April 18, 2018, Deaf Blind with Multiple Disabilities Webinar

Good morning, this is Lauren Chenoweth with Long Term Services and Supports. This is a presentation that Jackie and I had the pleasure of seeing a couple of weeks ago by Amanda. And we decided it would be really beneficial for our providers to get some of this information about cultural competency.

I know a lot of our individuals, it can be a little bit different because they are deaf and blind, but some function very similar to a deaf person and then a lot of times we have deaf staff which we want to encourage and provide you the resources to help support those staff because it can be such an important communication piece for our individuals that are signers.

So now I'm just going to turn it over to Amanda. She's a communications Access Specialist at the office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services. And she'll be presenting the rest of the webinar. Thanks.

>> Hello. My name is Amanda Tuite. Welcome to Cultural Competency: The Deaf Way. We're here to provide general
awareness about Deaf culture, how we should approach and talk with deaf individuals, and we'll also discuss a variety of topics. Typically to learn Deaf culture it would take more than a year. At least possibly seven years. So it's almost impossible to crunch everything into just an hour and a half.

So here's the agenda. We'll review Deaf culture, we'll provide an overview, including myths and facts about deaf people and Deaf culture. Also we'll include effective communication tips, we'll include how to use interpreters, also how to work with deaf people within the workplace. Also how to provide good accessible services for deaf clients.

We'll also be discussing community at large, services that maybe police provide and those various situations that arise. And at the close I'll provide some resources that actually support you in any case as you journey.

I'm sure many of you have already met a deaf person. Or maybe you work with a deaf individual, a deaf employee at your workplace or within your agency. Many you've met people out in the community or maybe you've seen a deaf customer in a restaurant or possibly in a store.

There are many different kinds of communication strategies that people utilize. Some deaf people sign, some
deaf people don't.

The traditional way of thinking about deaf people is to often emphasize the fact that they can't hear. That's a common general misconception. But really instead of viewing the fact that they can't hear and emphasizing that fact, maybe we can look at the fact that they have a culture. There are cultural aspects that deaf people have.

In everybody’s lives how do they function? People often have questions about that. They're still trying to kind of process like okay, they're deaf, but how can they communicate on the phone or how can they talk with people? How can they do their jobs? Some people can't fathom it, how do they function in their everyday life?

Also some people are fascinated that deaf people can function in our lives without hearing. There are often misconceptions that a deaf person can't drive or can't raise children, which is interesting.

So that's why I'm here, to try to change those misconceptions.

Deaf people such as myself don't see a lack of hearing as a disability. We don't want to be fixed. I've had various experiences where people have tried to fix my hearing,
especially during my childhood where I was put in speech therapy to improve my speech. And it reached a point where I felt probably by the age of 13, I think that was my moment of realization where I said okay, do you know what? I have to accept this. I am deaf. And I'm going to be okay with it.

Some people, you know, will go to speech therapy and will practice their hearing and that's great, but not everyone has the same experience as a deaf individual.

Deaf people often struggle in the beginning of their lives. They struggle to get access to language because there's so much focus on fixing them on getting them to hear better or speak better that they actually lack some vocabulary awareness and skill.

One out of 10 who are deaf have access to language at home. Only one out of 10 have access to language at home. Only one parent out of those 10 know how to sign and give access to language at home. That's only one out of 10.

They don't learn how to communicate until much later in life. Maybe after they go into school and the teacher starts to teach in sign.

I actually have seen that in my own experience, students
coming in to school and they don't know how to communicate except for maybe using gestures or pointing to things. Because at home that's how they're trying to communicate with their parents. So there's a delay in their education. There's a delay in their language acquisition, in their soft skills in many different areas.

Eventually, though, we do catch up. We do pick up and catch up. But the medical view focuses on the limitation of our hearing. You know, the deaf person can't hear. So they're trying to fill in the void with that specific area, but instead they'll focus on accommodations or getting a hearing aid and then they think that everything else will be fine if that void is filled, which is not always the case.

The loss of music, the loss of speech, we've never heard it before. So really the world focuses so much on how deaf people are losing these things whereas we actually focus on other visual cues, other senses we have, on language, on changing the mentality so that we can be viewed as deaf as a good thing.

My hearing level does not define my IQ level. It does not define my ability to do things. I just simply can't hear, that's all.
If you look at my audiogram you will see that the line is very low, it's almost touching the bottom. I am profoundly deaf. I can't even hear a train going by, you know? It could be very close to me and I still won't hear it.

And that's okay. I change my way of living. I adjust my attitude and I can't tell you how many times a hearing person -- they're like I'm so sorry and I'm like, I'm fine, I'm fine, I'm happy to be deaf. So that's who I am.

So another question is, is there Deaf culture? There are many different categories of deaf people and the cultures that are included. Some people use sign language, American Sign Language is considered the foundation of that culture. That's the core of the culture. That's what draws people together, communication.

People want to be understood. There are also different behavioral norms that we value. For example, deaf schools. There are many deaf schools. One example of belief is that my deaf school should be run by a deaf superintendent. The reason being that a deaf superintendent understands deaf people, they understand the needs of deaf people. So that might be one example of a standard belief that's out there in the deaf community and Deaf culture.
There are many different values that bring deaf people together. A belief in the deaf ecosystem, a belief in trying to promote deaf people to develop their own businesses, to support each other, to buy from each other.

