

## Teaching in Sign: Considerations for Using Sign Language in Therapeutic Riding

— Beth Large (Elizabeth), MOT, PATH RI, PATH VI, CHAI

\*\*A note about this handout: I am currently seeking copyright permission to use pictures of signs. However, the resource and reference list cite some amazing electronic and print resources. The PowerPoint has citations at the bottom of each slide.

— Intro-Beth's background (disclaimer-I'm not an interpreter!)

— How many people currently work with someone who utilizes signs to communicate?

— Purpose: To help EAI understand:

— Sub-culture

— Guidelines for using signs

— And of course, to learn some signs!

— How are people deaf?

— Congenital-50% genetic

— Although fewer than 5% of deaf people have deaf parents

— Degenerative

— Accident

— Disease

— Rubella

— A multitude of syndromes

— Menere's Disease, etc.

— History

— Formed by American School of the Deaf (ASD), by people who were deaf, and spearheaded by Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet in 1817

— He brought back Laurent Clerc from France, who was a deaf sign language instructor from the Paris school

— ASL has close roots to French Sign Language

— Even though standard, signs can differ regionally

— Especially regional/name signs (ex: Akron)

- Gallaudet University in Washington D.C. (1857)
- Culture
- Culture: set of social beliefs, behaviors, art, literacy, traditions, history, clause, and shared institutions of communities that are influenced by deafness and which use sign languages as main means of communication.”
- Video from Flavia Fleischer
- <https://www.facebook.com/johnny.hill.3990/videos/10153152878580728/>
- Culture Ctd.
- Cultural identity does not typically come from parents (because of a high rate coming from hearing parents)
- \*A note about Deaf and deaf
- DO NOT use “person first language”, but Deaf-first language
- See deafness as a “difference in experience” rather than disability
- Not all are part of the Deaf community
- Storytelling, humor, drama, poetry
- Not one Deaf culture, many! Regional, etc.
- Collectivist culture (vs. individualistic American society)
- More direct/literal, asked for connections to Deaf community
- Like to arrive early, explain themselves when they are late/leave early or it is considered rude
- Cultural “Fun Facts”
- How to gain attention
- Pen and paper
- Deaf “clap”
- Have a very literal sense of humor
- Open to others learning their language

- Who uses sign?
- The Deaf
- Hard of hearing
- People with Autism Spectrum Disorder
- People with Down Syndrome
- “Signs for babies”
  
- The Controversy
- Sign English (or “Manually Coded English”) is not used by those who are Deaf
  - Only 20-30% of a conversation is understood if a person lip reads (p. 43)
- Some children/people who are deaf have been forced to try to speak, leading to a deprivation of language
  - Some parents/caregivers may not want you to sign to their loved one because they believe that this will encourage their loved one not to speak
  - Ethically, you must adhere to the caregiver’s wishes, but you can professionally communicate/encourage the family to research this
  - **ASK before using signs!**
  
- Cochlear Implants
- Implant that communicates sound directly to the auditory nerve
- People of the Deaf culture are against cochlear implants for children, but support an adult’s choice to receive them (stuck between two cultures)
- HELMET USE: need to accommodate the cochlear external device
  - Recommend using a helmet with adjustable back
  - Know that they may fall off and this is not an emergency- just make sure they are not damaged!!

- How is sign used in the arena?
- If you are going to sign for a class, you MUST sign the entire class, even if you are not speaking to the person who is deaf
- Talk normally, don't yell or over exaggerate facial expressions/mouth
- Signing and talking at once (see note from Jay, 2011)
- Be humble, respectful, and don't try to interpret if you can't
- Directions
  - Colorful landmarks, letters are helpful
  
- Grammar
- Facial expressions
- Be exact when learning!
- Asking a question
- Using space
  
- Alphabet
- Basics
- Hello
- What's up?
- How are you?
- colors
- Directions

- Recommended Resources
- Jay, M., (2011), A Student's Guide to ASL and the Deaf Community, Los Angeles, CA; Judea Media, LLC.
- ASL University: lifeprint.com
- Handspeak: handspeak.com
- Signing Naturally (workbooks with DVD's): these are what I used as textbooks in my 4 semesters of ASL
- ASL dictionaries: siningsavvy.com
  
- References
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