COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

MPTC

Municipal Police Training Committee

In-Service Training

Freedom to Communicate: Deaf/Hard of Hearing and Victims of Human Trafficking

Version: A2025

INSTRUCTOR LESSON PLAN

The Municipal Police Training Committee (MPTC), an agency of the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS), serves the Commonwealth by establishing training standards, oversight, and policy guidance for policing professionals.

Title:	Freedom to Communicate: Deaf/Hard of Hearing and Victims of Human Trafficking
Version:	A2025
Course Purpose:	To provide law enforcement officers with the information and training needed to communicate effectively with vulnerable populations with an emphasis on communicating with people who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing or victims of human trafficking.
Length:	3 hours
Learning Objectives:	By the end of the lesson, participants will be able to: 1. Identify best practices of effective communication as well as common barriers to communication with vulnerable populations. 2. Describe and explain the best practices and resources available when communicating with Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals. 3. Review the best practices and available resources when communicating with victims of human trafficking.
Instructional Methods:	Direct Instruction (Lecture) Guided Note Taking Individual Reflection Cooperative Group Work Video Analysis Open Discussion
Handouts:	MCDHH Tips to Improve Communication with Deaf & Hard of Hearing Individuals in your Community
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INSTRUCTOR NOTES

1. Delivering instructor for this section must have an active MPTC TY25 In-Service: Freedom to Communicate: Deaf/Hard of Hearing and Victims of Human Trafficking instructor certification. For lessons taught at MPTC operated academies, instructors must also have an active state contract at the time of instruction. Instructors at operated academies without an active state contract at the time of instruction will not be paid.
2. This lesson plan may contain photographs. Instructors must instruct training attendees that any duplication or dissemination of any photograph that depicts a victim of a crime, accident or emergency is prohibited by law. MGL c 271 § 51.
3. Instructors should use and refer to the Massachusetts District Court Criminal Model Jury Instructions when describing Massachusetts General Laws (MGL) elements. The document is available online (http://www.mass.gov/courts/docs/courts-andjudges/courts/district-court/jury-instructions-criminal/criminal-model-juryinstructions.pdf) and made available in lesson to student officers.
4. Instructors must use the "Instructor" lesson plan and deliver the lesson in its entirety. Instructor NOTES are inserted throughout the lesson plan to choreograph delivery and ensure content is presented as intended and within the prescribed timeframe.
5. This lesson utilizes adult learning principles and may include activities, checkpoints, facilitated discussion questions, videos, and other instructional methods. The various instructional methods are intended to make the lesson learner-centered and provide different opportunities for participants to spiral through the learning cycle with the goals of retaining the information and to reinforce the concepts covered in the lesson. For this reason, it is important that any activities, checkpoints, and facilitated discussion be completed during the lesson.
6. Opportunities for facilitated discussion are provided throughout the lesson. Key takeaways are included with these discussion questions to clarify the purpose of the facilitated discussion. The takeaways help instructors confirm that participants understand the key ideas presented.
7. Instructors are encouraged to share relevant personal work experiences to help illustrate concepts in the lesson. Instructors should be mindful of the time allocated to the lesson so that all material in the lesson plan is presented.
8. "Version" numbers are used to identify the most current lesson plans, visual aids, and handout materials. Instructors must confirm they have the most current materials for delivery by checking MPTCtraining.com.

ICONOGRAPHY

 **Corresponding Slide Title**

 **Video**

 **Instructor Note**

 **Facilitated Discussion**

 **Refer to Handout**

INTRODUCTION

Introductions

Instructors should introduce themselves, share their professional backgrounds, and explain and emphasize that the primary goal of this training is to provide law enforcement officers with the information and training needed to communicate effectively with vulnerable populations with an emphasis on communicating with people who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing or victims of human trafficking.

Learning Objectives

Review the course objectives with participants.

1. Identify best practices of effective communication as well as common barriers to communication with vulnerable populations.

2. Describe and explain the best practices and resources available when communicating with Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals.

3. Review the best practices and available resources when communicating with victims of human trafficking.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

OBJECTIVE #1: Identify best practices of effective communication as well as common barriers to communication with vulnerable populations.

The Importance of Emotional Intelligence

Possessing emotional intelligence is a crucial part of being a successful law enforcement officer. When looking at the role emotional intelligence plays in day-to-day life, it is a skill that nobody should take lightly. Emotionally intelligent individuals are great at conflict resolution, rarely

ever lose control over their emotions and keep a cool head no matter what problems they come across.[1]

There are two basic aspects of emotional intelligence:

- The ability to recognize, understand and manage our own emotions.
- The ability to recognize, understand and influence the emotions of others.

Emotional intelligence serves two purposes for law enforcement officers; it helps officers serve the community better and helps individuals cope with the daily struggles of lives as officers. [2]

Emotionally intelligent individuals are also competent communicators, who are able to improve the outcomes of any interactions they might have. Officers who possess emotional intelligence can tell how people will react, understand their emotional state and can use this information to perform a better job. [3]



Communication Skills

Officers should develop and use advanced communication skills to quickly establish trust, build rapport and encourage individuals to be open about their potential risk or vulnerability, including any experience of abuse.[4]

Key skills include: [5]

- building rapport
- active listening
- using a procedurally just approach, for example, being open, respectful and honest
- minimizing biases and judgement
- awareness of internal motivations for disclosure

Applying these skills will help officers and staff develop a better understanding of relevant vulnerabilities, especially during the initial stages of information gathering and identification of risk. [6]

[1] CSS. (2020). The Importance of Emotional Intelligence In A Law Enforcement Officer's Toolkit. *Civil Service Success.* The Importance Of Emotional Intelligence In A Law Enforcement Officer's Toolkit (civilservicesuccess.com)
[2] CSS. (2020). The Importance of Emotional Intelligence In A Law Enforcement Officer's Toolkit. *Civil Service Success.* The Importance Of Emotional Intelligence In A Law Enforcement Officer's Toolkit (civilservicesuccess.com)
[3] CSS. (2020). The Importance of Emotional Intelligence In A Law Enforcement Officer's Toolkit. *Civil Service Success.* The Importance Of Emotional Intelligence In A Law Enforcement Officer's Toolkit (civilservicesuccess.com)
[4] College of Policing. (2021). Communication. *College of Policing.* Communication | College of Policing
[5] College of Policing. (2021). Communication. *College of Policing.* Communication | College of Policing
[6] College of Policing. (2021). Communication. *College of Policing.* Communication | College of Policing

There is good evidence on the importance of effective communication in building a relationship with victims or vulnerable people. This includes things such as language, building rapport and asking questions. [7]



Passing Judgment

In the first few milliseconds of perceiving someone, we not only automatically process information about who a person is, but we form an opinion, positive or negative. This automatic judgment meter is a legacy from crucial survival responses that prime us to assess a person as someone to approach or to avoid. Are they friend or foe? Can I trust this person, or is the friendly appearance deceptive? These judgments are fundamental to navigating our environment.[8] Rather than passing judgment so quickly we should be looking for more.



Developing Rapport

Building rapport with individuals is important when trying to elicit information and encourage cooperation for individuals with vulnerabilities.

Practitioners described rapport as 'building a human connection', 'developing a relationship' and 'encouraging trust'. It was suggested that building rapport takes time and can be improved by consistency of support when there is a series of encounters, both in terms of the approach and the number of different staff involved.[9]

In relation to children in particular, police need to avoid appearing intimidating or as authority figures.

Rapport building is vital when developing a relationship with an individual, it enables the disclosure of information and allows the collection of a more complete picture of the situation.

When individuals invest time, provide space and build good relationships, a safe space is created and will encourage the sharing of information.