There's also a belief that deaf people can do everything. We're not considered, quote, unquote, disabled. On paper, yes, it's a disability.

There are behavioral patterns that we'll also discuss soon in the next slide. Where we'll actually compare the different nuances.

There's literature and tradition, there's theater, the arts. We believe that bringing deaf people to Hollywood, actors and actresses? You know there's a new movie that just came out. I think it's called the quiet place, is that right? There's a deaf actress named Millie. I'm not sure of her last name. She's new to me.

But she has just taken off doing really well so we're really thrilled in the community and we're really supporting her that there's a deaf actress in a big Hollywood film so that's exciting. So we're really trying to promote Hollywood to hire more deaf actors and there's a new movement called hashtag deaf -- it's escaping me. #deaftalent. Thank you.
And when you see the hashtag on different posts, different blogs. There's different news stations in the deaf community that have -- there are newscasters that sign completely in ASL, the daily moth, they have captions, they've got signing. There's -- there are other deaf businesses, deaf professional network, DPN, and they have their own news station as well where they do like Hollywood type news and they really kind of bring exposure to deaf actors in Hollywood. It's really fascinating. They interview the factors on the red carpet in ASL.

And when Nyle DiMarco was on dancing with the stars, they would interview him on the red carpet as well. So that's just one example of how strong our Deaf culture really is in spreading awareness.

So if you're curious and you want to see what that might look like, you can look on the website and it will give you some more information on that. And also the approach to problem solving is a little bit different in the deaf community because the thinking, skills are -- can be a struggle.

If you look at the big picture, if you think about how a deaf person grew up with hearing impairments, they might
be arguing over whatever issues. They have brothers and sisters and they might be arguing how they problem solve. The deaf person doesn't have access to that information, you know, that incidental thinking and how to approach those type of occasions and the soft skills. They don't have that type of exposure. Seeing mom and dad have a discussion I could just see, I couldn't hear, I don't know what they were saying. It's kind of like I'm watching a movie that's on mute. So their word choices, what are they saying, how did they come to a conclusion, how did they end the discussion or argument? I wasn't able to learn that behavior until later in life through experiences in the workplace or just through trial and error. And so I learned through those mistakes to be able to develop those skills and it's kind of hard to change old habits. So you might notice that these different outbursts and you can kind of try and understand the perspective and the reasons why behind that that this deaf person may not have -- may not have had access to problem solving skills growing up.

So if there's -- thinking about a deaf person being introduced into the Deaf culture and deaf community and they start to learn how to develop solve, and they learn how -- to
better their life and enrich their experiences in how to approach oppression and how not to get lost in the hearing world and try to understand the incidental things that are going on in their environment, so Deaf culture is really an imperative part of a deaf person's life.

So as I mentioned we're going to talk about the nuances, different types of behaviors. And I'll give some examples of what the hearing way would be and what the deaf way would be.

So the number one most common question asked is how do you get a deaf person's attention? You know, a hearing person you would simply say hey. Hey, hey. But for a deaf person you might wave to get their attention or you can flick the lights on and off or you can gently tap them on the shoulder.

I remember I was trying to get my friend's attention who is deaf themselves, and I like was trying to lean over from behind. She was kind of far from me. She was sitting at a desk and I was trying to tap her and I actually touched her on her lower back as I reached over, on her mid back, and she said no, I prefer that you tap me on the shoulder. And I said oh. So each individual has their own preferences of how they would like for you to get their attention.
And so you set up those boundaries of an individual person and you know what that individual person wants.

Now, how do you give confirmation that you understand what a person is saying? Like usually if you're a hearing person you would kind of say uh-huh while you're nodding, nod your head and say uh-huh, right?

For a deaf person if you just are staring at them and you're just saying uh-huh, uh-huh, uh-huh, they will never know that you are understanding what they're saying if you are not moving your face at all and not nodding. So we might be thinking did you understand what I meant? Did you get that I said? And I sometimes have to ask a hearing person because I get a straight face, a poker face, and they're not making any indication that I was clear and so that's what I'm thinking. So it's nice if you could physically move your head up and down if you're understanding nodding yes.

Sometimes you can use hand gestures like this hand gesture here, this figure is saying yes, I understand or right, yes, I got that. Those are some words of confirmation that deaf people will use to make sure that the speaker is being understood.

My daughter gives me a hard time about this part, this
is eye contact. And we actually just had a discussion. We were speaking at home and I'll tell her, for example, Isabel, I need you to look at me when I'm talking to you so I know that you're acknowledging that you understand me. I really rely on your eye contact.

And she says mom I was writing something down. I understood what you said. I can hear you. And I'm like, -- I feel like I'm talking to a wall if the person I'm speaking to is looking away. It's very distressing. So it's important to have that good connection through eye contact when two people are speaking.

For a hearing person, you know, you can be kind of multi-tasking and just have your ear to the wind and be able to understand what's going on. I can't tell you how many times there's been a hearing person that kind of puts -- shoves their face into my face and doesn't actually look at me and I kind of back away and it's kind of like playing the game twister. I'm having to twist around so I can try and see that person face to face.

So sometimes I have to stop myself and wait a minute and say hey, I would like to look at your face so I can understand what you don't understand so I can fill in the blanks if that's
needed.

So those are some important things to recognize the face to face contact, eye to eye contact before you actually go ahead with the conversation.

