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### **Handouts**

**None**

### **Key Questions**

- **How is this different from the way I have been shopping (e.g., with family, on my own without complete information)?**
- **How do I know what is appropriate and when, under what circumstances (e.g., at the check-out counter)?**
- **How can I trust the SSP if they know my ATM password?**
- **How often and how long will it take me to complete the shopping task with the SSP?**
- **How will I know what other people think of me using an SSP when I can't see their body language or facial expressions, and what will I do with that information?**

### **Follow-Up Activities**

#### **Independent Assignments or Homework**

**Keep practicing and review on how to establish**

your own routine.

## **Evaluation of Student/Participant Achievement**

### **Participation**

### **Other Considerations**

- 1. Some host establishments may have unreasonable fears or concerns about hosting a training for several deaf-blind people (e.g., concerns of liability). Contacting the management ahead of time and assuring them of safety concerns is usually all that is needed. Let them know who the “go-to person” is if they have any later questions. (See above.)**
- 2. DB trainees may have set routines for shopping given the typical lack of communication without this SSP service. As a result, they may know this store, but they may not have a good idea of all that is available (e.g., range of brands, range of size of packages, novelty items, etc.)**
- 3. Poverty of many deaf-blind people (due to unemployment or underemployment). This is a consideration in choice of establishment for practice shopping.**

## **1.6 DB Module One**

### **Lesson Six: Lab: Restaurant**

All instructors are themselves deaf-blind.

#### **Lesson Overview**

Experience using SSP service in a different venue (restaurant).

*This lesson focuses on skill and attitude.*

**Goals: To build fluency in using SSPs**

- Enhance understanding of the role of SSP through a different practical experience
- Experience independence by making decisions without interference
- Motivate people to use SSPs correctly
- Build skill at communication with SSPs

#### **Activities**

Location depends on geographic area and transportation. All trainees (deaf-blind and SSPs) meet at the front of the restaurant.

##### **1. Pre-Lab Information**

Instructor informs the students prior to

beginning the exercise that interpreters will not be used during the lab. DB trainees will work exclusively with SSP trainees. It is thus important that the instructor provides full details before beginning.

This information includes the type of restaurant and how payment will be handled.

**Objectives:**

- Preview the lesson so participants have a clear understanding of the activity and
- Provide an opportunity for participants to ask questions or express concerns.

**2. Getting seated**

Set up teams of three: DB trainee with two SSP trainees. SSPs will rotate throughout the lab.

**Negotiating:** The deaf-blind trainee and SSP trainee negotiate where to sit so that each is comfortable and can communicate comfortably. Factors to consider include lighting, glare, and distance/positioning from one another.

**3. Ordering**

The DB trainee will decide what to do with the menu (ask for Braille or have SSP read or read

on their own). DB trainee lets the SSP know what assistance is needed (e.g., pointing to particular parts of the menu, reading the small print under some of the items).

**Preparation before placing the order:**

- DB trainee lets the SSP know how she will order (e.g., pointing to the menu) and what assistance is needed (e.g., help finding the specific food on the menu to point it out to the waiter/waitress, relaying the order) and whether there are questions.

The SSP trainee will notify the DB trainee if waitress/waiter arrives. Even though she is not ready to order, she may have some questions.

**Objectives:**

- Reinforce the role of SSP for all participants
- Reinforce boundaries

#### **4. Waiting**

DB trainee may use the time waiting for the food to get to know the SSP better by chatting about safe topics or may want to know more about the restaurant itself, its ambiance, other people there, and so on. They will work together to negotiate this conversation/description.

If there is a group at the table, the SSP may facilitate communication by repeating what others say, or if the deaf-blind person is partially sighted, they will all remember to keep everyone involved by turn-taking appropriately (i.e., signally a change of turn, whose turn is next) and signing in a clear way (e.g., in a small signing space).

Instructors both model this process with their own SSPs and observe trainees.

### Objectives:

- Become familiar with the technique of directing the reading of a menu, starting with an overview then going to what is interesting (does the deaf-blind trainee want to hear about the 15 kinds of hamburger or just the ones with sauce, only vegetarian meals, only fish?) and including other techniques, such as asking about the special of the day
- Establish the habit of expressing needs and preferences (such as where to sit) while getting more information with which to make a decision (two-way conversations)
- Establish rapport with SSPs in a comfortable environment

- **Become comfortable asking for and receiving visual information**
- **Practice making decisions independently**
- **Learn to participate fully**
- **Become empowered while being stimulated with information**

### **5. Discussion/Report**

**Trainees will meet the instructor at the conclusion of the meeting to report on what they have learned.**

**Objectives:**

- **Synthesize, share, and reinforce learning**

### **6. Paying the Bill and Departing**

**The deaf-blind trainees pay for their meal using their preferred method (cash, check, or card), learning from the SSP's visual information whether to pay at the table or counter.**

**Trainee may ask for a guide to bus, taxi, or a specific place, etc.**

**Objective:**

- **Follow through on self-reliance, clear communication, and other skills**

## **Lesson Preparation**

### **Instructor Preparation**

Contact the restaurant manager in advance, explain the purpose, and get the name of a back-up person's contact information in case any issues arise during that day. It is recommended that the DB trainer and interpreter greet/meet the manager personally on the day of training as it provides clear understanding and a positive model for the manager to see and understand the purpose of this activity taking place at his/her store.

### **Student Preparation**

None

### **List of Materials**

- a. Bus fare tickets, if planning to use bus to the restaurant from training center

### **Handouts**

None

## **Key Questions**

- If I bring an SSP to a restaurant with me



and family members or friends, how would that work?

- If I ask an SSP to go to a restaurant with me, who pays for the SSP's meal?
- Would it be possible to work out a communication system with the wait staff so I could come another time alone (without an SSP)?

## **Follow-Up Activities**

### **Independent Assignments or Homework**

Keep practicing and review on how to establish your own routine.

### **Evaluation of Student/Participant Achievement**

Participation, specifically assertiveness.

### **Other Considerations**

1. Some host establishments may have unreasonable fears or concerns about hosting a training for several deaf-blind people due to liability issues. Contacting the management ahead of time and assuring them of safety concerns is usually all that is needed, and let them know who is the “go-to person” if they have any later

**questions. (See above.)**

- 2. DB trainees may have specific dietary needs (e.g., allergies).**

## **1.7 DB Module One**

### **Lesson Seven: Review and Preparation for Internship**

All instructors are themselves deaf-blind.

#### **Lesson Overview**

**Review and Preparation for Internship**

*This lesson focuses on knowledge.*

**Goals: To prepare for internship**

- Reinforce skills learned during this unit
- Offer closure for this module
- Provide details concerning the up-coming internship

#### **Activities**

##### **1. Review**

**Instructors ask what questions trainees have.**

**After answering questions, instructors ask trainees what they remember most from the training, emphasizing key points:**

- Deaf-blind people have their own culture,

**which is much more tactile (just as deaf people sign much more than hearing people use gestures, so, too, do DB people touch a lot more than sighted-hearing people)**

- **SSPs have a code of ethics**
- **DB people make the decisions**

**Objectives:**

- **Reinforce the role of SSP for all participants**
- **Reinforce boundaries**

## **2. Overview**

**Instructors give an overview of the coming internship (some of this is review from the earlier sessions).**

- **Deaf-blind trainees and SSP trainees will be matched by the coordinator (who is introduced if she is not known to them)**
- **DB trainees and SSP trainees will be scheduled through the coordinator at the beginning, but if it is comfortable to both, it can be changed**

**Objectives:**

- **Make expectations clear**
- **Provide an opportunity for reflection on**

**what has been learned in a classroom or structured setting and how this can be applied to one's life**

- **Provide an opportunity for questions**

### **3. Evaluations**

**Instructors will stay in touch with the coordinator to make sure all is going well.**

**Instructors will stay in touch with trainees to make sure all is going well.**

**Trainees should take all problems to the SSP coordinator.**

**There will be a closing session to debrief at the end of the internship.**

**Objectives:**

- **On-going improvement of training**

### **4. Policies**

**Instructor hands out a copy of agency policies and reviews them with participants to make sure they are clear and understood.**

**Objectives:**

- **Provide transition**

- Reinforce boundaries and roles of agency personnel
- Provide information as to structure and practice.

## **5. Review and Synthesis**

Instructors check in to see if there are any concerns.

## **Lesson Preparation**

### **Instructor Preparation**

Work with SSP coordinator to make match-ups.

Work with coordinator to do follow up.

### **Student Preparation**

None

### **List of Materials**

None

### **Handouts**

SSP Policies

## **Key Questions**

- What do I expect to get out of this internship?
- What are the qualities I most want in an SSP (e.g., friendly attitude, reliability)?
- What if the SSP is not available when I want one?
- What if there is a problem?
- What if I decide I don't want to use an SSP after all?
- What are my concerns?

## **Follow-Up Activities**

### **Independent Assignments or Homework**

Use of SSPs.

### **Evaluation of Student/Participant Achievement**

Participation, specifically assertiveness.