Practical examples of this include:[10]

- offering drinks, tissues, breaks and a seat
- giving victims time to think
- offering encouragement
- offering alternatives (for example a female or male officer)
- offering interpreter services

[7] College of Policing. (2021). Communication. *College of Policing.* Communication | College of Policing
[8] Apter, T. (2018). Passing Judgment. *Psychology Today.* Passing Judgment | Psychology Today
[9] College of Policing. (2021). Communication. *College of Policing.* Communication | College of Policing
[10] College of Policing. (2021). Communication. *College of Policing.* Communication | College of Policing

- recognizing trauma
- developing a dialogue and using language they understand
- demonstrating a genuine interest in them
- demonstrating empathy and compassion
- listening actively



Conversation Habits

To set the stage for effective communication, officers should practice crucial *verbal* and *nonverbal conversation habits*. These include eye contact, body position, voice tone, facial expressions, gestures, physical distance, and physical contact. Police also should use open invitations to talk, such as encouragers and closed and open-ended questions.[11]

Police officers are often trained to use a set of strategies in the field that can help diffuse situations as well as identify the root cause of problems before they escalate out of control. Being able to effectively communicate with the community they serve grants officers the ability to establish trust and promote greater cooperation with citizens.

Behavioral psychologist Dr. Albert Mehrabian conducted research on the topic of body language. His findings resulted in the 7-38-55 rule which indicates that only 7% of all communication is done through verbal communication, whereas the nonverbal component of our daily communication, such as the tonality of our voice and body language, make up 38% and 55% respectively.[12]



Communication Strategies

The following are some effective communication strategies officers can deploy: [13]

- Use body language to show the individual that the officer is listening carefully.
- Ask many questions, and make simple requests, one at a time.
- Ask open-ended questions.

[11] Hulse, D., & McDermott, J., P. (2012). Focus on Training: Interpersonal Skills Training in Police Academy Curriculum. FBI *Law Enforcement Bulletin.* Focus on Training: Interpersonal Skills Training in Police Academy Curriculum — LEB (fbi.gov)
[12] Michail, J. (2020). Strong Nonverbal Skills Matter Now More Than Ever In This "New Normal". *Forbes.* Strong Nonverbal Skills Matter Now More Than Ever In This "New Normal" (forbes.com)
[13] Fritsvold, E. (2023). Police Communication Skills Matter More Than Ever: Here's Why. *University of San Diego.* The Overlooked [But Crucial] Skill of Police Communication (sandiego.edu)

- Understanding that a person with mental illness may not understand all of the words an officer says, but that the person can sense their tone and attitude.
    - If the officer is shouting orders and appears tense, that increases the tension.
    - Speaking slowly and calmly can help de-escalate the situation and convey to the person that the officer is not in a rush, that they have as much time as needed to converse and reach an understanding.
- Responding to calls involving individuals dealing with mental health conditions as well as cognitive disabilities are both challenging. They both require differing responses and actions from individuals.
    - A mental health crisis is something that someone can recover from, whereas a cognitive disability never goes away



Verbal Communication[14]

Communication is an important component of law enforcement; clear communication becomes even more critical when you are giving verbal commands.

The following are 10 tips that will help you improve your verbal commands:

1. **Control your level of stress:**
    a. Practice tactical breathing and visualize what you may need to do when on scene.
2. **Keep it low and slow:**
    a. Know when to raise your voice and when to lower it.
    b. Screaming is not a sign of command presence, it's a sign of a loss of control.
    c. Speaking slowly allows the subjects you are dealing with time to hear, comprehend and hopefully comply with your commands.
3. **Start low and then go loud:**
    a. Do not give commands any louder than is required for the subject(s) to hear you.
4. **Keep it clean, simple and clear:**
    a. Stress can cause your brain to shift into fight mode. Where the brain goes, the mouth follows.
    b. Give commands one at a time to give the subject a chance to comprehend and comply.
    c. Multiple commands can result in the subject getting them out of order or forgetting what they were told.
5. **One voice:**
    a. We often see multiple officers yelling at the same time or giving conflicting directions.

[14] Wolfe, D. (2023). 10 Things You Can Do to Improve Your Voice Commands. *Police1.* Verbal communication tactics to improve police commands (police1.com)

   b. If one officer is saying, "Don't move" and another "Hands up," who is the subject supposed to obey?
   c. The first responding officer is in charge unless that role has been clearly relinquished. Under stress everyone wants to join in, leading to confusion and chaos in hectic, stressful situations. If that happens, saying, "one voice" or some other practiced cue can shut it down.
6. **If it isn't working, try something else**:
   a. Repeating the same command several times with no response is not going to establish compliance; if you have given the same command 3-4 times, switch what you are doing or saying.
   b. Stop talking and take action to improve the situation.
   c. You might change the volume of your voice or stop issuing commands and start asking questions in situations that allow it.
   d. Creating distance might lessen the subject's stress level, allowing them to better communicate with you.
7. **Ask yourself "Am I establishing contact with the subject?":**
   a. If the subject is mentally removed at that moment and incapable of hearing, let alone complying with your commands, your words are wasted.
   b. Missing the cues and escalating your verbal commands may only make the situation tenser for everyone involved.
8. **Remember to listen:**
   a. When things are potentially dangerous; you should be doing most of the talking.
   b. However, remembering to listen will lead you to recognize cues of a language problem or impairment in communication. Once identified, adjust your tactics accordingly.
9. **Be clear**
10. **You are a professional, look, sound and act like one:**
    a. Your goal is to be the calm in the eye of every stormy situation.



Body Language

Kinesics is the study of body language or body movement that can be used as a means to communicate nonverbal messages. This includes hand gestures, posture, eye contact, and facial expressions. Body language can account for up to 90% of any spoken message during face-to-face conversations.[15] When body language aligns with spoken words, it helps reinforce the message. When body language does not align, it can create confusion and mistrust, hence

[15] Jeanne Segal, Ph.D., Melinda Smith, M.A., Greg Boose, and Jaelline Jaffe, Ph.D., "Non-Verbal Communication: Improving Your Nonverbal Skills and Reading Body Language." HelpGuide.org (January 2016)

mixed messages. For police officers, the goal is to use body language that communicates openness, active listening, and confidence, not authoritativeness. [16]



Nonverbal Communication

Nonverbal communication refers to the sharing of information without the use of words or spoken language. It involves a variety of signals or cues that are used while talking, these cues can be used subconsciously or consciously.[17]

Nonverbal communication can work for you or against you. It greatly influences the way your listener interprets your message and can affect how you develop relationships with other people. [18]

Nonverbal communication occurs in many forms such as: [19]

- Eye contact
- Gestures
- Silence
- Facial expression
- Posture and body language
- Space and proximity
- Tone of voice
- Appearance
- Touch

Eyes can communicate fear, hostility, affection, or attraction. Depending on culture, eye contact between people can gauge attention, interest, and emotions. Maintaining consistent but intermittent eye contact while communicating is very effective. [20]

[16] Jeanne Segal, Ph.D., Melinda Smith, M.A., Greg Boose, and Jaelline Jaffe, Ph.D., "Non-Verbal Communication: Improving Your Nonverbal Skills and Reading Body Language." HelpGuide.org (January 2016)
[17] Thorburn, L. (2024). Nonverbal Communication: Why It's Important and How to Use It. *Expressable.* Nonverbal Communication: Why It's Important and How to Use It (expressable.com)
[18] Thorburn, L. (2024). Nonverbal Communication: Why It's Important and How to Use It. *Expressable.* Nonverbal Communication: Why It's Important and How to Use It (expressable.com)
[19] Thorburn, L. (2024). Nonverbal Communication: Why It's Important and How to Use It. *Expressable.* Nonverbal Communication: Why It's Important and How to Use It (expressable.com)
[20] Jeanne Segal, Ph.D., Melinda Smith, M.A., Greg Boose, and Jaelline Jaffe, Ph.D., "Non-Verbal Communication: Improving Your Nonverbal Skills and Reading Body Language." HelpGuide.org (January 2016)

The human face alone can communicate both message and emotion. Examples include happiness, sadness, anger, surprise, fear, and disgust. The key for officers is to align their facial expressions with message being delivered or received. [21]



Active Listening

Everyone wants to be respected and have their story heard. Active listening uses a combination of body language, questioning, and summarizing to demonstrate interest. Active listening has three (3) elements; attending, acknowledging, and summarizing.

Attending:

- get comfortable and eliminate distracting behaviors (e.g., looking at your phone and not the person talking, etc.).
- includes an open posture, making eye contact, and using appropriate facial expressions.