For example, if you are giving directions, how to get to someplace, a lot of times you will kind of look around and because you will be pointing like hey, that place over there you kind of go down that street and then you take a right, you kind of look in that direction as you're giving directions so that can be a little bit of a challenge in that particular situation. You kind of look at the person, but then point to the right and just trust your sense of direction without actually having to look in that vicinity.

Another example about eye contact is -- this is kind of awkward. Imagine you're at a department, a retail store, and you're at the checkout counter, you're about to buy something.

And so I'm fiddling with my purse going through it, looking for something and I'm like, I can't find my debit card. I'm looking for it everywhere. And my purse is about this big so I'm going through it, looking for my debit card, and then I look up and the cashier is just staring at me. And I'm like okay. She had been waiting for my response. And
so I was looking around like did I miss something?

So I think it's important that she waited before she tried to tell me something until I made eye contact with her. You know, I don't know if she said do you want a bag or something like that or it will be $14.78, but it's important that you make that contact before you start talking.

Often times I find myself in a situation where I'm meeting a person who has never met a deaf person for the first time and it's like I'm looking at a deer in the headlights. You know what I mean? It's just -- and I'm like, can I help you? Do you have any questions for me? And they're just kind of blank stare. So it can become very awkward in those type of situations so I just try my best to give a smile.

And I really want to stress the myths about the Deaf culture. People will often ask me can you read... my... lips? And if I'm looking at them and I say yes, then they will just start speaking at a very rapid pace and then I'm like, okay, maybe I'll catch 30% of what's actually being said. And the reason for that is 30% of the English language is base -- is put on the lips.

So if you can imagine what I'm having to try and fill in for the other 70% I'm just guessing, trying to fill in the
blanks. What are we talking about? So it becomes very challenging. So the best response for me, I will always say no, I can't read your lips. So that kind of protects myself from any sort of misunderstanding.

If you know some signs that would help to fill in some blanks when you're speaking with a deaf person, some people are extremely clear when they're speaking and I can understand nearly everything that they're saying, but some people have a big, thick, bristly mustache or a beard and I can't understand what's being said.

I worked for a company where my boss had one of those big huge mustaches and I remember going into his office and I was going to ask him something and he responded to me, and of course his mustache, I think it was a little longer than usual that day, so I would kind of twist my head around to see. I was like I can't see your lips there.

So that happens quite frequently. So he kind of opened up his mustache like this and flipping up words and then talk.

So the next day he shaved off his mustache, which was really nice.

People often assume that all people who are deaf can sign or that all deaf people can use and understand American Sign
Language. But there are many -- there are many different sign systems. For example, cued speech, MSS, morphemic signing system where they sign the break-down of the word into maybe the different syllables. So for one word you will have two or three signs.

There's so many different signing systems. There's also the Rochester method where they fingerspell the majority of the words, actually the whole conversation.

Yeah, I have a friend who actually grew up using the Rochester method and they would actually fingerspell everything. And that actually helped my fingerspelling receptor skills. It's really fascinating.

And some don't even sign at all. They just speak. They're oral. Approximate.

And you probably know someone who is deaf who doesn't sign, so there are many different ways that communication can happen with someone who is deaf.

Some people feel that deaf people can be cured by a cochlear implant or a hearing aid. Once you have a cochlear implant, for example, first you go through a surgical procedure. Once that's done that means the surgical procedure actually cuts nerves near the cochlea. So you
become profoundly deaf unless you put in the prosthetics, the cochlear implant.

So for example, when I was wearing it, it felt like -- it was like a robotic noise. I couldn't comprehend what the sounds were. I didn't have any auditory memory to base it on, any sound memory, because I lost my hearing when I was one.

So it didn't work for me. However, it works for my husband. He can catch about 90% of speech if it's in a quiet environment. That's the key. If it's a quiet environment. If it's ideal. If it was an ideal world. But it doesn't work that way so you have to deal with background noise.

So what he can understand is always questionable. It's a 50/50 chance he will be able to catch it on or not. So he still considers himself deaf.

Hearing aids can help. They help amplify sound. But you're not completely cured from being deaf. And it doesn't always eliminate background noise.

Suppose that I travel to another country. For example, maybe Italy. Does that mean that I can use American Sign Language in Italy? The answer is no.

Each has their own language. There's over 250 different
sign languages in the world.

One sign language that can be applied to many different countries is something called Gestuno. It was developed I don't know how many years ago, but that might be called universal sign language.

I want to say 70% of that universal sign language is actually based in American Sign Language, has its roots there. Believe it or not. So there are deaf organizations as well, like world federation of the deaf, WFD. And they'll use universal sign language during their events and meetings.

Communicating with deaf individuals, that is an achievable goal. With or without accommodations.

So I want to tell you a story. I love stories.

I went to a work event where we were having to do icebreakers and I was there with other hearing employees, and I found it really interesting. People who hadn't ever been exposed to deaf people before during the breakouts when you were supposed to talk with a partner. It took me almost five attempts to find a partner during that breakout icebreaker, and the reason being that within that environment people started to talk and I would approach and all of a sudden the person could see me coming and would turn away. They would
look down and start walking in the opposite direction. People have fear of what they don't know.

People freeze because they're not sure how to approach. Maybe they've never had training or maybe they've never experienced meeting a deaf person before or maybe they don't want to try.