### **Other Considerations**

1. Trainees will need close follow-up. Some will feel shy about using SSPs and simply not make appointments. Some will want to use the SSP as an interpreter or friend instead of SSP and need reminders/

**guidance. Some will take advantage of SSPs (e.g., refuse to pay for gas) and so on. It's a learning process.**



## **1.8 DB Module One**

### **Lesson Eight: Exit Interview and Reception**

**All instructors are themselves deaf-blind.**

#### **Lesson Overview**

**This lesson is to add fluency to all skills, provide closure to the module, and transition to the next module. Members of both classes, the SSP track and DB track, are participants, as well as any community members (deaf-blind people, SSPs, interpreters, etc.) the instructor or class members wish to invite. Additionally, to synthesize the experience of the internship and initiate bridge building with other service providers and communities , and develop a network.**

***This lesson focuses on knowledge and attitude.***

**Goals: To synthesize internship experiences and look to the future**

- **Reinforce skills learned during internship**
- **Celebrate**
- **Broaden the network available to both deaf-blind people and the service providers who work with them**

## **Activities**

### **1. Exit Interview**

**Although instructors have been in touch with trainees throughout the internship, this is an opportunity for a ‘big picture’ discussion.**

**Trainees are asked to describe their experiences and share with one another. Instructors are looking primarily for ways to improve future training and the system by which service is offered.**

#### **Objectives:**

- **Transition**
- **Celebrate**

### **2. Transition**

**Instructors thank trainees for their participation thus far and describe the SSP service available going forward and correct any misunderstandings the trainees might have.**

**The instructor describes the planned reception to follow (who will attend and why they are invited to participate). She explains the interpreting arrangements.**

**Objectives:**

- **Transition**
- **Celebrate**

**3. Community Reception**

**The reception is for the community: other deaf-blind people, deaf people in the community, other SSPs, interpreters, and other service providers, such as VR counselors and job-placement specialists. It is scheduled during the day when agency people can attend on work time.**

**The instructors and agency director greet people as they come in, welcoming them to read the materials offered and meet with others in the room.**

**The Program. The program begins roughly 20 minutes after the doors open.**

**Instructors, the SSP coordinator, and trainees are introduced. The agency director explains the agency itself and the programs offered and profiles several successful deaf-blind people. At the conclusion, she emphasizes the importance of SSP services to deaf-blind people for their independence and ability to**

**maintain a healthy work life. She invites others to work together to support deaf-blind people in collaboration.**

**After the 15-minute presentation, the director takes questions and then invites people to enjoy refreshments and meeting one another.**

**Objectives:**

- **Celebrate**
- **Broaden the contacts between and among deaf-blind people and service providers**

### **Lesson Preparation**

#### **Instructor Preparation**

**Work with interpreter/SSP coordinator to make match-ups**

**Recruit local interpreters who have not yet worked with deaf-blind people to come and learn more**

**Send out invitations to the reception, order food, etc.**

#### **Student Preparation**

**Reflect on experience in the program**

## **List of Materials**

- a. Brochures on the agency
- b. Brochures on the program
- c. Refreshments

## **Handouts**

See materials

## **Key Questions**

- What did I get out of this internship?
- How can I use SSPs in my daily life to make the quality of my life better?
- What other ways can I enlarge my network?

## **Follow-Up Activities**

### **Independent Assignments or Homework**

Use of SSPs.

### **Evaluation of Student/Participant Achievement**

Participation

### **Other Considerations**

1. There is often a conflict in trying to choose the best time for the reception. Deaf-blind

**people and interpreters may be working during the day and unable to take time off without losing pay. On the other hand, professionals such as VR counselors and job placement specialists will consider attending this reception to be work and thus want it to be during their paid work time (day hours). The agency sponsoring the event will have to determine priorities (and resources, for example to reimburse deaf-blind people for time off work).**

## **Module Two**

### **DB Advanced Beginner: Overview**

#### **Description**

**Module Two is advanced beginner level training. It provides a deeper look at using SSPs. The emphasis is on communicating the visual information (and types of visual and tactual information) wanted to the SSP. This communication to the SSP requires both communication skill (linguistic) and assertiveness. The person completing this training is aware of ways to use SSP service beyond the accomplishment of simple tasks and errands.**

**Examples of post-Module Two uses of an SSP include: exploring the possibilities and benefits of using a new gym or recreational center, looking for a new apartment, or taking part in a community street fair. Here the deaf-blind person would be able to effectively gather the pre-assignment information about possibilities and explain the requisite background information to an SSP as to what is desired.**

## **Prerequisites for Trainees**

**Trainees should**

- **Be experienced in using SSPs and**
- **Be comfortable using touch (in public) for information.**

## **Instructor Qualifications**

**Instructors for this module should be a team of one (or more) deaf-blind instructor(s) who knows about and uses SSPs, and one experienced SSP. Instructors should have teaching skills, be active and respected members of the deaf-blind community and have attended at least one AADB conference and preferably other statewide events as well.**

**The instructional team should be able to communicate effectively with all trainees whether directly or through an interpreter.<sup>1</sup> The instructor(s) should have a working understanding of the theory of visual information such as distinctions between information that is useful/interesting, between being passive or active, and comfort in the role of “employer” (i.e., assertively giving direction to SSPs).**

**If there are no qualified deaf-blind instructors**



available, then it is even more important that the non-DB teacher have the respect of local deaf-blind community members. This instructor should make sure to host panels of deaf-blind people, show quality video material, invite deaf-blind guest speakers to the class, and otherwise endeavor to have the deaf-blind perspective well represented.

### **Module Objectives**

**At the successful completion of this module, trainee deaf-blind participants will be able to:**

- **Gather information through the Internet or other sources with which to plan outings.**
- **Clearly communicate the goals of the assignment to the SSP.**
- **Assertively request specific or additional visual information from an SSP.**
- **Effectively combine the use of visual information received through the SSP with tactual information gained through touch.**

**At the successful completion of this module, trainee deaf-blind participants will know the following principles of the role:**

- a. **The value of negotiating with SSPs to achieve the maximum benefit of the work.**

- b. The value of assertiveness and self-knowledge.**

## **Footnote**

- <sup>1</sup> We are speaking here of the communication skill (beyond language) to quickly recognize the best approach to meet the trainee “where he is at” linguistically, culturally, educationally, and experientially to explain the concepts in this lesson. It is expected that deaf-blind trainees will vary greatly in such background.

## **2.1 DB Module Two**

### **Lesson One: Analyzing Touch and Vision**

**Instructor(s) is/are themselves deaf-blind.**

#### **Lesson Overview**

**Using touch, remaining vision, and visual memory to better understand the environment.**

***This lesson focuses on skill and attitude.***

**Goal: Participants re-analyze and adjust their use of information resources.**

### **Activities**

#### **1. Instructor leads a discussion of the topic, access to information.**

**Instructors lead a discussion about how participants use vision and touch and how the two work together.**

**Instructors draw out how one sense enhances the understanding gained from the other. For deaf-blind people not yet using tactile sign language, instructors encourage them to try using “hands-on” together with their vision.<sup>1</sup>**

**Objectives:**

- Provide orientation and preview
- Share strategies
- Validate the use of touch

**2. Instructors transition into a discussion of the topic using touch while using SSPs to provide visual information.**

**This is a specific strategy: using visual information (not only from oneself but through the SSP) together with touch.**

**Objectives:**

- Practice touch to understand language (tactile signing)
- Use residual vision to look at what is being described
- Practice touch to explore what has been described
- Use visual memories to understand

**Instructors provide several items of interest such as tapestry sculpture (figures made in bas relief of a soft material such as cotton) with bright, contrasting colors.**

**Interpreter/SSPs can both identify them visually**

and then show them tactually. Participants are encouraged to share favorite things to touch (as well as material or textures not liked).

Food is another interesting material. Oatmeal with raisins and walnuts, for example, provides smell, taste, and texture to be felt with the mouth. Other foods such as artisan bread or hard-boiled eggs can be eaten with the hands and provide a tactile as well as visual and gustatory experience. Participants are encouraged to share favorite approaches to making food more interesting.

### Exercise:

Instructor invites participants to use vision and visual description (from SSPs) along with touch to explore some interesting objects, for example:

- textiles with upraised symbols or forms
- solid art objects with a tactile element
- fruit, vegetables

### 3. Instructors lead a discussion about asking SSPs for more visual information.

Instructors identifies different kinds of information:

- **useful (e.g., that some items are for sale, the price of objects)**
- **interesting (e.g., new styles, what people are doing)**
- **aesthetic (e.g., velvet, hand lotion)**

**The instructor suggests ways that deaf-blind people can use SSPs for more than just shopping, such as to visit interesting places. A specific strategy of using SSPs for visual information (together with touch) is to explore interesting places, for example:**

- **Folklife festivals**
- **Farmers' markets**
- **Hardware stores**

**Objectives:**

- **Stimulate curiosity**
- **Reinforce the use of touch as valid, accepted, valuable**
- **Build a common but more complex, nuanced understanding of the role of SSP**

## **Lesson Preparation**

### **Instructor Preparation**

Gather materials

### **Student Preparation**

Reflect on past experiences with SSPs

### **List of Materials**

- a. Objects that are interesting and can be touched

### **Handouts**

None

## **Key Questions**

- What are my choices regarding the use of my available resources?
- What makes a good SSP?

## **Follow-Up Activities**

### **Independent Assignments or Homework**

Apply what is learned to the next exercise



## **Evaluation of Trainee Achievement**

### **Participation**

### **Other Considerations**

- 1. There is a very limited amount of money available for formal, paid SSP hours and thus a paradox of encouraging more use when the funds might not be available. Encourage deaf-blind trainees to think of ways they can work together to approach their legislators for regular funding for SSPs. Deaf-blind people in a few states have been successful; others can be, too.**
- 2. Another consideration is establishing a tactile sign language small group class (again, with deaf-blind instructors). This has been done with no SSPs or interpreters, using creative techniques in an emotionally safe environment.**

## **Footnote**

- <sup>1</sup> Interpreters should be arranged for all participants so that enough are there if/when the people with tunnel vision or partial vision decide to use interpreters tactually (or close-vision) in addition to using their vision.**

## **2.2 DB Module Two**

### **Lesson Two: Lab: The Environment**

**All instructors are themselves deaf-blind.**

#### **Lesson Overview**

**Experience using an SSP in a new application of the service (learning about the environment)**

***This lesson focuses on skill and attitude.***

**Goals: To build fluency in using SSPs**

- **Enhance understanding of the role of SSP through practical experience**
- **Promote the more effective use of SSPs**
- **Build skill at communication with SSPs**

#### **Activities**

**Location depends on geographic area and transportation. All trainees (deaf-blind and SSPs) meet before the exercise begins.**

##### **1. Pre-Lab Information**

**Instructor informs the trainees prior to beginning the exercise. Interpreters will not be used during the lab, so it is important to make**

**sure expectations (the plan) is clear before interpreters step back and SSPs begin working.**

**DB trainees will work with advanced SSP trainees in teams of three: one DB trainee with two SSP trainees. SSPs will rotate throughout the lab to provide variety. The goal for the DB trainee is to have a sense of the environment, its structure, atmosphere, and its unique attributes through use of remaining vision/hearing but more importantly through touch and information from the SSP.**

**Instructors will give DB trainees an overview of the space: “You are in the downtown public library, which has three floors. What is particularly interesting in this building is the architecture and arrangement of various spaces.” The instructor then asks SSPs to give an overview of the space (a general sense of it: modern, classic, spacious, rich, and textured) and then asks the DB trainees to think how they can best get a sense of the overall space and particular points of interest and to direct the SSPs accordingly.**

**Instructors observe and provide tips and feedback to both DB trainees and SSP students.**

## **2. The Exercise**

Instructors have chosen a site that is interesting either because there is interesting architecture, design, or interior decorations. There should also be a tactile element to the site that deaf-blind trainees can experience tactually.