Acknowledging:

- is the ability to identify emotions communicated by people and demonstrate empathy. "I" statements are effective for acknowledging. "I see you are angry and have every right to feel that way."

Summarizing:

- is paraphrasing critical information to ensure people feel heard and acknowledged. Summarizing also helps officers confirm they possess accurate and complete information. "I" statements can be effective when summarizing.
    - "What I heard you say was [x]."
    - "Is everything I just said accurate?"



Non-Compliance

Non-Compliance includes conduct officers can easily see and experience to include physical resistance, violence, and specific body language or verbal clues. However, non-compliance can also be an unintentional act caused by certain underlying factors / conditions officers cannot see immediately or neglect to identify. These include, but are not limited to:

- physical illness
- mental illness
- developmental disabilities

[21] Jeanne Segal, Ph.D., Melinda Smith, M.A., Greg Boose, and Jaelline Jaffe, Ph.D., "Non-Verbal Communication: Improving Your Nonverbal Skills and Reading Body Language." HelpGuide.org (January 2016)

- drug impairment
- behavioral / emotional crisis

To effectively de-escalate, police need to recognize the possibilities for non-compliance when deciding the appropriate course of action.[22]



De-Escalation

MGL c 6E defines De-Escalation Tactics as:

> Proactive actions and approaches used by an officer to stabilize a law enforcement situation so that more time, options, and resources are available to gain a person's voluntary compliance and to reduce or eliminate the need to use force, including, but not limited to verbal persuasion, warnings, slowing down the pace of an incident, waiting out a person, creating distance between the officer and a threat, requesting additional resources to resolve the incident including but not limited to calling in medical or licensed mental health professionals as defined in MGL c 111 sec 51 ½ (a) to address the potential medical or mental health crisis.

It is about establishing and facilitating mutual interpersonal communication that should not compromise safety.

The purpose is to build rapport with a person to decrease behaviors that may result in a physical confrontation and increase the safety of all persons at the scene.



De-Escalation Tactics

De-escalation is always the goal, especially when interacting with vulnerable populations.

The MGL requires officers to attempt de-escalation tactics before using physical force upon another person unless it is not feasible to do so based upon the totality of the circumstances.

These tactics add tools to an officer's toolbox. When used effectively, they are forms of communication that should not compromise safety and can assist an officer in interactions with everyone.

[22] Dr. Laurence Miller, "Patrol Psychology 101: Communication and Conflict Resolution." Police One.com (April 18, 2008) [On-line] Available at: https://www.policeone.com/health-fitness/articles/1685390-Patrol-psychology-101-Communication-and-conflict-resolution [December 2019]



De-Escalation Fundamental Principles

The following principles underpin de-escalation:

- Take a calm approach.
- Patience, patience, patience.
- Slow down the pace of an incident
- Empathy is essential.
- Use active listening techniques.
- Understand and match your verbal cues with your non-verbal cues.
- Be respectful.



De-Escalation Techniques

The following techniques will successfully help de-escalate a situation:

- Allow the person to have their thoughts, feelings, and behavior.
- Use simple, concrete, clear communication.
- Use “I” or “We” statements” and NOT “You” statements.

Be sure to introduce yourself!

- Explain your actions when possible.
- Give them space—do not crowd them
- Use a calm, even tone of voice
- Be consistent and predictable when possible.
- Explain what happens next in advance (no surprises)

DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

OBJECTIVE #2: Describe and explain the best practices and resources available when communicating with Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals.



Important Notice

If you are receiving this presentation without having attended a previous MCDHH presentation, you are missing out on important information conveyed through in-person interaction. Non-MCDHH personnel should not use this presentation as the basis for their own presentations for this reason.

If you reside in Massachusetts you may request a free MCDHH training here: Request Free Inservice or Educational Training | Mass.gov.

Say Hello

You can say hello in a lot of different languages. Sometimes a few simple words in an individual's native language are enough to calm an injured person or even go as far as diffusing a stressful situation. While this section of the lesson is not intended to teach sign language, we can learn a few signs along the way to help you connect and effectively communicate with a Deaf individual.

Instructors should sign hello and encourage participants to join.

You will observe individuals signing hello with one or both hands if they are enthusiastic to see you.

The sign for "good" then "morning" shows the sun rising beyond the horizon, "night" shows the sun setting and "afternoon" shows the sun high in the sky.

Instructors will then sign good morning, good night, and good afternoon and encourage participants to join.

Emergency Situations: Communicating with Deaf & Hard of Hearing Individuals

This training content was provided by the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. MCDHH is the principal agency in the Commonwealth working on behalf of Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals and has partnered with the MPTC and the State Police for years to provide trainings like this, and insight into working with Deaf and Hard of Hearing members of our community.

A copy of this presentation is available for you and includes links for resources and information discussed.

Instructors are encouraged to share any experience they may have with Deaf or Hard of Hearing individuals.

What do you see?

Instructors should pose the following theoretical questions using the image on the slide for reference, not with the intention of soliciting responses but to make participants think.

Think about this scene for a moment. What do you see? Just a guy walking right? What do you see if you just found out that he fits the description of a suspect? Different right?

What do you see if you are telling him to stop and he doesn't? Often times we encounter Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals, and we have no idea! Unless they are wearing a hearing aid or cochlear implant that you can see, or using sign language, there are no identifying features. This training will help increase your awareness of behaviors that you might encounter that could be misinterpreted. This awareness, coupled with what to do once you are aware that person you are working with is Deaf or Hard of Hearing, will promote interactions that yield the desired result.

Video- Walking

Video – Walking
This video features a State trooper who observes a suspect matching the description of a previous call. The trooper did an excellent job approaching and tapping this individual on the back of the arm. Once the trooper learned that the individual was deaf, he quickly pivoted to writing as requested.

How will you communicate?

Instructors should pose the following theoretical questions, not with the intention of soliciting responses but to make participants think.

Once you have determined that an individual is Deaf or Hard of Hearing, how will you communicate?

With a victim:

- Do you need to ask questions? Call an emergency contact? Request medical attention?

With a suspect during an arrest:

- Miranda? Making a phone call?

Think about these questions as we go through this training. Perhaps your department already has policies and procedures for these events. Do you know them? Thinking about this now and making a plan for options will help you when these situations do occur.



What can you do?

What about when you are in your community? What can you do? Making events accessible to Deaf and Hard of Hearing members of your community and publicizing those events! Think public safety days, open house events, coffee in your community, ride along with an officer. Then think, why would a Deaf or Hard of Hearing individual attend one of these events if they could not understand what was being said? You'll learn about accessibility today.



Instructors should ask participants to raise their hand if they are familiar with the disability indicator form. Then proceed with the following content.

A State 911 Disability Indicator Form is available through State 911 Department, where an individual can self-disclose their disability. Therefore, when an individual calls 911 from their landline or cell phone the dispatcher will automatically be alerted to that disability! It is an incredible advantage that you may know before you arrive on scene that the individual calling was Deaf or Hard of Hearing, or any other disability for that matter. The big ask on this is "self-disclosing," that can be hard for anyone, but if you have more interactions with any group, they will feel more comfortable with local police and perhaps disclosing. Consider making your community events accessible. Ask MCDHH for guidance. Consider placing a link to the Disability Indicator Form on your department website.

What about interactions like the one pictured on this slide, where perhaps you meet someone on the street? This training will help you be better prepared for spontaneous community interactions like these.

When it comes to community planning there is a saying common in the disability community "Nothing about us, without us." Consider including Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals in every aspect of community planning and integration.



Refer to Handout- MCDHH Tips to Improve Officer Communication with Deaf & Hard of Hearing Individuals in your Community

Disclaimer

The material covered today is considered best practice and is never intended to replace legal counsel. Information, products and services pertaining to accessibility are constantly evolving. Which is a great thing, right? Any and all products highlighted in this presentation are for representative purposes. MCDHH does not endorse specific products or vendors.

Video- Culture

The funny thing about culture is that it can be hard to recognize or understand if it's not yours. In a law enforcement setting, that can lead to misunderstandings that can compromise individuals' rights.