So if you happen to find yourself in an icebreaker situation, go ahead and try. And here are some tips. Listen with your eyes instead of listening with your ears. Try to focus. So for example, remember those games with gestures, that will help. Look for some cues. And sometimes it can be something very simple that's easy to understand. For example, coffee can be signed this way. Do you want coffee? Or hello.

Use your hand gestures, use your facial expressions. For specific questions you can write back and forth with paper and pen, but be creative with your different strategies. For example, you can use your phone to text back and forth or maybe even pick up some signs that you can use. There are many ASL apps that are available.

There's no one-size-fits-all approach. Each individual has their own unique communication preferences.
And if you're not sure go ahead and ask them. Ask the person.

I gave a training to nurses who were becoming nurses in the future. They were nursing students. And they were asking me like what's the best appropriate way to communicate with a deaf individual, a deaf patient specifically? And what I told them was is why don't you ask the deaf patient what their preferences are? They'll tell you what their preferences are.

If you have 10 patients who come in, all of them will have different communication preferences. Not all of them will use American Sign Language. Not all of them will want to write back and forth. So really the point is ask first before you proceed and they'll really appreciate that.

Determining how to communicate. It takes a joint effort. First attempt you may feel awkward and uncomfortable, but that's okay, you will become used to it.

You might recall that I mentioned 90% of deaf children are born to hearing parents who don't know sign language. Often parents don't take time to learn sign language in order to communicate with their children.

There was a campaign that was led by LEAD-K. It was based
on language acquisition for ages zero to five so that the children could become kindergarten ready, so there are campaigns out there.

In the deaf community English is considered a second language, your second language. So suppose you're traveling on your honeymoon and you just happen to have a heart attack. If you're in Spain, let's say hypothetically, your primary language that they use there, the primary language that they use there is Spanish. And you're brought to the ER. And the doctor looks at you and starts speaking Spanish. And he notices that you have some concern and you see that he has some concern on his face. And you feel lost. You might feel frustrated if he's speaking Spanish and you don't understand him completely. You know, you have questions about what's going on with your body. You want to know what's going on, you want access.

That kind of thing happens on a daily basis for deaf people. We go to a hospital or maybe a court setting or maybe in our own home and just try to picture yourself if English was your second language only, but that was the only language being provided for access to you.

You know, the patient doesn't understand what's going on
with their body. It's important that you provide interpreters so they can access their first language. And that's true maybe in courts as well, hospitals. At home, it would be nice if there was an interpreter on Thanksgiving day so that I can understand everything that my family was saying. That would be amazing. That would be so cool.

So we focus a lot on facial expressions as well. When I'm having a conversation with my parents, for example, sometimes I'm focusing very heavily on their facial expressions and I might overlook some other expressions where maybe they have a flat affect but their tonality shows that they're expressing sarcasm. That actually happens all the time where I'll miss that.

So sometimes I'll have to clarify, are you trying to be funny or are you serious? It's so hard to catch sarcasm.

So the real point, though, is we're focusing on your facial expressions because that's the equivalent to your tone, to hearing tone. Tone helps us identify if something is a joke, it helps us identify the mood if you're serious, if you're mad, we identify it through facial expressions.

So you might notice that my facial expressions myself, I'm very animated.
Also talking of language, you might notice that a deaf person might have maybe some strong English skills because they knew American Sign Language growing up so maybe they had access to English as well or maybe they don't have access to English as well growing up. There's a variety. And it doesn't mean that ASL or English is better than each other. They're equal, they're just different.

They actually have a different structure, grammatical structure, syntax as well.

How much time do we have left?


We have many different communication tools at disposal. You could see those three, but there are many options. It could be sign language, gestures, IMing, instant messaging, texting, writing notes back and forth using maybe computers to type in a notes application, email. I always like using email for communication because then I have documentation as well.

You also can have a videophone meeting, which is great. There's a person who uses a videophone to communicate and it goes through the phone lines. That videophone -- well, I'm trying to picture how to describe it. There's a screen with
a webcam and I'm connected to the interpreter on the webcam and the interpreter is actually connected to the hearing person through that phone line. So there are three parties involved. The deaf person, the interpreter who is the mediator and then the hearing person. So we actually go back and forth. And it's live. And so it's faster than a TTY, if you remember that communication tool back in the day.

If you're in your office and you only have a TTY you might notice that some deaf people aren't using the TTY. The reason why is because technology has just skyrocketed and now we rely heavily on videophones instead.

I've seen some TTYs still in some facilities and I asked myself, you know, what is the relay number? I can't remember the last time I tried to use a TTY? I was like when was the last time? I think maybe 1990 the last time I used TTY.

So I try to tell people that those old phones where they would like pull it out from the wall. You know the phones I'm talking about? They hold one piece to their ear and one piece to their mouth. Do you remember how to use that? It's the same idea for deaf people. We don't really remember how to use TTYs at this point.

That being said, don't throw them away. There are
several people who still rely on TTYs.

For meetings or presentations or interviews, try not to use those accommodations that I just mentioned earlier. I would highly, highly recommend that you use a qualified sign language interpreter. And I'm going to talk more about the interpreters and the qualifications of interpreters coming up next in a few slides.

It's important not to say these following things to a deaf person. The first one, deaf/mute. That's old terminology and it's considered to be offensive, it's kind of like saying deaf and dumb.