### **Negotiation**

DB trainee and SSP work together on how to explore the space. The deaf-blind trainee decides with information from the SSP, based on the site, the time allotted and the logistics of exploring the building.

#### **Objectives:**

- **Become familiar with the technique of receiving interesting as well as useful information from an SSP**
- **To establish mutual cues so that the deaf-blind person has clear signals as to the value of the information.**

## **3. Discussion/Report**

Trainees will meet the instructor at a designated place and report on what they have learned.

### **Objectives:**

- **Provide an opportunity for self-reflection.**
- **Reinforce learning.**
- **Provide an opportunity for feedback and correction.**

### **4. Exercise Part II**

**Trainees have a mini-feedback session with their SSP in terms of which techniques are effective, which cues are unclear, etc.**

**Trainees are instructed to browse a particular area (in depth).**

### **Objectives:**

- **Develop skills at using vision, touch, and memory to establish a sense of place**
- **Enjoy the experience**
- **Practice screening visual/auditory information (to avoid over-stimulation) and focus**
- **Gain the sense of responsibility to negotiate understanding**

## **Lesson Preparation**

### **Instructor Preparation**

Contact the location manager in advance, explain the purpose, and get the name of a back-up person's contact information in case any issues arise during that day. It is recommended that the DB trainer make a request to touch any art objects or architectural features that might otherwise be off limits.

### **Student Preparation**

None

### **List of Materials**

- a. Ideal to have map of the site for SSPs to review before the exercise

### **Handouts**

None

## **Key Questions**

- Was this a positive experience? Why or why not?
- What would have made it better?
- Can I really direct the SSP to what I want to

know about, or elicit enough information to know what to ask?

## **Follow-Up Activities**

### **Independent Assignments or Homework**

Thought question: If the exercise were “people watching,” how would this be different from architecture or art?

### **Evaluation of Student/Participant Achievement**

Participation.

### **Other Considerations**

1. This may bring up a sense of loss for things the deaf-blind person is unable to see for him or herself. It might be frustrating if the SSPs are not sufficiently skilled.
2. If it is an artistic building, steps may be atypical and thus difficult to navigate.
3. There is a trade-off to be considered for this exercise. Using highly skilled SSPs will provide a more effective lesson for the deaf-blind trainees. On the other hand, using SSPs in training saves instructors’



**planning time. It may be best, if possible, to do both. Have SSP trainees practice but with supervision (one on one) by highly skilled SSPs who can step in and model as well as minimize frustration on the part of the deaf-blind trainees.**

## **2.3 DB Module Two**

### **Lesson Three: Lab: People Watching**

All instructors are themselves deaf-blind.

#### **Lesson Overview**

Experience using an SSP in a new application of the service (people watching)

*This lesson focuses on skill.*

**Goals: To build fluency in using SSPs**

- Enhance understanding of the role of SSP through practical experience of this enhanced value
- Promote more effective use of SSPs
- Build skill at communication with SSPs

#### **Activities**

Location depends on geographic area and transportation. All trainees (deaf-blind and SSPs) meet before the exercise begins.

##### **1. Pre-Lab Information**

DB trainees will work with advanced SSP trainees (fluent signers). Instructors talk about

special signals in TASL, such as feedback (back-channeling) that one understands, or does not understand what is being said. She will ask if any of the participants have other signals they use to communicate tactually that they'd like to share. Any abbreviations or signs they have invented should be shared.

**Objectives:**

- Preview for orientation.
- Opportunity for sharing (which also builds a sense of community).

Set up teams of three: DB trainee with two SSP trainees. SSPs will rotate throughout the lab. The goal is to have a sense of the people in the environment, their “type,” style, and behaviors.

Instructors observe and provide tips and feedback to both DB trainees and SSP students.

**2. The Exercise**

Instructors have chosen a site that is interesting for people watching, e.g. a local park, a shopping mall, etc.

**Negotiation**

DB trainee and SSP work together on how to

observe. What is most interesting to the deaf-blind trainee (children/teenagers, actions/clothes). The SSP exercises judgment based on the feedback from the deaf-blind trainee, the people present, and the time allotted.

### **Objectives:**

- **Become familiar with the technique of receiving interesting as well as useful information from an SSP**
- **Establish mutual cues to make conveying such information more efficient**

### **3. Discussion/Report**

Trainees will meet the instructor and one another at a designated place and report on what they have learned, to de-brief and exchange ideas.

### **Objectives:**

- **Provide an opportunity for self-reflection.**
- **Reinforce learning.**
- **Provide an opportunity for feedback and correction.**

### **4. Exercise Part II**

Trainees have a mini-feedback session with

their SSP in terms of which techniques are effective, which cues are unclear, etc. They watch again for a short period of time.

**Objectives:**

- Establish a sense of place through “people watching”
- Experiment with cues
- Enjoy the experience
- Practice screening visual/auditory information (to avoid overstimulation) and focus
- To gain the sense of authority to negotiate understanding

**Lesson Preparation**

**Instructor Preparation**

None

**Student Preparation**

None

**List of Materials**

- a. Ideal to have places to sit comfortably from which to observe

### Handouts

None

### Key Questions

- Was this a positive experience? Why or why not?
- What would have made it better?
- What's my limit for listening to description? How do I find and set my filter and share this with another (the SSP)?
- How, when, and in what way is touch most useful? How is it best for me to use touch with verbal description?
- How can we develop TASL to really use the modality of touch?

### Follow-Up Activities

#### Independent Assignments or Homework

Thought question: What kinds of instructions are most useful to SSPs? How can I improve communication with SSPs to get more of the kind of information and experiences I want?

## **Evaluation of Student/Participant Achievement**

**Participation.**

### **Other Considerations**

- 1. This may bring up a sense of loss for things the deaf-blind person is unable to see for him or herself. It might be frustrating if the SSPs are not sufficiently skilled.**
- 2. If it is an artistic building, steps may be atypical and thus difficult to navigate.**

## **2.4 DB Module Two**

### **Lesson Four: Communication**

**Instructor(s) is/are themselves deaf-blind.**

#### **Lesson Overview**

##### **Healthy Communication**

***This lesson focuses on skill and attitude.***

**Goal: Participants move closer to assertive communication.**

### **Activities**

#### **1. Instructor leads a discussion on the topic of the DB–SSP relationship.**

**Instructors lead a discussion about how participants may sometimes feel frustrated with SSPs, perceiving that the SSPs do not provide enough information since you are not getting the information you want. The answer is communication.**

**Instructors encourage asking SSPs for more information, “Tell me what you see.” Sometimes SSPs feel like they “do not see anything.” This is because they are using their**



**passive vision**. They are seeing passively, waiting for something interesting to focus on but meanwhile, they are gathering and storing information. For example, when I drive to the grocery store, I may not “notice” anything consciously. I may be thinking about what I’m going to buy for dinner, but I still do see things. I see whether it’s raining or not, I see how much traffic there is, whether there is a house for sale or a new building going up.

**Objectives:**

- Teach theory (of vision)
- Validate assertiveness

Instructors encourage deaf-blind people to ask SSPs to go to interesting places and to exchange information with one another regarding such places. This provides stimulation and helps build a store of information about the world (for example, the two places just visited).

## **Lesson Preparation**

### **Instructor Preparation**

None

## **Student Preparation**

**Reflect on recent experiences with SSPs**

## **List of Materials**

**None**

## **Handouts**

**None**

## **Key Questions**

- **What do I want to do with my SSP time?**
- **How can I help my SSPs improve so that I get better service?**
- **What do I need to communicate with my SSP so that she will understand my needs better?**

## **Follow-Up Activities**

### **Independent Assignments or Homework**

**None**

### **Evaluation of Trainee Achievement**

**Participation**

## **Other Considerations**

- 1. There is a very limited amount of money available for formal, paid SSP hours and thus a paradox of encouraging more use when the funds might not be available.**

# Appendix A:

## Visual Information

**The topic of visual information is huge. Here we will focus on a few of the major functions of the information we gather by seeing or looking and how this relates to work as an SSP.**

**First, of course, we use our vision to navigate the environment and to identify the path before us, approaching dangers and inferring actions we should take such as making a turn, pausing, stepping over or around obstacles, and so on. Sighted guides do this as a matter of course and without usually informing the deaf-blind person.**

**But our vision also provides information which**

- **Locates us in a particular time, place, and setting.**
- **Helps us navigate the social environment.**

- **Is intellectually stimulating.**
- **Is substance for later conversations.**
- **Provides information to store, things that may not be meaningful in the moment but which may become important later.**
- **Is aesthetically pleasing.**