Video – Culture

This video features MCDHH's Assistive Technology and Training Specialist, Jonathan O'Dell. He discusses how culture differs from person to person, and because of this it is important to recognize that every individual is different in several aspects of life.

Goals For Today

Officers will be able to:

1. Recall the different communication methods Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals may use and which are most likely to work for an individual in a specific setting.

As we go through this training this will become more obvious, but the communication method of choice for a culturally Deaf individual, perhaps American Sign Language, WILL LIKLEY NOT work for a Hard of Hearing elderly individual. Depending on the setting, it may not be readily available.

2. Apply simple everyday communication tips to improve any communication situation.

Not every interaction will require full communication access, but almost every interaction can be improved by the little things we can do in the moment. We'll learn lots of these tips along the way.

3. Consider the type of communication access necessary and identify methods to obtain: Interpreter/CART Provider/Assistive Listening Device.



This is critical for in-depth conversations particularly of a legal nature. For instance, if you are interviewing a victim or a suspect, or you are arresting an individual. You need to know how to obtain these services.

4. Identify the Federal and State Law that applies to your work with Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals.



It is important that you recognize your responsibilities under the laws. We will be briefly discussing both Americans with Disability Act (ADA) and Mass General Law (MGL), but you should look to your department to guide you on adhering to the law.



Demographics

How many Deaf or Hard of Hearing individuals are there? LOTS! There are a lot more Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals than you might think. A 2011 study by John Hopkins Medical School found that one out of every five people in the United States lives with a significant hearing loss. That is 20% of the population.[23] In Massachusetts alone, this translates into roughly 1.4 million residents who may experience significant communication difficulties during everyday communications. In areas with older populations, the incidence is even higher.[24]



MCDHH

The Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MCDHH) was established in 1985 by Massachusetts General Law to function as the lead agency representing the issues and needs of Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and late deafened residents in the Commonwealth.

MCDHH is 1 of 11 agencies that make up the Executive Office of Health and Human Services.

MCDHH's staff of 57 works hard on behalf of constituents across the state via 5 regional offices.

[23] Lin, R., F.,Niparko, J., K., & Ferrucci, L. (2011). Hearing Loss Prevalence in the United States. *Arch Intern Med,* 171(*20*):1851–1853. https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamainternalmedicine/fullarticle/1106004
[24] World Population Review. (2024). Massachusetts Population 2024. *World Population Review.* Massachusetts Population 2024 (Demographics, Maps, Graphs) (worldpopulationreview.com)



Relevant for Law Enforcement

The following are resources that the MCDHH provides that are most applicable for law enforcement.

If you ever need to secure a(n):

- ASL Interpreter
- Certified Deaf Interpreter (CDI), or
- Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) provider

MCDHH has a service that connects you with certified, local interpreters as well as CART providers both in advance and via an After-Hours Emergency line. We will go into detail about what these services are, when you might need them, and how to get a referral later in this presentation.

MCDHH staff offer free trainings on a wealth of topics and can also provide technology and access guidance.



Services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Individuals

As you first arrive on scene you may notice when an individual is struggling or may benefit from support or services.

The Community Services Division of MCDHH has bilingual specialists, fluent in ASL and English, who work with individuals and families on things like advocacy, support, referrals and more.

Every community has been impacted by substance use disorder, take a moment to think of how difficult it would be for a Deaf or Hard of Hearing individual to succeed in recovery with zero access to meeting information. Due to the fact that so many recovery services are volunteer organizations, no group is financially responsible for providing communication access. This is where MCDHH comes in, providing Recovery Coaches who are both bilingual and have personally navigated the recovery process. They are in a unique position to help others. The program also runs and identifies accessible meetings online so individuals can attend, participate and have a real chance to succeed in recovery.

If you ever see an individual experience trouble making calls perhaps even to 911, The State 911 Equipment Distribution Program may be incredibly helpful. The individual simply has their audiologist sign off and submit it to MCDHH. Then State 911 visits the home to find the best type of phone. For instance, an older person who has lost hearing over time may use a caption

phone (refer to the image on the slide) to speak as they normally would. But when the person on the other end speaks, it would show up as text for them to read.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Independent Learning Services, known as DHILS, are located throughout the Commonwealth. The purpose of these programs is to provide a peer consumer environment to enable Deaf and Hard of Hearing persons to become more independent. Many often hold ASL classes for those wishing to learn.



ADA

The ADA is a Federal Law enacted in 1990 with the intent of outlawing discrimination and ensuring equal access for persons with disabilities.

Title I covers employment. Employees with disabilities must be provided with reasonable accommodation in order to be able to fulfil the essential functions of their jobs. This could be ASL interpreters and CART providers for meetings, captioned and amplified phones, visual alerts for environmental notification and adaptation of office policies and procedures that disadvantage persons who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing.

Title II applies to state and local governments and mandates provision of programs and services in whatever manner makes them accessible to citizens with disabilities, both physical and communication access. Example: ASL or captioning for open city and town meetings, or questioning/interviews by law enforcement officers. using the visor card and/or other forms of communication access before ASL interpreters or CART become available, providing Miranda through ASL, and more.

Title III applies to all places of public accommodation which the general public can reasonably be expected to have access to. In our context, a Deaf person not being permitted to order food at the drive through window because they cannot understand through the microphone, or being unlawfully denied entrance to a library/doctor's office/retail establishment with a hearing ear (service) dog, is discriminatory and unlawful. Equal functional access to that which a hearing non-disabled person enjoys must be provided to Deaf/Hard of Hearing persons!

Some big takeaways here:

- The law gives primary consideration for the type of aid or service requested by the Deaf or Hard of Hearing individual. Don't guess or assume what someone needs, ask!
- **Providing ineffective communication access that does not meet the person's needs is considered a violation of the ADA! Never assume!**

- **In an emergency, urgency often dictates action.** Once the immediate crisis has been stabilized, we should strive for full and appropriate communication access as the ADA requires.
- MGL covers specifics on Interpreters in law enforcement settings like arrests, evidence and court proceedings and fees. You should become familiar with the law.



Communication

Everyone remembers a game like this, a person speaks in one end and what comes out on the other isn't always as intended.

Communication access? What does that mean? It simply means that you are providing the resources necessary for 2-way communication in a specific setting. We will delve deeper into this later in the presentation.

What will communication look like? What type will be needed? That depends on both the individual and the situation.



Myths & Stereotypes

There are many common myths out there. The following are some that seem to persist:

- All deaf people read lips
- Hard of Hearing people know sign language
- Deaf people do not drive.
    - **This is 100% incorrect!** In fact, Deaf drivers are statistically better than the rest of us. Why? They are very visual.
- Cochlear implants and hearing aids fix hearing
- If a person can speak then they must also hear.
    - **Again, this is not true!** Many Deaf individuals can and do speak. Sometimes the reaction that a Deaf individual receives when they do use their voice is less than welcoming, which influences their choice in whether to continue to speak. But that does not mean they can hear!
- American Sign Language is the same as English.
    - **Another myth!** ASL has its own grammar and syntax and even what one would think of as a straight translation can be fraught with misunderstanding. This is why it is imperative to obtain the communication access that the individual requests.

The Words We Choose

Language is ever evolving. People may refer to themselves in different ways, but it is best to stick with Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf/Blind and not by the outdated terms you see on the right of the slide.

Perception vs Reality

Hearing people tend to see a lack of hearing as a pathological disability which is not necessarily how Deaf and Hard of Hearing people see themselves. There are distinct groups who may communicate in many different ways determined by their individual abilities, upbringing, experience and specific circumstances.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals know from experience that disclosing their identity often leads to marginalization and outright discrimination. As a result of that, they may not be as forthcoming as you might expect about their communication.

When you see all these subgroups, it's easy to recognize that there is no one way to communicate. Even within categories there are huge variances in communication preference.

The best way to determine an individual's communication preference is to always ask the individual what works for them!

Deaf

Culturally Deaf or Deaf with a capital D typically refers to individuals who were born Deaf and raised in an ASL environment. In the next few slides we will learn more about their concerns, culture and some typical behaviors that may be misinterpreted.

