussing her new need for personal assistance services at home
- Her plan denied the interpreter request, indicating that instead, her social worker would report the decision of the care team to her



What Can You Do?

- Disability and aging organizations can assist people with disabilities resolve health care access problems
- Possible actions:
 - Advise the person that they have health care rights
 - Non-discrimination
 - Effective communication – In Rashida's case, a Sign Language interpreter
 - Urge Rashida to contact the managed care plan again and request an interpreter for the meeting, or contact the plan on her behalf
 - Explain that a Sign Language interpreter is necessary for Rashida to communicate effectively with her care team and is required under federal law when communications are complex
 - If the plan fails to provide an interpreter, advise Rashida to file a complaint with the managed care plan first, then with the relevant state agency overseeing managed care

Quiz

Question # 1: Effective communication for people with disabilities means (choose the most appropriate answer)

- A. Identifying a family member who will convey the information
- B. Avoiding complex questions because of the length of time it might take for someone with a speech disability to reply
- C. Scanning printed care instructions and sending them via email attachment to someone who is blind at their request
- D. Referring deaf patients to other providers who might be willing to provide Sign Language interpreters

Quiz

Question # 2: An example of method for providing effective communication is (choose the most appropriate answer)

- A. Instructing a person who is blind to ask a friend or family member to read aloud the printed directions for preparing for an upcoming test
- B. Writing a note to a person who is deaf to convey test results that revealed a serious medical condition
- C. Using the telecommunications relay service to reschedule an appointment with a hard of hearing person
- D. Speaking loudly to a person with a cognitive disability to be sure the person understands what is being said

Quiz—Answer in Red

Question # 1: Effective communication for people with disabilities means (choose the most appropriate answer)

- A. Identifying a family member who will convey the information
- B. Avoiding complex questions because of the length of time it might take for someone with a speech disability to reply
- C. Scanning printed care instructions and sending them via email attachment to someone who is blind at their request**
- D. Referring deaf patients to other providers who might be willing to provide Sign Language interpreters

Quiz—Answer in Red

Question # 2: An example of a method for providing effective communication is (choose the most appropriate answer)

- A. Instructing a person who is blind to ask a friend or family member to read aloud the printed directions for preparing for an upcoming test
- B. Writing a note to a person who is deaf to convey test results that revealed a serious medical condition
- C. Using the telecommunications relay service to reschedule an appointment with a hard of hearing person**
- D. Speaking loudly to a person with a cognitive disability to be sure the person understands what is being said