**At the beginning level, it is all an SSP can do to process the visual information needed to navigate the physical environment and safely guide the deaf-blind person while remembering to communicate the reasons for pausing and so on. But as SSPs gain skill, they are then able to add “scene setting” to their skills, to describe the room in terms of its ambiance, the people who are there, their dress, mood, and so on. Each space has its own tone. Elements such as spaciousness, light, color, and style give it a sense of airiness, coziness, somberness, and so on.**

**But the environment is not merely physical; it is social. To ease social relations, it is important to know who is present, what they are doing, and what they are feeling. Knowing other people’s age, gender, and dress, as well as posture, gestures, and actions keep us connected.**

**Thirdly, what we see challenges our old thinking, stimulates questions, sparks memories, and becomes the content for our conversations. We stay in touch with the world around us, almost unconsciously using the information we gather as we go about our daily routines. New buildings go up, old ones come down, new products are advertised, and businesses change the ways they operate.<sup>1</sup>**

**What we see gives us food for thought and information for future conversations. These conversations lead in turn to a greater participation in society, further intellectual stimulation, and become part of our store of knowledge which may be useful later. We may, for example, begin a new hobby and remember that the shop we passed on our way to the grocery store sells materials for this. Conversely, learning about the shop may inspire us to take up the hobby. Even if we personally never take an interest in the topic, it will provide background with which to understand another person's conversation about it.**

**Deaf-blind people, too, want the information that goes beyond simply navigating the room physically. They want to be socially oriented as**

well as physically oriented, and they want the intellectual stimulation, and connection with others, that this information provides. The work of SSPs is critical, providing not simply a guide and the price of the food on the shelf, but descriptions of what is seen along the way. Indeed, as the SSP learns the more about the interests and personality of the deaf-blind person with whom they are working, they may add even more information gleaned at other times and in other places. The best way to start a conversation is not always to ask questions but often to just begin with talking about what is interesting. All this is included when we say SSPs provide “visual information.”

## **Footnote**

- <sup>1</sup> Remember, for instance, the days before bar codes and ATMs?**



# **Appendix B:**

## **SSP Sample Job Description**

**SSPs are responsible to communicate effectively with the deaf-blind person to whom they are assigned, to act as sighted-guide, and to provide visual/environmental information.**

**Duties include but are not limited to the formal SSP program, that is, the agency occasionally sponsors or supports community events in which deaf-blind people participate and for which they will need volunteer SSPs.**

### **Responsibilities:**

- **Convey and describe visual information (what you see).**
- **Provide casual interpreting.**
- **Act as a professional guide.**

- **Provide information with which the deaf-blind person is able to make independent decisions.**
- **Comply with \_\_\_(our agency)\_\_\_ SSP policies and abide by ethical and professional practices.**
- **Prepare and submit monthly invoices and reports to the agency in a timely and professional manner.**

### **Qualifications:**

- **Formal training as an SSP. (If an applicant does not have any formal training but otherwise qualifies, the agency will provide the necessary training.)**
- **A minimum of one year's experience working with deaf-blind individuals as a paid worker or volunteer.**
- **A minimum of one year's experience interacting and socializing in the deaf-blind community in community events.**
- **Fluency in ASL/PSE skills.**
- **Knowledge of deaf-blind culture.**
- **Knowledge of ethical practices and agency policies.**

# Appendix C:

## Demographic Information on the Deaf-Blind Population in the United States

**There are no reliable sources of demographic information on deaf-blind people in the United States. This is due to several factors, including the purpose for the data and definitions of “deaf-blindness.”**

**While the United States census counts people who identify as having a disability, it does not break down this count into specific disabilities. The National Consortium on Deaf-Blindness conducts an annual count of children who are identified as being deaf-blind. The Helen Keller National Center (HKNC), through its regional offices, counts deaf-blind persons who identify themselves as such within specific categories, when they ask about or need services; it is not a full count of all the deaf-blind persons in a**

**region or state, only those served by HKNC. The Deaf-Blind Service Center (DBSC) similarly counts the number of clients it serves in the greater Seattle area, as well as a few areas in Washington state but does not count the number of deaf-blind people in general.**

**What does it mean to be deaf-blind? To measure visual acuity and field, and to measure audiological decibels and Hertz is relatively easy, but to infer lifestyle and implications for a person's well-being is much more difficult.**

**Demographic information is sought for different reasons. For example:**

- a. An attempt to identify the incidence of various syndromes that cause deaf-blindness (medical perspective), in order to parse out the effects of various etiologies for the purposes of future research.**
- b. An attempt to assess how much service will be needed (by e.g., Departments of Vocational Rehabilitation, or public schools) or to include in a grant proposal requesting funds to support specific services.**
- c. An attempt to identify the number and/or location of people who are culturally deaf**

and then become deaf-blind (as for anthropologists and linguists), again for the purposes of study.

- d. An attempt to identify the number of elderly people in whom poor vision is combined with poor hearing as a basis for research on the quality of life of the elderly.
- e. An attempt to identify the number of people who might find a particular product (e.g., an electronic book that produces output in large print and Braille).

What we do know is this: There are no reliable, consistent statistics, but it is clearly a very, very, very small percentage of the general population.<sup>1</sup> Wolf, Schein, and Delk's 1982<sup>2</sup> study on the prevalence of deaf-blindness in the general population<sup>3</sup> breaks down the numbers of persons who are both deaf and blind into five categories,<sup>4</sup> each with their own rate of prevalence<sup>5</sup>: deaf-blind, deaf, and severely visually impaired; blind and severely hearing impaired; severely visually and hearing impaired; and "all definitions combined."<sup>6</sup> For the purposes of this curriculum, we are using the category of "all definitions combined," which, based on their figures, is 346 persons per 100,000. A few caveats come to mind. One

is that prevalence reported by this study may be distorted by the areas in which they did their study, i.e., in urban areas where services are concentrated. Another is that this study is over 25 years old, but, to our knowledge, it is the latest such data available.<sup>7</sup> Based on this ratio, and using the most recent United States census figures, the number of deaf-blind persons in the United States would be 1,052,047, and in Washington state 22,315.<sup>8</sup>

Further, most *adults* who are deaf-blind are so because of either:

- a. Very advanced age (presbycusia and presbyopia)
- b. Usher Syndrome,
- c. Rare epidemics of maternal rubella, or
- d. Genetic anomalies.

Each of these etiologies has very different implications for the person themselves and for service providers.<sup>9</sup>

For the purposes of this curriculum, it makes the most sense for each agency providing SSP service to do outreach in your local area and discover where such services are needed and for colleges and universities offering training to

**work closely with the local service-providing agencies. As services are provided, and as the national deaf-blind community grows more established, cohesive and well-known, the kind and amount of SSP services needed will become clear.**

## **Footnotes**

- <sup>1</sup> The best counts seem to be for children, and because of the nature of the various etiologies, the numbers of children is not predictive of the number of adults, i.e., some syndromes manifest early and cause significant medical problems, which may result in early death, while other syndromes manifest in young adulthood and may not be included in counts of younger children. See the National Consortium on Deaf-Blindness: <http://nationaldb.org/index.php>.**
- <sup>2</sup> Wolf, E. G., Delk, M. T. & Schein, J. D. (1982) Needs assessment of services to deaf-blind individuals. Silver Spring, MD: Redex, Inc.**
- <sup>3</sup> Schein, Jerome D. (1986) Rehabilitating the Deaf-Blind Client. Journal of Rehabilitation of the Deaf, Vol. 19 Nos. 3-4, January/February 1986; pp. 5-9.**
- <sup>4</sup> Some within each category may also have additional disabilities.**
- <sup>5</sup> Based on a set of factors outlined in their research, they have come up with the rate per 100,000 persons for each category.**
- <sup>6</sup> The Deaf-Blind Service Center uses four categories based on the reporting person's residual hearing or vision: deaf and partially sighted, hard of hearing and partially sighted, deaf and blind, and hard of hearing and blind. The Northwest Region of the Helen Keller National Center further breaks down its data by how its "customers" self-identify the etiology of their hearing and/or vision loss.**



- <sup>7</sup> Schein, Jerome D. (1986) Rehabilitating the Deaf-Blind Client. *Journal of Rehabilitation of the Deaf*, Vol. 19 Nos. 3-4, January/February 1986; p. 6.
- <sup>8</sup> Based on July 1, 2008 US Census data estimates.
- <sup>9</sup> People deaf-blind as a result of old age, for example, are not likely to be very active (having arthritis, heart conditions, and so on), and they are not likely to be fluent in ASL. People deaf-blind as a result of Usher Syndrome Type I may identify primarily as deaf people who use sign language, while those deaf-blind as a result of CHARGE Syndrome will have multiple and extensive medical and physical challenges.

# Appendix D:

## Touch, Culture, and Power

Touch, along with smell and taste, are the remaining senses with which deaf-blind people know about and experience the world. The importance of touch cannot be overestimated. This raises four important issues:

- How deaf-blind people are touched and how often
- Cultural rules
- personal comfort about touching, and
- Control, power, and touch.

**Learning How.** One of the first lessons sighted people learn is how to get the attention of a deaf-blind person by touching them. The text covers this, as do parts of this curriculum. This is the purely mechanical aspect of touch, the

“how to” part. However, the other issues must be understood as well. If the sighted person simply takes hold of the deaf-blind person’s hand and moves it as if it were an object (say to find a cup of coffee), the touch has a dehumanizing effect on the deaf-blind person. Thus, how sighted people touch deaf-blind people relates strongly to issues of control. This can be discussed as mechanics—the right way to do it—or as an element of control.

Cultural rules about touch. Americans are typically not as comfortable touching one another as are people in some other cultures. Adults do not typically hold hands unless we are in a romantic relationship with one another or even with children unless it is a safety precaution. Americans like “our space.” However, this is counter the needs of deaf-blind people. Just as we easily become comfortable with new (foreign) foods and clothes, we can become comfortable with the new (deaf-blind culture) rules of touch.

As teachers, we should monitor how our SSP students use touch and encourage an understanding of it within the context of being both deaf and blind as well as within the context of personal space, boundaries, power

and control.