Deaf/HH Concerns

A very sad situation occurred in San Marcos, Texas. A Deaf couple was having an argument, and it was reported as a possible altercation. When the police arrived and the man did not respond to verbal commands, he was tazed repeatedly. The video clearly shows the man trying to communicate that he was Deaf. This situation has led to serious repercussions for all involved. It is referenced here as an example of how situations like this occur mainly due to misunderstanding.

The following video illustrates just how easy it is to think a simple disagreement between individuals using sign language is an altercation.

Video- Argument

Video – Argument

Instructors should play the first 19 seconds of the video and then pause.

You can see how a simple argument may be completely misinterpreted by a bystander. To a hearing individual it looks aggressive, but it is just emotion that we typically show in voice inflection showing up in big signs and facial emotion. Calls to the Police for Deaf individuals arguing is somewhat common. Once you get on scene, recognizing typical cultural behaviors will help you identify what is happening and to respond accordingly.

Instructors should direct participants to pay attention to what happens when the State Police show up to their home. Resume the video.

This is a great example involving minors and family. Only in urgent situations should you ever use family as interpreters. Surprisingly very few family members are fluent in ASL and you have no idea if the parents, in this case, want the child to know what happened.
If the person indicates it's okay to write, do so in short written exchanges. Don't forget that using gestures may be helpful in the immediate emergency situation, but should be complemented with full communication access, if required. Visual tools, like the Visor Card and Emergency Services Card we'll show later, may also be helpful!

Video- Deaf Culture Explained

Video – Deaf Culture Explained

Heather and Janay will help us learn some typical communication preferences for Deaf individuals.

Video- Cultural Behaviors

Video – Cultural Behaviors

Communication that is culturally typical in the Deaf community may be easily misunderstood. Some behaviors and mannerisms may even be startling to people unfamiliar with them or seen as aggressive.

Individuals may use intense facial expressions in place of voice inflection. It may be intimidating for someone experiencing this for the first time. Let's watch…



Video- Cultural Behaviors II



Video – Cultural Behaviors II

What you observed in this video is not uncommon. A Deaf individual may approach you to see you better. Often times you are arriving on the scene to someone who is stressed, injured or in distress. You may have noticed Jon was a little unsteady on his feet. This too is common for Deaf and hard of hearing individuals.



ASL, CDI and DeafBlind Interpreters

You can contact MCDHH to connect with an ASL & CDI interpreter. Interpreters referred by MCDHH are screened or hold national certification, have specialized legal training and they must adhere to a professional code of conduct. They are not employed by MCDHH, but referred to you to contract independently.

Certified Deaf Interpreters are Deaf individuals who can interpret between ASL interpreters and Deaf signers who may not know or not be wholly comfortable with ASL.

I will bet that you have all seen a CDI before. Often when the Governor holds a press conference the interpreter you see on stage is actually a Deaf Interpreter. How do they know what the Governor is saying? The Deaf Interpreter works with an ASL Interpreter as a team. So, follow me with this…

1. The Governor, on stage, speaks.
2. The ASL Interpreter who is hearing sits in the front row facing the stage and interprets for the Deaf Interpreter who stands near the Governor on stage.
3. The Deaf Interpreter then converts that using both ASL and visual gestural communication to make the most fluent and widely understandable interpretation of the Governors message. WOW!

This is amazing and very useful for situations like major emergencies, court testimony and even Deaf individuals who may know other sign languages. Yes, there are many, many different sign languages, French, German, British, Vietnamese, and I could go on and on…

This is super important so it's worth saying again. In general, family should not be used as Interpreters. They may be used only for momentary on-scene assistance and not for complex legal questions.



Video- DeafBlind Interpreters



Video – DeafBlind Interpreters



Video Relay Service

VRS may be exactly how a Deaf individual contacts 911 or make any other typical call. It is a federally regulated telecommunications Relay Service that places ASL interpreters in between hearing and Deaf callers. Here [point as you go] the Deaf individual on the left places a call on his video phone. It automatically routes through an Interpreter who watches the caller's message then speaks to you on the right. And when you speak, it goes in reverse!

You need no special equipment and there is no charge for VRS calls. If a Deaf individual gives you a phone number, use any phone you have and dial that number. Your call will automatically be routed through VRS and an interpreter will pop up on the Deaf person's videophone or videophone app on their mobile device.

It does have restricted use however. VRS is for telecommunications only. It is not intended to substitute for in-person interpreting.

Important to note, when you receive a call via VRS the Interpreter will introduce themselves and that they are calling on behalf of the Deaf individual. In real time this may sound like a prank call, so don't hang up!



Video Remote Interpreting

VRI enables a Deaf individual who is fluent in ASL, and a hearing individual who is not, to communicate with one another effectively. It essentially "beams an interpreter in" to your setting via video conferencing. It is as easy as having an interpreter join via Zoom or Teams as a

participant, as long as they are pinned and maximized so that they stay onscreen and are large enough to be seen throughout by the Deaf person.

VRI may be useful, but it doesn't lend itself to all situations. It is always best to ask the Deaf individual about their communication preferences. High speed internet on a large, fully adjustable display is necessary for VRI to work, as are excellent sound and lighting on both ends.

This is not a free service; securing this service and payment is the responsibility of the department/service provider.



Visual Tools

In 2018 MCDHH, with feedback from law enforcement and the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community, developed the Visor Card. This visual tool is for quick roadside communication.

The MCDHH Visor Card can be downloaded and printed here:
https://www.mass.gov/doc/massachusetts-visor-card/download



Instructors should hold up a Visor Card and use it as a reference as they present this section.

It's really easy to use, you can ask to see an individual's license and registration, tell them they went through a stop sign, and that you're letting them off with a warning. Fast and easy!



Video- Traffic Stop

Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals may have one of these on their visor and the instructions they get tell them to point BEFORE reaching to show you. If you have one in your patrol car EVEN BETTER! Why? Based on what we've learned about the ADA, you know it's your responsibility to ensure communication not that of the Deaf or Hard of Hearing individual.

The back side offers communication tips and a way to determine the best communication for a longer interaction. And this, this is important! Printed on the card is the 1-800 number for the After-Hours Emergency Referral Service. If you haven't already, you might want to grab the QR code so you can have this tool on your smartphone.



Video – Traffic Stop

This video shows the Visor Card described above and how it should be used.

DFS/EMS Visual Tools

Based on the popularity of the Visor Card with law enforcement and another card, called the "Covid Card" created during the pandemic, MCDHH worked with the Office of Emergency Medical Services and the Department of Fire Services to develop the Emergency Services Card. Like the other visual tools, it is intended for an on the spot, quick interaction, where it is unlikely to obtain full communication access. OEMS has added this to their "Protocols Book" which rides in ambulances across The Commonwealth, and it is available in print and as a pdf download.

The MCDHH Emergency Services Card can be downloaded and printed here:
https://www.mass.gov/doc/emergency-services-card-ma/download

QR Download

You may want to download this resource to your devices.

One of the side benefits of some of the visual tools is that first responders are finding them helpful not just for Deaf and hard of hearing individuals, but for others who may not speak English too.

Hard of Hearing

We will now learn more about Hard of Hearing individuals and some of their typical communication preferences**.** Generally speaking, Hard of Hearing means that there is post lingual hearing loss. In our society this situation is a very stigmatized condition. As such some people may not openly disclose their hearing loss and in some cases, they may not even be aware of it!

The degree of loss, mild to profound, will determine the individual's communicative abilities and use of personal amplification.

While there is a strong correlation between aging and hearing loss, it is by no means exclusive to elders as you'll see in just a minute.

Speech reading, hearing aids and assistive listening devices can all help, but NOTHING restores 'normal' hearing abilities.

Causes of Hearing Loss

Now to interrupt this presentation with a Public Service Announcement…The next few slides might pertain to you someday.

Instructors should download the Decibel App to show for effect during this slide.

How loud is too loud? The NIH states that sounds at or below 70 decibels are generally safe, but long or repeated exposure above 85 Decibels can cause hearing loss. To give you an idea, Sirens from emergency vehicles: 110 to 129 Decibels.[25]

Instructors should use the following to guide this section of the lesson.