That happened to a couple who were looking for their luggage at an airport and one of the airport workers wrote down deaf and dumb on the document that they had to be able to identify who the luggage belonged to. And that paper actually went viral and made it on the news. And it's a true story, it happened maybe a couple of years ago. So be careful with your word choices. You can say deaf and that's it.

And I mentioned this earlier, this whole can you read my lips? I mean, everyone can lipread that question. "I'll tell you later", that phrase. Later doesn't usually ever come.
“Never mind”, that phrase, I've heard that a lot. I hear it all the time, that oh, never mind, never mind.

I'm not going to bother to include you, that's what never mind means. Oh, never mind, it's not that important. It might be to that person. It might be to that deaf individual.

Or hey, “you're not missing anything”. Maybe the deaf person had something to add to the conversation.

So pretend you're signing and this happened to a good friend of mine. I saw this friend at a party saying I know sign language and just throwing their hands up in the air, and that friend -- the deaf friend who that happened to, she grabbed this person's hands and grabbed them and put them down and smiled and just said no.

I think that person got the message that was flailing their hands up in the air. So it's important to educate. So if you see that happen, just say hey, that's not cool.

So deaf people and hard of hearing people often do -- what they often do is they'll kind of bluff. They'll just nod up and down. That will be a common response like saying hey, I understand you when often they don't understand. I think last week I was in the elevator here at work and I was standing in there and somebody was talking to me, smiling and I looked
at them and I just kind of smiled and nodded up and down and she looked at me and she gave me this look like, huh? And she pointed at the numbers and I'm like oh, you want to know what floor I'm going to, silly me. And I said three.

I shouldn't have been nodding up and down bluffing like I understood.

I'm going to ask a question to you guys. Try and imagine that you get up, you wake up one day and all of a sudden you're deaf. How would you feel? So if you guys go ahead, type in a response in the question box on the right side of the screen and just tell me how you would feel if that happened to you.

Okay. Scared, confused.

>> Anxious, scared.

>> Anxious, scared. Overwhelmed, scared, confused.

Devastated, those are all really good responses. And honest responses.

So now imagine yourself that you're deaf. Now think about how would you do your job that you have now? Do you think that you could do your current -- that you could do your current job effectively?

>> No.

Not without support, I wouldn't be able to. I would be
scared and disappointed.

>> Okay. Very good.

Feeling scared, feeling disappointed. So I like the response feeling scared and disappointed because you haven't reached the point in your life where you've accepted your hearing loss, accepted your identity as a deaf person.

So it takes that acceptance to be able to feel confident enough to be able to find solutions in your life. So once you passed those stages, the grief, you process through that and you learn how to deal with it, try to find ways to be able to solve problems, relying on your other senses that you have. Remember, one small change can go a long way.

Once you accept your identity you start to feel good about yourself and you're more likely to become a better self-advocate. You're more likely to be able to request the appropriate accommodations for yourself, know what solutions you need to be able to arrive at those goals in your life. You know, what do I need to do for my job today. So that's why we offer support through the office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services. So I really highly recommend that for anybody who has recently lost their hearing to please have them contact us. We can work with the individual. We've got
contracts all throughout the state who work with our office to be able to provide support to their communities that happen to be in this particular situation.

And there are many different types of solutions. There are many different answers. You just have to know what they are. You have to know yourself, you have to know what your communication access is. Your communication access will be different from what my communication access is. It's based on the individual. Some people prefer sign language interpreters. Other people prefer using CART services. CART, I'm not talking about a shopping cart now. That's like imagine the typers that are in court and they're documenting everything, that's a similar analogy, that's what CART is.

And I didn't know about CART until I was in college. So everybody learns about accommodations at different stages throughout their life. You're not given all the resources upfront, you know? You might get to one place in your life and see that oh, that's a really cool accommodation. I could use that.

I do my job just like you guys do your job. I use different types of equipment to communicate on the telephone,
I use email to communicate with clients, I use the videophone to be able to communicate with deaf clients face to face using American Sign Language. There are no limitations for me in my job. So that's what I'm trying to say, there's always a way. You just have to know what the challenges will be and then find an answer for those challenges.

Okay. So talking about deaf people in the workplace. Or do you have a deaf person that works with you in your work environment? If not, I would highly recommend that you do have one. You would be surprised at how well deaf people can do everything. The only thing they can't do is hear, which is fine. It doesn't mean that that limits their ability to do their job.

There are various stories about success of employers that have deaf people in their workplace. They're able to solve various problems, they're able to catch things that other people might not be able to. They're good at thinking outside of the box. Not everything is black and white because if you think about it a deaf person is so accustomed going through this world in their life trying to figure out how to approach various situations, how to -- they've got to work around obstacles constantly. So if you put a deaf person in a
workplace -- work environment like that they're constantly trying to find solutions, constantly trying to overcome various obstacles and that's just -- that's survival instincts that we've had growing up in to play in the work environment.

Deaf people are very creative when it comes to communication. That's how we've gone through our life. So think about -- what is a job that you think deaf people can't do? And go ahead and answer in the question box.

Someone said nothing, that's a good answer.

Okay. So there are many opportunities out there and the key is to look at it -- to look at the job description. And there are some physical requirements, there are some job descriptions that require specific hearing level. For example, way back in the day deaf people were not allowed to get a CDL license, a commercial driver's license, to be able to drive a big rig. So I thought deaf people can drive. Of course they can get a CDL, but the requirements for the test when you go through that process to get that certification, one of the things you have to do is pass a hearing test.