**Personal Comfort.** Individuals will come with different levels of comfort with touch. There will be those whose families were very comfortable with touch and showed a lot of affection. Conversely, there will be others who have had bad experiences in their pasts that leave them emotionally uncomfortable with such personal touch. At the same time, some deaf-blind people have been so isolated that they have become desperate for human contact and may move to an intimacy that is inappropriate. Some deaf-blind people too have had bad experiences with touch. Both need to be assertive, clear communicators, thinking about and setting boundaries regarding personal touch. These are personal issues and should be negotiated.

**Transitions and Power.** It is important that the SSP become comfortable with touch and use it as optimally as possible. This is what some deaf-blind people call “the power of touch.” The transition from reading ASL visually to reading it tactually is gradual. It makes sense to use touch to communicate when the light is dim, when the space is crowded, and when the conversation or action moves relatively rapidly

from one place to another (as in a group conversation when the person next to the deaf-blind person can tactually signal where to look). As vision fades, touch should naturally be used more and more. Sighted people must be careful to understand this natural use of touch and to welcome it.

Finally, touch is a source of information about things as well as a channel of communication and way to connect with other people. Here again, we run into culture. As children, we were often told, “Look, but don’t touch.” In stores we can touch the merchandise, but it is not encouraged. In museums, objects are protected behind glass or ropes. Many things are simply out of reach.

A focus on “doing it the right way” or fitting in may make both a new SSP and a partially sighted deaf-blind person hesitant to use touch at all. They may want to avoid “looking strange” despite the fact that using touch may be the best way to literally get a sense of something. Being deaf-blind is different. The lives of deaf-blind people are different and that’s okay.

# Appendix E:

## Simulation Goggle Kit

A kit of simulators is very helpful, if not essential to the beginning levels of training for SSPs. Kits can be purchased “ready-made” for approximately \$250 (2009 dollars) or made by the instruction team from easily purchased items and several hours of work.

### Ready-made:

A ready-made kit can be purchased (within the continental US) from [www.lowvisionsimulationkit.com](http://www.lowvisionsimulationkit.com). The kit contains four goggles and interchangeable lenses and funnels that allow the wearer to briefly experience tunnel vision of varying degrees or blurry vision. These are the typical results of Usher syndrome, macular degeneration, and other common causes of

blindness. The field loss and/or lack of visual clarity affect mobility, awareness of the environment, gathering of information (especially incidental information), and the daily activities of life (activities of daily living: ADL).

The lenses in the goggles can be removed/replaced much like the lenses of an expensive camera to create a variety of simulations. The kit comes with a carrying case and instructions for use. The biggest limitation of the ready-made kit (other than its price) is the size (smaller than an average class). It is designed to be used with groups of eight: four users and four guides.

### Do-It-Yourself

To make your own kit, you will need the following parts:

- Goggles with removable lenses. We recommend item #JAC3002686 from [www.airgas.com](http://www.airgas.com), but we also suggest comparing welding goggles from various vendors.
- Funnels (can be purchased at medical supply stores or your local drug store).

- A sharp utensil (e.g., box cutter or saw).
- Dark paint to cover the funnels and block the light.<sup>1</sup>

The funnels help simulate various levels of tunnel vision (or restricted field), the degree of vision depending on the width of the narrow end of the funnel. The black or dark paint covering the funnel prevents the participant from seeing light through the plastic.

Each set of goggles will have one lens covered with black paint. The other eyepiece will be replaced by a funnel (to simulate tunnel vision). Trim the end of the funnel using a box cutter or saw, to fit in the eyepiece, in place of the lens. The narrower end of the funnel can be cut down to any length; the smaller the opening, the more limited the user's vision will be. Be sure the funnel itself is thick and opaque or is painted to prevent light from leaking in.

### Complete Blindness

Finally, blindfolds made from strips of fabric (fleece is a great material) to be tied around the head, covering the eyes, will simulate complete blindness. Sleep masks can also be used and purchased at any drug store, but fleece is



readily available at a fabric store, inexpensive, durable, comfortable to wear, easy to store, and easily washed between uses. One yard of fabric cut into strips 6 inches wide by 36 inches long will make 6 such blindfolds.

### Additional Supplies

To complete the kit, include earplugs, or noise-blocking, moldable material to simulate a mild to moderate hearing loss.

## **Footnotes**

- <sup>1</sup> Be sure to choose paint that will adhere to the material of the funnel. For example, if the funnel is plastic, make sure the paint will adhere to plastic.**

# Appendix F:

## Play-Doh™ Pictionary

### Materials:

- Enough Play-Doh for all participants (1 can each, of any color, should be sufficient).
- Blindfolds

### Goal of the game:

Identify the object modeled by your partner before the other teams (members of other teams also guessing) do so.

### Purpose of the game:

- Become more sensitive to the deaf-blind experience (e.g., having to wait without knowing what is going on).
- Get to know one another better.

- **Improve communication skills (specifically topic comment discourse<sup>1</sup> used in Tactile ASL).**
- **Learn more about the ergonomics of tactile sign language (positioning at a table, use of physical supports, etc.).**
- **Have fun.**

### **Players:**

**Four or more plus a leader (it's best to have one leader and an assistant if the group is larger than 6).**

**Divide into teams of two people each. If the group has an odd number, one team can have three players who rotate in (as active players) and out (as observers).**

**The players are called “modelers” and “guessers.” These roles reverse from game to game. The modelers form the object using Play-Doh, and the guessers touch the object and try to identify it using only touch.**

**All “talking” between team members is done using Sign Language or gesture. The person with the blindfold on will read signs tactually (see below). The leader will sign instructions and comments and will write the target word on**

the flip chart or whiteboard. This is important so that the educational objectives can be met.

Each player should have her own blindfold. The two-member teams begin by deciding on a name for their team. The leader then writes these team names on a flip chart or whiteboard to be used as a scorecard visible to all.

The leader then explains the play and the rules. It's a good idea to begin with a practice round so all can understand before beginning to score.

**The play:**

1. To begin, the guessers put on their blindfolds.
2. The leader gives the modelers a target word (“wristwatch”) and the amount of time allotted for modeling the object (two minutes) by writing it on the chart or board. The time is determined by the difficulty of the object. For example, “wristwatch” is fairly simple and would require only two minutes. The easiest objects (such as “book”) are given only one minute, and the most difficult (“popcorn”) may require three.

- 3. Once the object to communicate is clear to all the modelers, the leader says, “Go,” and the modeling begins.<sup>2</sup> The modelers then have the allotted time to shape the object using the Play-Doh. If they finish early, they must wait but not hand the object to the guessers. That is, all guessers must wait until the signal is given by the leader that it is now time to begin the guessing phase. It usually takes one or two practice runs for all participants to understand this point.**
- 4. When the time for modeling is up or all modelers are finished, the leader signals time to hand the Play-Doh modeled objects to the guessers, again signaling, “Go.”**
- 5. The guessers sign their guesses, and the modeler responds with only a hot/cold kind of response (i.e., “no” if the guesser is way off base, “so-so” gesture if the guesser is somewhat right but not really, or a “come-on” gesture if the guesser is very close but not quite right).**
- 6. Once the guesser correctly identifies the object, the modeler slaps/pounds the table and raises a hand.<sup>3</sup>**
- 7. The leader checks to make sure the guesser is correct and awards the point.**

8. All guessers and modelers then switch roles (the guessers take off their blindfolds and become modelers while the modelers put on blindfolds and become guessers).
9. The play continues.

**The score:**

The team that first guesses the object correctly scores a point, and the game goes to the next round.

**Rules:**

1. No voicing used.
2. Modelers wait for time or signal from the leader before allowing guesser to touch the modeled object.
3. No hints other than the possible responses (gestures) named above.
4. No writing out a word (i.e. modeling snake-like letters to spell out the word).

The leader (teacher) and assistant watch to make sure all are following the rules and to give hints as to how to communicate better.

### Hints:

1. 3-D models are often easier to identify than 2-D, flat, drawing-like models.
2. As the modeler, giving feedback helps the process.
3. As the guesser, keep guessing to get feedback even if you have no idea what the object is supposed to represent.

### Sample objects to be modeled:

These are just suggestions for objects and time. The leader can let her/ his imagination run. Presenting the objects in categories (e.g., accessories, vehicles) makes the subsequent objects much easier to guess. Mixing them up is probably best.

1. Wristwatch (2)
2. Ring (1)
3. Shoe (2)
4. Belt (1)
5. Airplane (2)
6. Bicycle (2)
7. Car (2)
8. Book (1)



9. Camera (3)
10. Phone (cell phone, digital device of the moment) (2)
11. Purse (2)
12. Backpack (1)
13. Toaster (2)
14. Spaghetti (1)
15. Popcorn (3)
16. Hamburger (1)
17. Pizza (2)
18. Sandwich (1)
19. Dog (2)
20. Cat (2)
21. Bird (2)
22. Fish (2)
23. Whale (2)
24. Boat (2)
25. Submarine (2)

**Goal of the lesson:**

The goals of the lesson (as opposed to that of the game) are to:

- Develop better tactile communication (as indicated above, by gestures, pounding on the table).