Right now, while I am talking [instructors should hold up decibel app] it is [instructors should read off what the app says]. And in what we would consider a silent room [instructors should hold up decibel app and then read off what the app says]. Therefore, going up to 85 decibels is really not that hard!

That is exactly why you see Workplace Exposure at the top of the list. As first responders you may work in environments that expose you to potentially damaging levels of sound. Use hearing protection!

Loud music and ear buds specifically, physical trauma to the head and ear can cause hearing loss. Everyday medications like ibuprofen may have side effects that impact hearing, temporarily, while others like chemotherapy may have a permanent effect.

Genetics is an interesting one. In fact, most people believe that Deaf children are born to Deaf parents, but in actuality, 9 out of 10 Deaf babies are born to hearing adults!

As for aging, well, we are all at risk. At age 60 approximately 30% have hearing loss but by age 70 it is close to 50%!

Sudden Hearing Loss is a condition where a person who is otherwise feeling fine goes to bed hearing and wakes up deaf. If you are on a call where this happens, do encourage the individual to go the ER immediately. If antibiotics are administered in time this may be remedied. If not, the individual will likely remain deaf.

[25] NIDCD. (2020). Do you know how loud is too loud?. *National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders.* Do you know how loud is too loud? | NIDCD (nih.gov)

And of course, there are many cases where we have no idea why a person loses their hearing.



Hearing Aids

Hearing aids are somewhat common for this group and come in all shapes and sizes. They are used to amplify sound. One thing to note if you are relocating a person whom you have noticed is Hard of Hearing, ask (if you don't see them) whether the person has hearing aids and transport those with the individual. Also take batteries chargers. This will make later communications much more effective.

Also recognize that not all Hard of Hearing people will wear their hearing aids all the time and that even with the use of a hearing aid the individual may not understand everything you say.



Assistive Listening Devices

This type of listening device can be extremely helpful for anyone who is Hard of Hearing and does not have hearing aids. It provides about 50 decibels of amplification and can also reduce background noise. These systems are very affordable and are specifically listed as being required by the ADA when their use would accommodate an individual.



Telecommunications

Pictured on the slide are the phones mentioned earlier. These and others like them are available through the State 911 Departments Equipment Distribution Program as well as individual vendors.



Late Deafened

Generally speaking, Late Deafened refers to TOTAL post-lingual hearing loss. At this point, hearing aids and listening devices will no longer be effective; cochlear implants are often the only option, and not everyone wants to undergo, can afford, or is medically eligible for this kind of surgical procedure.

For public spaces, it is important to have closed captioning turned on. Some communities have either enacted or are in the process of enacting ordinances that require captions to be visible at all times. During an emergency, captions can also mean setting up roadside utility signs with messaging about specific hazards and emergencies.



Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART)

Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) is live captioning service via a professional provider, for those who don't know ASL and who also can't be helped with hearing aids. It can be provided both onsite or remotely.

Requests for qualified CART providers can be made through MCDHH. Responsibility for procurement of/payment for these services falls on the Police Department.



Video- Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART)

For interactions with legal consequence like an interview or arrest, and when a person can read English and communicate verbally in return, CART should be a consideration!



Video – CART

This video illustrates how a remote CART provider works in real time to provide a Deaf individual with a transcript of what is being discussed by the Trooper. This video also highlights when this service will be appropriate as well as when this service will not be useful when communicating with the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.



Video- Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR)

For instances that are NOT legal in nature or lengthy something like Automatic Speech Recognition could be helpful. Things like giving directions or stopping into the department to inquire about the town leash law or overnight parking restrictions.



Video – Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR)

This video illustrates how ASR differs from CART. While ASR is a tool that may be useful, it is not 100% reliable given it is machine generated and not nearly as accurate as a human CART provider. As a result of this, ASR cannot be considered a form of reasonable accommodation or be used for critical communication.



Cochlear Implants

Cochlear Implants use external and internal components to send electronic signals stimulating the cochlea nerve bypassing any damage in the inner ear.

It is important to note that just because an individual is using a cochlear implant or other assistive listening device does not mean that they understand everything you say.

Like other devices, if transporting an individual do grab the device and charger.

Many individuals with Cochlear implants cannot have an MRI. Even when the outer component is removed, the inner one remains and that may not be compatible with MRI.

Spotting Hearing Loss

By now you are all pretty good at reading a situation and you've seen lots of behaviors like this:

- Person indicating by pointing to ear
- Shaking head "no" indicating they don't understand
- Showing a confused look or "furrowed brow"
- Nodding "yes" and agreeing to everything – ask questions
- Speaking very loudly
- Remaining silent unexpectedly
- Answering off tangent

In some cases, individuals themselves may not be aware of specific scenarios and environments that may negatively impact their ability to understand, such as not realizing that background noise or poor lighting is affecting their communication.

Video- Communication Tips

Video – Communication Tips

This video discusses difficulties to communication as well as how to best avoid miscommunications with Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals. Jonathan provides communication tips to use when you are communicating with Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals.

Communication Tips

- Face the person when speaking, keep eye contact & communicate with person, not interpreter or acquaintance
- Make sure the area is well lit, but avoid bright light behind you
- Minimize distracting lights, sounds and activity
- Don't cover your mouth
- Minimize the number of people asking questions
- Don't yell or over exaggerate speech

- Watch for mirroring visual cues or “bluffing”. Individuals may understand less than you think and/or misunderstand you.
- Don’t forget to use gestures or visual tools/cues.
- Pass along information as you pass along the individual to another Officer, an EMT, to the Hospital, etc.

Jonathan’s suggestions are simple but powerful and things we can literally implement today on the side of the road, at our police departments, anywhere!



Video- Police Considerations: Left Out of the Conversation



Video – Police Considerations: Left Out of the Conversation



Police Considerations

There is a natural tendency to communicate with the individuals it’s easiest to communicate with! In this case the Deaf individual is left out of the conversation. This would never happen with two hearing individuals, right? How can you be sure you are getting the whole story if you don’t communicate with the Deaf individual too? You should strive to work with them exactly as you would two hearing individuals. In this case, you would likely separate them to get both individuals perspectives, right?

Let’s touch on some other police considerations:

- A flashlight in the eyes makes it difficult to see your face/read lips
- What looks like failure to comply may simply be a case of not hearing or understanding your instructions face-to-face or via loudspeaker.
- If an arrest is necessary, remember the person cannot follow your commands if they cannot see or hear you.
- If an arrest is necessary, hand cuffing in back may eliminate any potential communication. Do you have other safe options?
- How will the individual make a call?
- How will you deliver Miranda?
- Do not use family as interpreters.

These are important reminders when we are working with Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals. For the big questions like how you will provide communication access, you should ask your supervisor to review your department policies and procedures for working with Deaf

and Hard of Hearing individuals and determining when and how to obtain these services. If your department does not have current Policies and Procedures, you can contact MCDHH to request an example policy. And do visit the DOJ links for law enforcement officer FAQs.

Video- Arrest with an Interpreter

Video – Arrest with an Interpreter

Video- Arrest without an Interpreter

Video – Arrest without an Interpreter

In both scenarios this Trooper does an excellent job. When he did not have an Interpreter present, he gestured for what was to come. When there was an interpreter, he made sure to allow them to change positions so the interpreter was in view of the suspect, and he mentioned that communication would begin again once at the station.

Keep in mind that when you arrive on scene the individuals are likely scared, stressed, injured, etc. Struggling with less-than-optimal communication access under these situations may be exhausting.

Video- A Few ASL Signs

Instructors should encourage participants to do the signs they observe as the video plays.

Video – A Few ASL Signs

When an individual is stressed, angry, scared, or hurt a little communication can go a long way to deescalate the situation. Remember, signs are wonderful, but communication through gestures is equally effective.

For instance, how would you communicate “drink”? **[pause for response]** Or “hungry”? **[pause for response]** Or “sick”? **[pause for response]**. EXACTLY! We learned the sign for “stop” **[do the**

sign] in the video, but "Stop" can look like this too **[Hold palm out facing audience].** Don't be afraid to use your body.