So the national association for the deaf fought to make sure that deaf people had the access and the ability to get
They argued that deaf people are just as good drivers as hearing people are. And they're the same. There was no safety issue.

Yes, the Americans with disabilities act, I'm sure most of you guys are familiar with that that protects deaf people from discrimination in the workplace.

An example of discrimination at the workplace would not be not hiring a deaf person simply because of the fear that they're not able to communicate with other co-workers. There's always a way to solve that problem.

Another example, deaf people are given a reduction in pay or less pay compared to a hearing co-worker who has the same position. So it's really important to take a step back and make sure that the company, the organization is in compliance with the ADA to provide equal access and equal opportunity, equal pay.

>> We did have a few audience responses.

>> Sure, feel free.

>> Can't think of one, conducting an orchestra or maybe working in a 911 call center.

>> Conducting an orchestra, working in a 911 center. Those are good. Those are good examples.
If there's no accommodations that are available to help that person perform the essential functions of that job. If there's no accommodations for that, then so be it.

Then that would be a hard position to work in, correct. Those are two good examples.

There are some amendments within the ADA that really stress some reasons where people cannot provide accommodations or maybe they can't hire that deaf individual.

So for example, safety. Safety is one where they'll cause harm to others. Undue hardship is another. Undue hardship.

That means where they feel they can't afford the cost of the accommodation to the worker.

If businesses can't afford the cost for accommodations, I really encourage that business to attempt to seek resources in order to fill that cost. For example, vocational rehab, we have counselors here. Reach out to them and see if there's a way to support that company in the cost for accommodations for a certain period of time.

There's a woman on the screen, a black woman, who is named Claudia Gordon. She used to work at the White House. She's an attorney. She's profoundly deaf. She's fought many
violations against the Americans with Disabilities acted and she works in the White House now as the disability services coordinator. She makes sure that the nation provides actual access. She gives seminars and I've taken her seminar one time and it was pleasing. She's just an amazing woman. She signs about opportunities. She's one of my role models.

And that's Gordon for her last name.

Also, I want to focus on some issues that do affect deaf people within the workplace. And yes, it's not all encompassing. It's not all glorious. There are several issues that deaf people will face such as attitude, oppression from co-workers. The attitude or belief that a deaf person can't do it. Or underestimating their abilities.

Attitude, that's what really can hurt a deaf employee. It hurts their confidence.

Attitude actually blocks people from trying to understand where the deaf person is coming from. The most common issue also I see is communication. Misunderstandings. You know, understanding the intent behind the question. Misunderstanding and thinking that the intent of their actions. Misunderstanding -- just misunderstandings.
Remember that English is a second language and that can lead to other misunderstandings if that's the primary mode being used to communicate.

Clarification is often needed. If you feel some tension, if you feel something is missing, go ahead and check in with that deaf person, that deaf employee. Just check in. Is everything good? Did I miss something? Did you understand what I'm saying? And that will help. That will help that individual grow in the workplace.

Problem solving requires good communication. A good attitude as well.

Moving on to the topic of inclusion.

Several times when you have a co-worker maybe they're chatting by the water fountain or chatting in the break-room and they're talking about the football scores or they're just joking with each other, those little things a deaf employee can miss out on.

So if you notice that the deaf person is standing by themselves, they're in a silo, ask to include them. Use your phone to start to show them what you guys have been talking about or what the game score is or what happened. Show them the score and say what do you think? Use your gestures to
build that bridge to communication. And we always feel appreciated when we're part of something, when we're connected. Especially when it comes to meetings as well.

When you're talking about work topics, a deaf person wants to be included and they'll have something to say as well. And need to understand what's being said. So that's where accommodations come in.

Accommodations provide full access for understanding. To bring understanding to me as a deaf with my role and responsibilities and to help me grow in the workplace.

Can you imagine if you went to work and you were dealing with some people having a bad attitude towards you and you're missing out on communication and you're feeling rejected by your peers and you're not getting accommodations. Can you imagine that scenario? That's not cool.

On the screen you're going to see a picture of a gentleman who is using sign language at his workplace.

So here's some myths and facts. I've gone to multiple job interviews and the job was not given for several reasons. There was one person working at a school and I know that I'm capable of monitoring children. You know, I rely on my eyes more than anything. More than any other sense. And I'm very
aware of my surroundings.

So I didn't end up getting the job. No, I'm sorry, I did end up getting the job, though. Let me clarify, I did end up getting the job.

So accommodations for employees who -- for deaf employees who need accommodations, there is if you remember there are many different alternatives at our disposal. It's important to sit down with a Deafness Resource Specialist to focus on accessibility for that deaf employee.

Try to explore different resources before you make that decision about hiring or not hiring.

Americans with disability act, they really want to make sure that businesses provide access, auxiliary aids is the language they use in the ADA, for employees in order for employees to have access to communication.

If you have any concerns about cost, ask the deaf individual and they'll know where to find some resources. Other people may not know, but others do.

For example, videophones. Videophones are usually provided for free by the video remote services businesses. There are five major VRS providers in our country at this point. That's a high number compared to many other countries
who don't have access to VRS services.

And the cost for equipment, there's no cost to the company at all. It's provided free by these VRS companies. And they'll actually connect it for you.

Once you use the videophone it connects directly to an interpreter and the interpreter can call the hearing caller and connect them.