- **Develop sensitivity regarding how it feels to wait (in this case even just a few minutes while the modeler molds the object) when the blindfold makes it impossible to see and all communication is silent.**
- **Improve understanding of what makes sense tactually.**
- **Learn the importance of getting comfortable before beginning to save backaches, etc. (e.g., sitting at the corner of a table so there is less turning or twisting of the back, sitting where players can see both the leader and flip chart easily, and using tables and chair backs for support).**

### **Time of play and discussion:**

**The leaders determine ahead of time how long the game is to continue. Usually 90 minutes (including the time to get organized into teams, understand the directions, the play and the rules) is about right. It is important to follow the game with a discussion period to reinforce learning. Thirty minutes is a good amount of time to allow for this discussion. The leader elicits insights from the players with open-ended questions:**

- **What did you notice?**

- **How did you feel when you were the guesser?**
- **How did you feel when you were the modeler?**
- **What seemed to help the communication?**
- **What was frustrating? What would have helped?**

## **Footnotes**

- <sup>1</sup> Establishing what one is talking about before making a comment about it (the topic). For further elaboration on this topic, see the literature on ASL discourse.**
- <sup>2</sup> It is often helpful for new signers to write this word on a flip chart. Indeed, it is helpful to have the rules printed as a handout for the same reason.**
- <sup>3</sup> This is so the guesser knows s/he is correct, other teams and the leader are aware that the correct guess has been made.**

# Appendix G:

## Sample Job Description: Coordinator, Support Service Provider Program

Duties include but are not limited to the formal SSP program; that is, the agency occasionally sponsors or supports community events in which deaf-blind people participate and for which they will need volunteer SSPs.

Coordinate SSP services for deaf-blind individuals:

- Plan and implement procedures for
  - Matching deaf-blind clients with SSPs
  - Recruiting new SSPs
  - Training and evaluation of SSPs
  - Arranging for substitute SSPs as needed
  - Monitoring SSP hours and invoices
  - Organizing volunteers for non-paid activities when possible

**The Coordinator’s activities Include:**

- **Analysis and evaluation of the language, communication, and people skills of clients and SSPs for the purpose of creating successful assignments (see matching and training above).**
- **Facilitation of SSP workshops for new SSPs, experienced SSPs, and as technical assistance to other agencies using SSPs.**
- **Ongoing evaluation and improvement of the current SSP curriculum (see recruiting and training above).**
- **Ongoing evaluation and suggestions for improvement of SSP program policies and procedures.**
- **Maintenance of accurate files, including the tracking of invoices and documentation of all services as well as e-mail and other written correspondence.**
- **Development of marketing tools and strategies with which to recruit new SSPs.**
- **Provision of technical assistance to related agencies on the role, use, and importance of SSP services and the distinction between SSPs and interpreters, advocates, etc.**
- **Monitoring of the success of SSP-client match-ups.**

- **Provision of ongoing support, counsel, and instruction to SSPs and deaf-blind clients.**
- **Creation of monthly reports to be used by the Director for budgeting, fundraising, and planning.**

**Required qualifications:**

**The person hired for this position must**

- **Be a skilled SSP**
- **Be able to work independently and yet as a member of a team**
- **Maintain healthy professional relationships and manner**
- **Possess skills in problem-solving and conflict resolution**
- **Possess advanced communication skills using American Sign Language (ASL), tactile ASL, and written English**
- **Have good organizational skills**
- **Understand policies and procedures and be able to apply them appropriately**

**Desired qualifications:**

- **A Bachelor's of Arts Degree in a related field (e.g., Social Work, Human Resources,**

**Deaf Studies, Psychology, Interpreting)**

- **Three or more years' experience working and socializing with deaf-blind people**
- **Two or more years' experience coordinating**
- **Familiarity with agency policies and procedures**
- **Familiarity with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and relevant state laws (WAC)**
- **Computer skills using current versions of Microsoft Windows, Excel, and Outlook**



# **Appendix H:**

## **Sample Support Service Provider (SSP) Program Policy**

The \_\_\_\_ (*Your agency name*) \_\_\_\_ Support Service Provider (SSP) Program is intended to support the independence of deaf-blind people by contracting with qualified vendors to provide sighted guide service and visual information as well as to facilitate communication for deaf-blind people.

### **Overview**

The number of hours per month allotted to SSP services is constrained by our financial and personnel resources. We budget annually for these services, making adjustments at least annually for the maximum amount of support possible. All paid SSP work must therefore be first arranged for and/or approved by the agency.

**Regular SSP service includes the following essential tasks:**

- 1. Grocery shopping.**
- 2. Basic banking (reading statements, writing deposit/withdrawal slips, using the ATM).  
Note: Sometimes, the deaf-blind person will need an interpreter, e.g., to help open an account, apply for loan or credit card, or solve problems with their account). The bank is to provide an interpreter—this is not the SSP’s responsibility.**
- 3. Mail reading.**
- 4. Errands (for example, getting a haircut, buying gifts, or going to the post office).**

**During these assignments, SSPs guide (sighted guide), inform the deaf-blind person of both useful and interesting information about the visual environment, and facilitate communication with store clerks or regarding print media, etc.**

**We are not able to arrange SSPs for out-of-town trips, or deaf or deaf-blind community events. While we at \_\_\_(agency)\_\_\_ totally support such activities and the full engagement of deaf-blind people in the wider community, our resources do not currently allow us to**

provide this service. SSP hours may, however, be used to provide transportation to the train station or airport for such a trip and to navigate purchasing a ticket, checking in, getting to the correct gate, and establishing a communication system with the driver, steward, etc.

Role of SSPs for *(your agency)*

Deaf-blind clients who receive SSP services are independent adults who make decisions for themselves. SSPs do not make decisions for deaf-blind clients or act in a custodial or guardianship role.

SSPs are independent contractors who provide the following services:

- Sighted guide (which may include driving to and from the assignment with the deaf-blind person—see liability insurance in the SSP section below).
- Visual information that is useful for orientation to place and for accomplishing the task at hand (e.g., “This area of the store has fruits and vegetables. There is a large bin of fresh asparagus. There are four people in line ahead of us with very full baskets.”). It might also include a sense of the people, their mood, style, and so on.

- **Nominal communication facilitation—**relaying questions, comments, and brief pleasantries.

**The deaf-blind person decides** where to go and what to do. The deaf-blind person decides how to divide up the time and which stores to use, but the deaf-blind person and the SSP may talk about the easiest or most efficient way to do it (e.g., save driving back and forth).

The deaf-blind person may not commit the agency to pay the SSP for more hours. Other arrangements may be made between the deaf-blind person and the SSP (e.g., the deaf-blind person will him/herself pay the SSP for this time). Our agency, however, is responsible ***only*** for arrangements made through the SSP coordinator. We will not pay for private arrangements.

While SSPs and deaf-blind people often enjoy one another's company and may look forward to working together, the role of SSP is distinct from that of friend or paid companion. SSPs and deaf-blind people who are indeed also friends may arrange to see one another outside of this contracted time. This is not, however, part of the role.

**What SSPs are NOT...**

- **SSPs are not an emergency service and are not available for emergencies.**
- **SSPs are not employees of the agency; they are outside contractors.**
- **SSPs are not generic “helpers” for deaf-blind people. The SSP does not run errands for, clean house for, act as driver, or in any other way “take care of” the deaf-blind person.**
- **SSPs are not generic “professionals” working with deaf-blind people; they do not teach, counsel, advocate, find a job for, or act as recreation specialists.**
- **SSPs are not interpreters. While SSPs do facilitate communication while shopping or running errands, they do not analyze the content and intent of the message.**

**Community Support and Duplication of Services**

**Deaf-Blind people, like all people, need a larger support network than just SSP service. \_\_\_(Our agency)\_\_\_ avoids duplication of services and/or competition with other agencies serving deaf, blind and deaf-blind people. These other agencies include \_\_\_(other agency)\_\_\_, which**

provides audiological services, \_\_\_(*other agency*)\_\_\_, which provides low-vision counseling and visual aids, \_\_\_(*other agency*)\_\_\_, which offers support and transitional housing for victims of domestic violence or sexual assault, \_\_\_(*other agency*)\_\_\_, providing funds for vocational rehabilitation, employment training, support and placement for deaf-blind people, and so on. There are also several interpreter referral services in \_\_\_(xx)\_\_\_ area serving deaf-blind people as well as deaf people. SSPs are not a replacement for such services but intended to augment them.

## WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Deaf-blind people who apply for SSP service must be:

- Adults (over the age of 18)
- Live in the catchment area in which we have resources
- Independent

Vendors who apply to be SSPs must

- Be adults (over the age of 18)
- Have appropriate communication skills

- **Demonstrate no criminal record as verified by a background check**
- **Have a valid business license**
- **Have a valid driver's license**
- **Have current car insurance that includes liability insurance**
- **Commit to a regular schedule and a minimum of six months' service**

In many instances, SSPs will be expected to drive as a part of the assignment (e.g., to and from the grocery store). Exceptions can be negotiated (e.g., an SSP who only does mail reading and does not drive but rides the bus). The SSP and not \_\_\_(agency)\_\_\_ is liable for any car accident and injuries. SSPs must bring in a copy of their licenses and insurance so the agency can make copies to be kept on file.

## **PROCESS**

### **Intake**

Deaf-blind people wishing to engage SSP service meet with \_\_\_(the advocate)\_\_\_ to discuss how \_\_\_(agency)\_\_\_ can best meet their needs. The \_\_\_(advocate)\_\_\_ will describe all the services we offer and relevant services

offered by other agencies and make any appropriate referrals. Together they will make a plan for how \_\_\_(agency)\_\_\_ and the client will work together. If SSP services are appropriate, the deaf-blind person will be referred to the SSP Coordinator for an appointment.

Vendors wishing to work as SSPs meet with the SSP Coordinator, who explains the role and responsibilities of an SSP, \_\_\_(agency)\_\_\_ policies, and SSP eligibility. SSPs are then referred and scheduled for training.

### **Match-Ups**

The SSP coordinator will meet with the deaf-blind person to review \_\_\_(agency)\_\_\_ SSP policies and to begin the process of matching the deaf-blind person and an SSP. Match-ups are done based on communication, geography, age, and personality as well as availability.

The coordinator will introduce the SSP and deaf-blind person for the first time and follow-up with both within the next two months to see that they are satisfied. If the SSP is not sufficiently skilled to communicate effectively with the deaf-blind person, or it is difficult for the two to communicate, the SSP Coordinator



will help solve the problem (e.g., match the deaf-blind person and SSP with a different person). The coordinator should be informed of any communication issues/problems as soon as possible.