If you would like to learn more ASL, there are many resources both locally and online. The following is a pamphlet available for purchase that includes 100 ASL Emergency Signs: **DawnSignPress - Store**



Environmental Alerting Devices

Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals can't just walk into a hardware store and purchase customized emergency alerting devices. It is not helpful to have an audible alarm if you can't hear it. Recognize that the community needs visual and tactile alerting- like ADA compliant strobe lights and bed shakers. These systems can cost upwards of $1,000+ to cover a whole house, so not many persons who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing have these technologies. Alerts could include smoke and carbon monoxide, doorbells, baby crying, video phone calls, etc. In terms of apartments, often times these alerting devices are the responsibility of the property owner or management company/housing authority.

Individuals looking for smoke and Carbon Monoxide alerting may find some limited options are available through the Red Cross of Massachusetts.



Knowledge Check #1



Instructors should pose the following question to the room and encourage participants to call out responses before moving onto the next slide which includes the key takeaway.

How do we determine the best way to communicate?



Knowledge Check #1

ASK! The ADA gives considerable weight to the preferences of the individual when determining the most effective accommodation.



Knowledge Check #2



Instructors should pose the following statements to the room one by one and encourage participants to call out responses (True or False) before sharing the correct answers and key takeaways.

One of our goals was to recall the different communication methods, as well as which are most likely to work for an individual. We have already learned that there is no one size fits all here, so much will depend on the individual you are working with.

Let's start with a simple one.

1. **True or false. For communication purposes a culturally Deaf individual would benefit from a hearing aid that amplifies sound.**



False. This is highly unlikely, if they are Deaf amplifying the sound won't help for communication. However, some Deaf or Hard of Hearing individuals may use devices more for situational awareness (sound) than speech recognition.

2. **True or False. A Hard of Hearing individual won't benefit from an ASL Interpreter for communication.**



True. UNLESS the individual decided to learn ASL when they started to lose their hearing which is relatively uncommon.

3. **True or False. CART is only for Deaf people.**



False. CART is English based transcription, so anyone who reads English may benefit from its use. A Hard of Hearing or late deafened person who can read English and then reply to you verbally would benefit. However, you need to consider 2-way communication. How would a Deaf individual reply?



Knowledge Check #3



Instructors should pose the following question to the room and encourage participants to call out responses before moving onto the next slide which includes key takeaways.

Remember those simple everyday communication tips we can use? Say you arrive on scene to an evening traffic accident and learn that the individual is Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

What simple adjustments can we make to improve communication?



Knowledge Check #3

- Face the person when speaking, keep eye contact & communicate with person, not interpreter or acquaintance

- Make sure the area is well lit, avoid bright light behind you
- Minimize distracting lights, sounds and activity
- Don't cover your mouth, yell or over exaggerate speech
- Minimize the number of people asking questions
- Watch for mirroring visual cues or "bluffing".
- Don't forget to use gestures or visual tools/cues.
- Pass along information as you pass along the individual to another Officer, an EMT, to the Hospital, etc.



Knowledge Check #4



Instructors should pose the following question to the room and encourage participants to call out responses before moving onto the next slide which includes the key takeaways.

How do you obtain an ASL/CDI interpreter or CART?



Knowledge Check #4

Contact MCDHH and request a referral for ASL/CDI interpreter/CART. You can also reach someone after hours during emergencies via 1-800-249-9949.



Knowledge Check #5



Instructors should pose the following question to the room and encourage participants to call out responses before moving onto the next slide which includes the key takeaways.

Identify federal and state laws.



Knowledge Check #5

The federal law we discussed today is the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The state law we discussed earlier today is MGL c 221 § 92A.

It is important that you become familiar with these laws and determine what policies and procedures are in place within your own department.

Resources

Massachusetts 24 Hour Emergency Legal Interpreter Referral call 800-249-9949

MCDHH Request an interpreter/CART Provider: https://www.mass.gov/how-to/request-an-interpreter
DOJ ADA Guide and LEO FAQ: https://www.ada.gov/effective-comm.htm & Commonly Asked Questions About the ADA and Law Enforcement | ADA.gov

MGL Legal Interpreters:
https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartIII/TitleI/Chapter221/Section92A

Disability Indicator Form: Request a Disability Indicator form for Landline, Wireless and VoIP Consumers | Mass.gov

Resources (cont'd)

911 Equipment Distribution Program phones/signalers:
https://www.mass.gov/massachusetts-equipment-distribution-program-massedp

Voice to Text App for Android: Live Transcribe
https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.google.audio.hearing.visualization.accessibility.scribe&hl=en_US; others also exist but there is usually a difference in cost and functionality. Consider multiple language functionality.

Voice to Text App On iPhone: AVA, Otter, other apps under Speech to Text (STT) or automatic speech recognition.

Equipment

Hear it Better – Massachusetts based vendor of assistive equipment for Deaf/Hard of Hearing individuals.

Diglo, formerly Harris Communications, one of the country's largest vendors, based in Minnesota.

Red Cross of Massachusetts – smoke and carbon monoxide alerting.

Assistive equipment can include vibrating and flashing smoke/fire/carbon monoxide alerting devices, doorbells, baby cry alarms, entry sensors and more. They can often prevent dangerous situations from happening in the first place but are very expensive and not generally in the public domain – you have to know they exist to get them.



Q & A

Any questions or experiences to share before we wrap up this section of the course?



Video- Commissioner Thank You

 **Video – Commissioner Thank You**
A thank you from MCDHH Commissioner Opeoluwa Sotonwa.



MCDHH Contacts

Please feel free to contact MCDHH if you have any questions.

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Thank You to Our Contributors

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Trooper Adam Simeone
Lieutenant Matt Simpson
*Many individuals who have shared experiences and provided feedback.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

OBJECTIVE #3: Review the best practices and available resources when communicating with victims of human trafficking.



Victim Centered Approach

When working with victims of human trafficking it is important to use a victim centered approach. Equal value must be placed on the identification and stabilization of survivors, the investigation, as well as the prosecution of the traffickers. Survivors need to feel stable, safe, and secure.



Understanding Vulnerabilities

Trafficked persons may be reluctant to report or seek services because they:

- Do not know or understand that they are being exploited, or "trafficked"
- Threatened that if they tell anyone, they or their families will be hurt
- Have complex relationships with their traffickers that involve deep levels of psychological conditioning based on fear or misplaced feelings of love

Trafficked persons may be reluctant to report or seek services because they:

- Are addicted to drugs
- Unfamiliar with their surroundings and do not know whom to trust
- Fear law enforcement and other authorities
- Fear retribution and forcible removal or deportation
- Do not know help exists, how to access it, or where to go for it



Understanding Vulnerabilities (con.)

Some common characteristics that increase the likelihood of being victimized by labor trafficking:

- Substance use disorder
- Debt
- Immigration/documentation status
- Lack of employment opportunities / socioeconomic circumstance
- Language barriers
- Past abuse



Immigration Concerns

Immigration concerns

- Increased fear of immigration enforcement
- Increased vulnerability for labor trafficking victims

What can be done?

- Make referrals to immigration legal services early in the process
- Understand potential eligibility for U and T visas



T Visas

T visas

In order to be eligible for T nonimmigrant status, each applicant must demonstrate that she or he:

- Is or has been a victim of a severe form of trafficking in persons;
- Is physically present in the U.S. on account of human trafficking;
- Has complied with any reasonable request for assistance in the investigation or prosecution of acts of trafficking in persons and
- would suffer extreme hardship involving unusual and severe harm if removed from the U.S.



