



DMHAS
Division of Mental Health
and Addiction Services

Access and Accommodations for Persons who are Deaf

Tevis Thompson

Project Manager

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Opioid and Stimulant Use Disorder Initiatives

Office of Treatment and Recovery Supports







#1 Question

Is it required to accept people who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing into our program?



YES!

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT:



Title III: Public Accommodation—Requires that businesses must provide persons with disabilities an equal opportunity to access the goods or services they offer.



ALL

NJ state funded Substance Use Disorder treatment and recovery providers, programs and facilities are expected to be accessible and useable for Deaf and Hard of Hearing clients.

NO EXCEPTIONS.



How do we do that?

Educate your first contact staff on proper service request phone inquiries, or emails.

“Yes, we do provide services to persons who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.”

Stay on the phone line. A relay call from a person who is Deaf will have an interpreter identifying themselves at the start of the call. **This is not a telemarketer trying to sell something.**



Handle the call as you would any other person seeking treatment and recovery services.



NEXT STEPS

- Schedule the intake.
- Email or Call me with the intake date & time.

Tevis Thompson

DMHAS-DHH@dhs.nj.gov

- Monday, Tuesday Thursday – Office phone 609-438-4346
- Wednesday, Friday – Cell phone 609-376-6340



ASL Interpreters

- Please send me a copy of the clients daily/weekly schedule as soon as you receive the referral.
- The number of hours of interpreter services depends on the daily schedule and the client's preference.
- Interpreters will be available during unstructured time to allow for social interactions within the community.
- Make sure ALL staff, day, evening and weekend are aware of the client and the interpreters that will be arriving.
- ALL interactions and communications are strictly confidential. This is a provision of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf Code of Professional Conduct. Interpreters are willing to sign a confidentiality agreement with your facility if necessary.



American Sign Language Interpreters

Will be provided to the client either in-person or remotely via Zoom at no cost to the provider.

- I schedule the interpreters.
- I receive and process the interpreter's invoices.
- DMHAS Accounts Payable sends the payment.



Provider Preparation Steps

1. Educate staff about working with Deaf and Hard of Hearing clients.
2. Set up a Laptop or tablet with Zoom and talk to text application.
3. Purchase Wi-Fi Boosters.
4. Purchase Microphone w/receiver for laptop or tablet.
5. Purchase a Tablet stand.



Electronic Devices

1. The device falls under the Auxiliary Aids provision of the ADA.
2. Store the device in the medication room, give it out at the first medication pass of the day and take it back to charge at the last medication pass of the evening.
3. Make sure overnight staff has my cell phone number. If there is an emergency during the night, and you need immediate interpreter access....609-376-6340
4. Client outbound phone calls: We have an account with Purple Communications for video phone access. I will provide you with the log in codes so clients can make outbound phone calls at no charge to your agency and according to your rules.



Group Dynamics

- Work with group facilitators to limit side conversations, cross talk and background noise.
- Encourage group participants to speak clearly and sit closer to together.
- Always speak in the first person. No need to say “Tell them” “Ask Them”

Contact Information

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Mental Health Providers

Statewide Specialized Inpatient Program for the Deaf

Based at St. Joseph's University Medical Center, ACCESS provides 24/7 community-based psychiatric and mental health services to deaf and hard of hearing people throughout New Jersey.

973-754-5595 or 973-870-0683 (Video Phone)