The deaf-blind person and SSP are encouraged to talk about confidentiality, privacy (see below), scheduling, and any concerns they have. They are also encouraged to do any necessary problem solving on their own. If, however, there is a problem they are unable to resolve, the SSP coordinator will assist and if necessary assign a different match-up.

### Schedules and Subs

The SSP Coordinator matches paid SSPs with deaf-blind clients. The number of hours worked is set as a part of the contract. Any and all changes to the number of hours must be agreed upon by the SSP Coordinator and \_\_\_(agency)\_\_\_ Director. Priority is given to those with the most need.

The deaf-blind person and the SSP, however, do scheduling of these hours. For example, they may begin working together on alternate Wednesday evenings but after a few months

decide that Tuesday evenings work better for them. This is entirely up to the deaf-blind person and the SSP. The agency is concerned only with a) reliability and b) total number of hours (money).

If a paid SSP is unable to work on a scheduled work day (e.g., sick), the SSP will contact \_\_\_(agency)\_\_\_ with as much notice as possible and request a substitute so that the deaf-blind person can still complete his or her errands. The SSP Coordinator has a list of SSPs who work as subs when regular SSPs are ill or have an emergency.

Saving or carrying hours over from one month to the next is not possible. Deaf-blind people who do not use all their hours in a month will forfeit them.

## **ETHICS**

SSPs are expected to act professionally and ethically.

### **Confidentiality, Privacy, and Respect**

The SSP must agree to both abide by confidentiality and respect the privacy of the

deaf-blind person. For example, the SSP must agree not to talk to other people about the deaf-blind person's activity, what she or he buys, how much money she has in the bank, or any other business of the deaf-blind person.

The SSP can talk generally about being a \_\_\_(agency)\_\_\_ SSP, but names and private information should be kept strictly confidential. SSPs who need to problem solve or vent their feelings should talk with the SSP Coordinator—not with other SSPs or deaf-blind people.

Similarly, the deaf-blind person must agree not to gossip about SSPs. Deaf-blind people who need to problem solve or vent their feelings should talk with the SSP Coordinator—not with other deaf-blind people or SSPs.

### Conflict of Interest

SSPs should avoid a conflict of interest. For example, an SSP who also works for a bank should not be involved in transactions with that bank with his or her deaf-blind client.

### Boundaries

SSPs and deaf-blind people who are friends as well as work together should not confuse roles

**and should be clear when it is friend time and when it is work time. Any concerns in this area should be discussed with the Coordinator.**

**While the SSP is working, he or she should not be making personal phone calls, doing his own grocery shopping, or otherwise combining personal needs or errands with the job.**

### **Professional Development**

**SSPs shall seek continuing education training to help them improve their SSP skills, their understanding of the deaf-blind experience, and their communication/language skills. Deaf-blind people should help support new SSPs by both being patient while they develop skill and helping them do so by giving both useful direction and feedback.**

### **JUDGMENT and RESPECT**

**The SSP and the deaf-blind client should exercise judgment. For example, if the SSP is feeling sick and possibly contagious, she should arrange for a sub. In any case, both the SSP and the deaf-blind person should be aware of the implications of tactile or close-vision communication and take care to exercise good**

**health habits such as washing hands regularly, etc.**

**If the deaf-blind person is the parent of a young child, it may not be possible for the SSP to both guide the deaf-blind person and watch the young child at the same time. SSPs who are not yet fluent in ASL may not be able to safely communicate in sign language and drive at the same time. The SSP and deaf-blind person should discuss these issues.**

**The deaf-blind person and SSP should communicate clearly and listen respectfully to each other. For example, if an SSP is annoyed because the deaf-blind person does not seem to be able to manage time and tasks well and the errands always seem to take more time than is allowed, this should be discussed. If the deaf-blind person is annoyed because the SSP is frequently late, this should be discussed. If the problem persists, the problem should be reported to the SSP Coordinator. Problems with the Coordinator, the system, or the agency's policies should be referred to the Director, and if the issue is serious, a formal grievance filed.**

**The SSP must respect the privacy of others and**

refrain from gossip. An SSP may, in the course of work, learn private information about someone in the deaf-blind community (e.g. come to the agency to turn in invoices and incidentally see a deaf-blind person meeting with the advocate or having an argument). The SSP should act in a professional manner by keeping that information private. On the other hand, deaf-blind people should have access to the same general information SSPs are seeing while working. For example, if the SSP sees another deaf-blind person in the store while assisting the deaf-blind person to shop, they would relay this as visual information.

### Law Abiding

The SSP should follow and obey all laws. SSPs should further be alert and ready to work during an assignment and not under the influence of any drugs, alcohol, or mood-altering substances. Harassment and abuse (physical, verbal, or emotional) are strictly forbidden and should immediately be reported to the SSP coordinator. If the abuse is serious, the victim may file charges.

## Professionalism and Business Practices

### Reliability and Communication

The SSP is expected to follow through on commitments, to be dependable, to arrive on time and be ready to work. Frequent absences or changes in schedule are unprofessional and not acceptable.

In the case of illness, emergency, or unforeseen circumstance (e.g., a flat tire, sick child), SSPs should communicate as soon as possible with both the deaf-blind person and the SSP Coordinator. In the case of repeated complaints and failure to improve, the SSP will be terminated.

If the SSP experiences major life changes (e.g., moving out of town) and decides to terminate the agreement (to stop working) or otherwise significantly alter his or her commitment, the SSP is expected to inform the deaf-blind person and the coordinator in a timely way (see below).

### Invoicing and Expenses

Invoices should be submitted on a form that is clear and easy to read and submitted to the

**agency within 30 days of service.**

**SSPs pay for their own gas to and from the assignment.**

**The deaf-blind person will pay expenses incurred during the job. These include:**

- **Mileage (amount negotiated periodically)**
- **Bus fares**
- **Parking fees**

## **CANCELLATION AND NO-SHOW PROCEDURES**

**SSPs and deaf-blind people are encouraged to keep a regular schedule or to reschedule if at all possible and not use the sub-request procedure except as a last resort. Any significant changes or exceptional circumstances should be communicated to the SSP Coordinator (e.g., the deaf-blind person finds she need fewer hours, or one of the pair will be out of town for a month). SSPs may not bill for time not worked.**

**If the SSP will be unavailable for a week, and the deaf-blind person is not able to wait an additional week, the deaf-blind person may ask**



the SSP to contact the SSP Coordinator to find a sub. This should be done as soon as the need for a sub is known. When subs are arranged, the substitute SSPs will be paid, and the regular SSP will not.

If the deaf-blind person cancels at the last minute or does not show up, the SSP should wait for half an hour and then can charge for time scheduled. The SSP must inform the SSP Coordinator of this “no-show” within two days. If the SSP is more than 30 minutes late or does not show up, the deaf-blind person should report this to the Coordinator.

Permanently Cancel: If the SSP decides to stop working, he or she must first inform the deaf-blind person and then inform the SSP Coordinator. This should be done two or more weeks in advance so a replacement can be found.

## INVOICES and TAXES

SSPs are responsible to invoice the agency for their time five business days before the end of the month. See contract for details.

SSPs are responsible for their own reporting

**and taxes. At the end of the year, the agency will send out 1099s.**

## **GRIEVANCES**

**The agency has strict policies against physical, verbal, or emotional abuse, sexual harassment, unfair/illegal discrimination, and the use of controlled substances that might influence the SSPs' thinking, driving, or judgment while working. (See these policies and the grievance procedure.) If an SSP or deaf-blind client acts in a way that is contrary to these policies, there is a clear grievance procedure that the victim is encouraged to follow.**

**SSPs who violate these policies or engage in unethical behavior or practices will have their contracts cancelled immediately.**

# Appendix I:

## Sample Support Service Provider (SSP) Independent Contractor Agreement

Agency Name: \_\_\_\_\_

SSP Contractor Name: \_\_\_\_\_ [type]

This contract is \_\_\_\_\_ a renewal/ \_\_\_\_\_ a new contract.

### Services to Provide:

I, \_\_\_\_\_ [SSP], agree to provide SSP service: to include guiding services, visual and environmental information, and simple facilitation of communication while the deaf-blind client(s) assigned to me is (are) doing regular errands such as food shopping, banking, and mail reading on a regularly scheduled basis.

**I understand that this service is for deaf-blind adults who make their own life decisions independently and that as SSP I am not to advise, offer unsolicited opinions, or attempt to make decisions for the client.**

**I understand that I am to communicate in the preferred language of the deaf-blind person.**

**I agree to arrange scheduling with the deaf-blind person and to be clear about the time and place to meet, and the length as well as purpose of the assignment.**

**I agree that the deaf-blind person and I will establish effective distance communication (e.g., e-mail, text paging) for schedule changes, etc.**

**I understand that the role of SSP does NOT include:**

- **Chore services such as housecleaning.**
- **Heavy lifting, such as the moving of boxes or furniture.**
- **Interpreting, including phone calls.**
- **Advocacy regarding legal, medical, or other issues.**

I further understand that for emergencies, I am to call 9-1-1 and request a qualified interpreter for the deaf-blind person involved in the emergency situation and not to try to solve the problem myself or to attempt to interpret for emergency responders. \_\_\_\_\_[initial]

**Billing:**

SSPs will report and send invoices to the SSP Coordinator by the 3rd of each month. Invoices that do not reach the coordinator by this date will be included in the following month's billing cycle. *Invoices submitted more than 90 days from the billing date will not be paid.*

If the deaf-blind person is a "no-show," the contractor is to inform the SSP Coordinator by the end of that day. The agency agrees to pay for th contracted time, and this time will be deducted from the amount allotted to the deaf-blind person who scheduled the time.