U Visas

U visas

In order to prove eligibility, each applicant must demonstrate:

- He or she is or has been a victim of a qualifying violent crime;
- He or she has suffered substantial physical or mental abuse related to the crime;
- He or she possesses information about criminal activity;
- The criminal activity occurred in the U.S. or territories or otherwise violated U.S. law
- He or she has been, is being, or is likely to be helpful in the investigation or prosecution of criminal activity



General Law c. 258F

G.L. c. 258F

The Certification for Victims of Violent Crime and Human Trafficking Law requires:

- ✓ Adoption of a policy by a certifying agency for the completion and signing of U and T visa requests
- ✓ A response within ninety (90) days of receipt of a certification request
- ✓ Annual reporting to the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS)



How to Communicate & Maintain Relationships with Victims

How to communicate and maintain relationships with human trafficking victims/survivors, giving particular attention to survivors expressing themselves:

- Communicating with survivors in their primary or preferred language by use of an interpreter when in person or during phone calls. Use language translation apps when texting.
- Reliable communication: when you say you are going to do something or that you are going to call or text a survivor make sure you follow through.
- Provide culturally appropriate referrals and resources available to survivors in their community or surrounding area- this allows for survivors to feel supported within their communities.
- Listen and provide opportunities for survivors to be heard/communicate their feelings/thoughts.
- Validate concerns or thoughts of a survivor and inform them how you can help.
- Make sure victims know that their physical and emotional safety is important - ask victims what we can do to help them feel safe.
- Be transparent about the criminal justice or investigatory process to the extent information can be shared.
- Conduct meetings or interviews in a space where survivors/victims feel comfortable and safe.
- Survivors may have concerns about their immigration status or feel that they are in trouble when confronted or communicating with law enforcement. This can prevent survivors from sharing information about their victimization. It is important to let survivors/victims know that they are not in trouble or targets of an investigation (when possible).
- Inform victims/survivors who may be embarrassed to talk about their victimization that they can talk freely and that we do this work, and we are not passing judgement.



Working with Victims/Survivors

Interacting with potential survivor

- Pay attention to location
- Interview survivor by themselves or away from potential trafficker/trafficking situation
- Be up front about your role and limits (confidentiality) and do not make promises
- Ask if survivor feels comfortable being interviewed with someone of the same gender
- Understand that trust might take time
- Be careful when engaging about immigration status
- Use interpreter if necessary but do not allow a party to interpret who is associated with the employer/trafficker
- Understand that employee may feel allegiances to the employer or fear the employer/trafficker
- Make appropriate referrals



Trauma

Consider whether to conduct multiple interviews if survivor cannot recount details, but understand if survivor does not want to recount the incident multiple times or in detail.

- Trauma can affect the amount of details (dates, etc.) that the survivor can recount
- Survivor may need access to mental health professional **first.**
- Survivor may also seek to avoid you or other reminders of the incident due to trauma.



Victim Reactions

It is important to recognize that when you begin working with survivors they may:

- Fear law enforcement because they may think they are in trouble, or they do not have legal status in the US
- Not identify themselves as a victim
- Not tell a complete story or use rehearsed responses
- Identify with the trafficker



Victim Support

Although it may be frustrating when trying to work with these reactions, it is crucial to understand that this behavior is a direct result of the **level of control traffickers hold over survivors**. Therefore, victims need constant support, reassurance, and acknowledgement of their fears.

Immediately connecting them with a Victim Advocate or Service Provider to assist with whatever their most basic needs are, including immigration concerns is crucial to gaining trust.

- Be patient and provide people with the space they need to process what is happening while they try to regain control of their life.



Multi-Disciplinary Teams

The **MDT** approach promotes well-coordinated investigations that benefit from the input and attention of many different disciplines—especially law enforcement, prosecution, and victim services—to ensure a successful conclusion to the investigation and to minimize additional trauma to the victim.

- Trauma informed, victim-centered approach
- Coordinated investigation; different disciplines
- Law Enforcement, prosecution, victim services
- Goal→ streamline efforts; minimize trauma
- Continued contact with the team is important.
- Continued contact with the victim by Victim Witness Advocate.
- Services: Needs may evolve during pendency of case.
- Victim's residence may change frequently. Common for victims to run in times of stress—which can include repeated interviews, witness prep, court dates, trial.



Resources in MA

Volunteers in Medicine
777 Main Street, Suite 4
Great Barrington, MA 01230
199 South Street
Pittsfield, MA 01201
https://www.vimberkshires.org/

Provides free, comprehensive, high-quality health care, free of judgment, for patients in the region who are income-qualified and ineligible for health insurance. VIM provides primary care, dentistry, women's health, optometry, behavioral therapy, and more, all under one roof. VIM also collaborates with community partners such as schools, local government, and housing agencies to address non-medical factors that contribute to good health, including food security, safe housing, employment, and childcare.

ROCA SPRINGFIELD
29 School Street
Springfield, MA 01105

Phone: 413- 846-4301
Fax: 413-739-3336
springfield@rocainc.com

Serving young men and young moms from Springfield, West Springfield, Holyoke, and Chicopee.

Health Imperatives
942 West Chestnut Street
Brockton, MA 02301
Phone: 508-583-3005
24/7 hotline: 508-588-TALK
info@healthimperatives.org
https://healthimperatives.org/services-for-survivors-of-human-trafficking/

Services include one-on-one counseling, emergency shelter, and advocacy.

Amirah
Phone for questions re residential program: 781-462-1758
Drop in non-residential phone :781-346-9342 (open Mon-Wed)
http://amirahinc.org

- Exit and aftercare services for women exiting commercial sex trade.
- Residential Program, providing long term and trauma informed care.
- Non-Residential community resource center in Lynn, MA provides services to HT victims or those at risk.

The Center for Hope and Healing
Lowell, MA
Phone: 978-452-7721
24/7 helpline: 800-542-5212
https://chhinc.org/

- Services for men who have histories of unwanted or abusive sexual experiences (24/7 online helpline, weekly online support groups)
- Individual counseling
- Medical and legal advocacy
- Refugees, Immigrants and LGBTQIA +
- Serve English, Khmer, Portuguese, and Spanish speakers

Family and Community Resources
18 Newton Street
Brockton, MA 02301
24/7 crisis line: 508-583-6498
https://www.fcr-ma.org/tap

Services include:

- Serving Plymouth County, MA
- Multilingual advocates
- Assistance with shelter and safe placement
- Case management & referrals
- Individual support
- Services are for survivors 18+

St. Anthony's Shrine- Women's Clinic
100 Arch Street Boston, MA
Phone: 617-542-6440
Website: https://stanthonyshrine.org/womens-clinic/

Services include:

- Support, housing and mental health referrals, ability to shower, food/grocery assistance + food pantry, provide clothing, medical care & reproductive health exam/care, emergency hotel stays.
- Assist women who are exploited, homeless, have substance abuse disorder or mental health diagnosis.

RIA House, Inc (Ready, Act, Inspire)
330 Cochituate Road #1784, Framingham, MA 01701
Offices located in MetroWest & Central MA
Phone:774-245-9153
Hours 9-5pm Monday-Friday
https://readyinspireact.org/for-participants/

Provide in-person and virtual survivor professional mentorship, clinical therapy, case management, groups, financial assistance, and accompaniment across the state.

Ascentria Care Alliance
11 Shattuck Street Worcester, MA 01605
Phone: 774-243-3100

Hours-8am-5pm
https://www.ascentria.org/

Services include:

- Legal assistance program providing free and low-cost legal services to immigrants in MA.
- Multi-cultural and multi-lingual representation that covers spectrum from undocumented to U.S. citizenship.
- Represent survivors of human trafficking, domestic violence, child abuse, torture, and violent crimes.
- Legal services include removal defense, asylum, unaccompanied minors, DACA, members of the LGBTQI+ community, family-based petitions, waivers, consular processing, and citizenship.

YW Western MA
Phone: 413-732-3121
24/7 sexual assault hotline: 413-733-7100
https://www.ywworks.org/who-we-are/programs/

The YW serves individuals and families in the region through programs offered from several sites, including locations in Holyoke, Northampton, Springfield, and Westfield. Provides services to human trafficking victims & youth at risk for sex trafficking, these services include:

- Housing assistance
- Economic empowerment
- Medical advocacy
- Counseling
- Court advocacy



Contacts for Human Trafficking Victims

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Sara Roper
Director of Operations for Roca Springfield & Roca Hartford
Sara_Roper@rocainc.com



Attorney General's Office Resource

Jennifer Snook, Chief of the Human Trafficking Division. Jennifer.l.snook@mass.gov

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