And the deaf person will be assigned a new phone number that actually works with the VRS companies to provide these services.

There's something I wanted to add about VRS companies...

So VRS is one, CART is another option, sign language interpreters is another option. So it's not really appropriate to have all these things running everyday 24/7, but there might be certain times when you need to use an interpreter.

Not always. And so -- also we've had conversations about hearing aids and cochlear implants if you remember at the beginning of this talk. If there's a noisy environment it doesn't bother the deaf person. That's a myth. That's not true. For me -- well, I have no hearing, so a noisy environment just means that there's a lot of commotion,
there's a lot of people, visual noise is happening around me, a lot of movement, a lot of people passing back and forth, I will get very distracted because I'm very attentive to visual information.

So for me a noisy environment means to actually reduce the visual noise. I guess it's just like a hearing person, right, how to reduce our distractions.

Okay. So we have about 15 minutes left.

Now we're going to talk about providing services to deaf clients. Mental illness within the deaf community is a huge concern. The reason why is because there is limited access to therapists and communication within those services where people actually use the language that the deaf person uses.

So imagine you go to another country and you could imagine that would be difficult to find a therapist who would be difficult to communicate in the same language that you do.

So that's a priority for deaf clients. They need to be understood. And it's hard to find therapists who are willing to actually pay for accommodations.

Even though there's protection under the ADA.

Many therapists can't afford the cost of an interpreter. They feel that that cost out-weighs what they're billing. So
that's why we really encourage people to really keep a running list, updated list of therapists who already have skill, ASL skill. Or are willing to pay for interpreters.

And we have that list ready. We have it ready on-hand. So feel free. We can always contact an advocate as well. There is a list of therapists resource specialists have ready who sign.

When using a therapist with an interpreter, sometimes it's tough. The reason why is because imagine yourself trying to pour out your emotions, your issues, your private most intimate thoughts, and to trust the therapist to understand Deaf culture and to understand my internal workings to leave my heart out on the floor. So I'm more likely to maybe overshare with a deaf peer than to seek therapeutic services.

I would love to have a deaf therapist. We have maybe -- I want to say less than 10 deaf therapists, but very few who are licensed. So that just gives you an idea of what we face in our country in general.

But pleased in that there are options. So if you have a question, please contact our office and we can share more options and resources.
To be able to provide good, effective services and communication and the quality of services it's important to keep an open mind. So okay, maybe this client has a different way of communication so let's ask them first what type of communication needs do you have?

I've not hired an interpreter. Okay, that's okay. You can contact our office and ask how -- what the process is to contact an agency to provide interpreting services. So it's important that you bring in a qualified sign language interpreter.

And so what does a qualified sign language interpreter mean? So the ADA defines a qualified interpreter as an interpreter who is able to interpret effectively, accurately and neutral in both receptively and expressively using specialized vocabulary. For example in the medical setting it is important for the interpreter to have that medical terminology, that medical awareness and that doesn't always happen. So imagine interpreter comes in to interpret a medical appointment and the deaf person is looking at them and the interpreter is just very hesitant, doesn't know a lot of the signs. So how do you think that the deaf person would be able to understand what the doctor is actually saying so
considering having a certified deaf interpreter in that situation and that could help the process along. If the deaf patient is having a hard time understanding the advanced terminology that's being used, that's used often in the medical setting or in the court setting, for example, it's the interpreter's responsibility to interpret that information, what's being said during court or medical appointment, then you can have a certified deaf interpreter interpreting also with a hearing interpreter -- where the hearing interpreter gives information to the deaf interpreter and the deaf interpreter gives that information to the deaf client and is interpreting culturally and linguistically.

If you have a communication policy, look in that policy.

If someone comes in and asks for a specific accommodation what is your communication access policy say? It could include -- you have to request an interpreter in a certain amount of time before the appointment so know what that is to be able to protect yourself.

Again, you can contact our office any time. We are here for you guys.

Using an interpreter is important because it's your communication facilitator. You're not just helping the deaf
person understand, they're helping you understand as well.

Interpreters have -- there are different levels of certifications for sign language interpreters. There are three. There's RID certifications and there are BEI certifications. And there's also NIC certifications. So why is a certification important? A certification means that the interpreter themselves has taken and passed an exam to show that they have the specific skills. The certification helps consumers and clients to understand and know what to expect from the interpreter.

And there are-- the CPC, the code of professional conduct for interpreters, which means it's almost the same as a therapist. They have to follow their own ethics, professionalism, confidentiality, so keep that in the back of your mind when an interpreter shows up. So yes, the interpreter must follow confidentiality rules.

So you can ask the interpreter are you certified? And if you know -- if they say yes, then you know that they have to follow that code of professional conduct. I don't have any time to expand on those ethics. I'd love to, but my time is limited.

When you're using an interpreter it's important to know
that it's important that you don't stand between the deaf person and the interpreter, of course. They need to be able to see each other. When you're speaking to a deaf person, don't say to the interpreter, hey, tell her this, tell her that. Just speak directly to the deaf person and keep eye contact with them as you're speaking with them. And the interpreter can be interpreting everything that's being said.

If you say hey, don't interpret that, talk in -- this is for somebody else. The interpreter will interpret that. So just forewarning.

I've got about 10 minutes left, is that right? And we wanted to have time for the Q and A,? Okay. So I'm going to go ahead and put the presentation on hold for any questions that we might have.