Invoices for the final month of the contract must be submitted on time. Invoices submitted more than five business days late will result in a refusal to renew this contract in the future. \_\_\_\_\_[initial]

**Confidentiality and Boundaries:**

**I, \_\_\_\_\_[initial], agree to respect the ethical tenets of confidentiality, conflicts of interest and professional boundaries. I agree to keep all information learned in the course of this work confidential. The time, place, activities, and conversations are all to be kept in confidence.**

**I agree to refrain from counseling, teaching, advocating, etc. If, for any reason, I have concerns about this, I will report the issue to the SSP Coordinator, who will take the appropriate action (e.g., talk with the deaf-blind person, refer to the advocate).**

**This contract is for the following:**

**Period of \_\_\_\_\_ [date] and ends on \_\_\_\_\_ [date] (six months).**

**This contract covers the SSP services as listed above, to be provided by**

**\_\_\_\_\_,  
independent contractor to the Deaf-Blind  
Service Center (DBSC/Contracting Agency).**

**The \_\_\_\_\_[agency] agrees to pay  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_ per hour of authorized services. The  
SSP and deaf-blind person may not increase**

**the allotted number of hours without approval.**

**I understand that as an SSP I am an independent contractor and that the agency is NOT responsible for providing any of the following:**

- Insurance: health, auto, liability, industrial, or any other insurance covering Independent Contractors.**
- Any other benefits of employment not specified elsewhere in this contract.**

**The agency can cancel this contract for any reason, at any time, with >10 days' written notice. In the event of a cancellation, payment will be provided for all services performed prior to the notification of cancellation.**

**The Independent Contractor [SSP] can cancel this contract for any reason with >30 days' written notice to the SSP Coordinator.**

**My signature below indicates that I understand and agree to follow the terms and conditions of this contract.**

**For renewal contracts, all prior invoices for work completed through \_\_\_\_\_ will be turned into the agency by \_\_\_\_\_.**

**Appendix I: Sample SSP Independent Contractor Agreement**

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**Support Service Provider**

**Date**

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**Agency SSP Coordinator**

**Date**

**For Office Use Only**

**Driver's License Copy: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Auto Insurance Copy: \_\_\_\_\_**

**WA State Master Business License Copy: \_\_\_\_\_**

**[Other requirements dictated by state regulations or by contract/funder requirements, e.g., a background check.]**

**W-9 (or other necessary tax forms): \_\_\_\_\_**

**Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Date: \_\_\_\_\_**



# Appendix J:

## Sample Support Service Provider (SSP) Client Agreement

Agency Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Deaf-Blind Client Name: \_\_\_\_\_ [type]

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Services to Be Provided:

I, \_\_\_\_\_ [client] agree to manage my SSP services responsibly and to work through the SSP Coordinator when appropriate.

I understand that this service is for deaf-blind adults who make their own decisions independently and that as a recipient of this service I am not to ask the SSP to go beyond his or her role. I understand that the role of SSP

**does NOT include:**

- **Chore services such as housecleaning.**
- **Heavy lifting, such as the moving of boxes or furniture.**
- **Interpreting, including phone calls.**
- **Advocacy regarding legal, medical, or other issues.**

**I further understand that for emergencies, I am to call or have the SSP call 9-1-1 and request an interpreter and that the SSP cannot interpret even in emergency situations. \_\_\_\_\_[initial]**

**I agree to schedule time together with the SSP and to be clear about the time and place to meet, and the length as well as purpose of the assignment.**

**I agree that we will establish effective distance communication (e.g.. e-mail, text paging) for schedule changes, etc.**

**Number of Service Hours:**

**I understand that I have a maximum of \_\_\_\_\_ paid SSP hours per month, and that the SSP and I may not increase the allotted number of paid hours without approval from the Coordinator, that I am to prioritize my errands**

and other activities accordingly, and that I cannot carry over hours from one month to the next. I also know that the agency can occasionally look for volunteers for certain situations, and when necessary, I will discuss this need with the SSP Coordinator.

I understand that if I do not show up for a scheduled meeting with my SSP that the SSP will be paid for that time, and these hours will be deducted from my hours for that month. If I need to reschedule, I can do this with the SSP in advance.

I understand that I can and should report any concerns or complaints about the SSPs assigned to me to the SSP Coordinator.

**Confidentiality, Privacy, and Boundaries:**

I understand that the SSP has signed a confidentiality agreement with the agency. I, in turn, agree to respect the privacy of the SSP, and to maintain proper personal and professional boundaries.

If I have a complaint about an SSP or feel the SSP needs further training, I agree to inform the Coordinator.

## Appendix J: Sample Support Service Provider Client Agreement

**I understand that the SSP service is to provide visual information and does not include transportation. If I ask the SSP for a ride to do the errands, I do so at my own risk. I understand that all SSPs are independent contractors; the agency will check to be sure the SSP has a valid driver's license and current regular auto liability insurance, but beyond this holds NO responsibility or liability for my safety while soliciting or accepting a ride.**

**My signature below indicates that I understand and agree to follow the terms and conditions of this agreement.**

---

**Deaf-Blind Client**

**Date**

---

**Agency SSP Coordinator**

**Date**

**Appendix J: Sample Support Service Provider Client Agreement**

**For Office Use Only**

**[Other requirements dictated by state regulations or by contract/funder requirements, e.g., a background check.]**

**Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Date: \_\_\_\_\_**

# **Appendix K:**

## **Sample SSP Evaluation Procedure**

**SSPs' work is to be formally evaluated at least once each contract period (every six months) and notation made in the file. The initial contract period should include an evaluation which includes observation (see process below).**

**All evaluations are done by the SSP Coordinator on the basis of a) feedback from deaf-blind clients and b) observations by the coordinator.<sup>1</sup>**

**Specific elements of the work to be evaluated include:**

- **communication skills, including sign language skills (not only language but openness, creativity in communication, patience)**

- **reliability**
- **ethical behavior (maintaining confidentiality, avoiding a conflict of interest etc.)**
- **professional conduct (maintaining proper boundaries, etc.)**
- **technical skills: ability to provide visual information, appropriate use of touch, guiding skills (safety)**
- **flexibility and willingness to work as part of a team**

Each element of the work is rated on a scale (e.g., 1-5, with 1 being unsatisfactory and 5 being outstanding), with notes made as to why this number was chosen. Ethical concerns and unprofessional conduct could be sufficient reason for termination.

### The Process

1. **The SSP coordinator checks with all assigned deaf-blind clients as to their satisfaction.**
2. **If the client is unsatisfied, the SSP coordinator explores this further by asking questions / gaining more information, with the goal of improving the situation and the SSP's work.**

- 3. The SSP Coordinator will, from time to time, accompany the deaf-blind person and the SSP to observe the SSP's work.<sup>2</sup>**
- 4. The SSP coordinator will make use of incidental opportunities to observe the SSPs during various community events.<sup>3</sup>**

**The SSP coordinator will have a formal interview with each SSP at the end of her/his contract to a) review the assignments and get the SSP's input into the program as well as these specific assignments and b) provide feedback to the SSP at the end of each evaluation, being clear about areas where the SSP is providing good or above average service as well as where he or she needs improvement. If needed, the coordinator will make recommendations for further training or other suggestions of ways to improve in weak areas.**



## **Footnotes**

- <sup>1</sup> If either the deaf-blind person or the SSP are frustrated and report this to the SSP Coordinator, the Coordinator will arrange an observation to monitor the working relationship. This then becomes a part of an ongoing evaluation.**
  
- <sup>2</sup> Most SSPs are new and may need some support from the SSP Coordinator.**
  
- <sup>3</sup> This is especially helpful in considering personalities and therefore good 'matches.'**

# Appendix L:

## Guidelines for a Quality SSP Program

**A quality SSP program should:**

- 1. Have a reliable source of income, such as line-item state funding. Relying on grants or donations does not make for a solid program; rather, these funds should be used for special projects (e.g., advanced training) or to augment essential services.**
- 2. Be designed locally. Different areas of the country will have varying needs, resources, and contexts. It is important that the SSP program make sense within this context. The availability of interpreters and the state of the transportation infrastructure are two key resources that make up this context.<sup>1</sup>**
- 3. Assure formal training of SSPs prior to hiring, and require ongoing education.**

- 4. Provide training for deaf-blind people using the service so they are empowered to get the most benefit from the service.**
- 5. Pay SSPs a fair wage.**
- 6. Supervise SSPs to assure they are reliable and ethical.**
- 7. Match SSPs and deaf-blind clients for compatibility of:**
  - a. communication**
  - b. personality and style**
  - c. schedules, and**
  - d. whenever possible, common interests.**
- 8. Employ a coordinator who is responsible for recruiting, training, and assigning SSPs, processing or reconciling invoices, problem solving and generally monitoring and promoting the success of the program.<sup>2</sup> (See Appendix G, Sample SSP Coordinator Position.)**
- 9. Employ a program coordinator who has a good working relationship with key people in the community<sup>3</sup>, as well as institutions and organizations from which to draw or recruit SSPs. These include but are not limited to local interpreter training or**

**preparation programs<sup>4</sup> and local deaf groups.<sup>5</sup>**

- 10. Recruit volunteers (unpaid SSPs) for deaf community events. These volunteer SSPs should be no less ethical or reliable.**
- 11. Have an ongoing recruitment and training plan, including advanced training for experienced SSPs.**

## **Footnotes**

- <sup>1</sup> We found, for example, that in rural areas where there were not sufficient interpreting resources, there was often undue pressure put on SSPs to act in that capacity. In this case, the state RID association should be contacted to provide training to interpreters who can fill this gap.**
  
- <sup>2</sup> We found, for example, that some areas having SSPs overburdened the coordinators so that they were unable to provide adequate recruitment, training, and monitoring of the services provided. This lent itself to unnecessary abuses and/or poor service.**
  
- <sup>3</sup> Key people in the deaf-blind community can provide valuable input, feedback, and support to the program.**
  
- <sup>4</sup> Interpreters in training need more exposure to the use of sign language in context, and working as an SSP provides such an opportunity.**
  
- <sup>5</sup> Deaf people who are underemployed may enjoy the intellectual challenge and opportunity to contribute.**