Let me fast forward actually. I'm going to fast forward to this point here because I think it's pretty important. We can always go back if we have time.

We have a resource specialist program that's contracted under our office and there are two different types of specialists. The first specialist is a deaf or hard of hearing Access Specialist and they will focus on the basics of the ADA providing education and training to deaf clients
and also to hearing clients on the basics of effective communication, equal access, equal opportunity, self-access training as well. And just kind of teach what are the basic civil rights laws, provide group trainings and those are at no cost. You can always contact them and request that information or that training. And contact us if you are outside of Austin for referral to your local specialist.

The second type of specialist is a deaf and hard of hearing Technology Specialist and they will provide training on how to deal with hearing loss, they will do technology demonstrations for various accommodations, they will go to your workplace and do an evaluation to make sure that environment is accessible for your client. They've got communication strategies. They also do group training. And the two specialists will actually work together often and provide a brief training.

So if there's any questions that you have about deaf people and accommodations, call them. They have tons of resources readily available. If you're not sure which agency -- which interpreting agency that you should use, who's in my area? Call them they'll provide you in a list of interpreting agencies in your area so that you can provide
access to your deaf employee.

If you have a deaf employee or a Jeff client.

So now I'm going to put that on hold for any questions.

>> We did have a couple of comments from earlier when we were talking about what it would be like to be deaf in the workplace and a couple of people said it would be hard to communicate with the teammates. And also it would be hard to multitask in the same way where you would be on a call and work on something else simultaneously.

>> Good comments. So on that topic -- when we're talking about multitasking and that -- that being a challenge talking on the phone and working on the computer at the same time. I'm glad that that was brought up.

For me multitasking is hard, just for me individually. It's I think more based on the personality. I don't think that has to do with hearing loss. Not everybody can multitask. It requires the ability to process multiple things at the same time. My husband is an expert at multitasking and he's hard of hearing. He can talk on the phone while he's watching an interpreter, working on the computer, then he can have a side conversation with somebody who comes in the office and he's doing all three or four things
at the same time. But for me personally I have a hard time doing it. I do -- will have my videophone up and working on my computer. I will say hold on while I pull this up on my computer. I have to put something on pause and kind of do things one at a time.

So I think it really depends on the individual. I don't think it's really a deaf thing.

Okay. So it looks like I will be able to go back on the PowerPoint.

So I wanted to cover this because I think it's pretty important. Deaf people have a fear of two things. One, law enforcement and two, CPS.

Talking about law enforcement, why? It's because of their safety. So when they're approached by a police officer the police officer will never assume that this person is deaf. And so this is a true story. There were two people walking outside of their deaf school and they were tackled and brought to the ground from behind by a police officer. And it was simply because the deaf girls were not responding to their calls. So that can be a terrifying situation obviously. I've been scarred myself from a situation I had with law enforcement. I've been pulled over, I've been -- I've had
a police officer point their gun at me because I wasn't responding. So it's important for law enforcement to realize that -- what the language and communication strategies are for the deaf community and understand that you have to bring an interpreter in those situations.

So we do have a training curriculum that was approved by TCOLE and they focus on interaction with drivers who are deaf and/or hard of hearing. And that was implemented about two years ago.

And if you're interested in a referral -- to refer law enforcement to that training, you can contact us and ask us about it.

Okay. Another fear, as I mentioned, is CPS situations. And the reason is because a CPS worker could assume that a deaf person can't raise children. It's like wow, they might think how can you hear a baby cry? How can you raise kids? How will a deaf person be able to communicate with their children? And many of them do not realize that deaf families have successfully raised children for a long time.

For me I'm a mother of two teenaged kids who stress me out everyday just like hearing parents.

Are all hearing parents great? Fantastic? Are all
parents great or fantastic? No. They're equivalent.

So a lot of CPS workers are unaware. Maybe they've never met a deaf person. They don't realize that okay, there are accommodations in the home that you can use. Deaf parents can raise children. We use accommodations at home like a baby crying alert monitor, a nanny cam, video monitoring.

And our kids will usually come up and tap us to get your attention. As a deaf mom I know if a light comes on I know there's something going on. I've got an app on my phone that lets me know when my kids get home when I'm not home. So there are many different strategies to be able to raise our children.

So using a child to interpret for a deaf person in a CPS situation is not appropriate. Be sure if there are any CPS home visits, please bring in an interpreter, please, that's very important to that the parent can understand completely the situation, the questions to avoid any sorts of misunderstandings.

In a situation where there's a deaf child that's placed in a home where ASL service accessible to them and this is something that happens quite often, if you have any concerns or questions about that you can please contact us so we can
support you through that.

So any last questions? Okay. So here's all of the resources. If you're interested, you want to learn sign language, there's some resources there. There are many, many different videos. There are ASL classes out in the community. There are apps that you can look on to learn a little bit of ASL. And the best way is obviously interacting with deaf people and picking up sign language from them.

So be sure you contact your resource specialist to get more information in your region. And there's the rest of them, the resources there, our email for questions, for specific questions in regards to providing services or working with deaf people, please feel free to contact us at any time. If you want training in your region, please contact us.

And thank you.

>> All right. Thank you so much, Amanda. And thank you everyone for joining us. We're going to close up now because we've run out of time on the webinar system. But you can also email questions to the DBMD policy mailbox or just give us a call and we'll help you connect with Amanda or other resources. Again, thank you so much.