

# TeleBehavioral Health 501 Training Series

Behavioral Health Institute (BHI)  
Harborview Medical Center  
Website: <https://bhinstitute.uw.edu>  
Email: [bhinstitute@uw.edu](mailto:bhinstitute@uw.edu)

Northwest Regional  
Telehealth Resource Center (NRTRC)  
Website: <https://nrtrc.org>  
Email: [info@nrtrc.org](mailto:info@nrtrc.org)

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# Behavioral Health Institute (BHI)

## Training, Workforce and Policy Innovation Center

The Behavioral Health Institute is a Center of Excellence where innovation, research and clinical practice come together to improve mental health and addiction treatment.

The BHI brings the expertise of Harborview Medical Center/University of Washington Medicine and other university partners together to address the challenges facing Washington's behavioral health system through:

- Clinical Innovation
- Research and Evaluation
- Workforce Development and Training
- Expanded Digital and Telehealth Services and Training

The BHI serves as a regional resource for the advancement of behavioral health outcomes and policy, and to support sustainable system change.



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# Northwest Regional Telehealth Resource Center (NRTRC)

## Telehealth Technical Assistance Center



The NRTRC delivers telehealth technical assistance and shares expertise through individual consults, trainings, webinars, conference presentations and the web.

Their mission is to advance telehealth programs' development, implementation and integration in rural and medically underserved communities.

The NRTRC aims to assist healthcare providers, organizations and networks in implementing cost-effective telehealth programs to increase access and equity in rural and medically underserved areas and populations.

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# Planner disclosures

The following series planners and team have no relevant conflicts of interest to disclose:

Brad Felker MD

Cara Towle MSN RN

Topher Jerome

Melody McKee SUDP MS

Nicki Perisho RN

Jaleen Johnson



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## TeleBehavioral Health 501

# TeleBehavioral Health: Best Practices for Telemental Health with Clients who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing and/or DeafBlind

TONY DAVIS, MSW

NORTH CAROLINA DIVISION OF SERVICES FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

DAVID PAYNE, NIC QMHI

NORTH CAROLINA DIVISION OF SERVICES FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

ASHLEY BENTON, MSW

NORTH CAROLINA DIVISION OF MENTAL HEALTH, DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AND SUBSTANCE USE SERVICES

KATHY HSU WIBBERLY, PHD

MID-ATLANTIC TELEHEALTH RESOURCE CENTER

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# Defining Hearing Loss

**Deaf:** A person with hearing loss to such a degree that they rely on visual forms of communication such as sign language. American Sign Language (ASL) and visual communication as the binding factor of the Deaf community and Deaf culture. This population is diverse and consists of many subcultures.

**Hard of Hearing:** Hard of Hearing refers to people with hearing loss of varying degrees and who usually communicate through spoken language. Depending on the person's accommodation needs and residual hearing, assistive listening devices and or Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) captioning can assist a person to better communicate effectively during an appointment.

**DeafBlind:** A person with a combination of hearing and vision loss in various degrees. Hearing loss can range from mild to profound and types of vision loss can range from requiring large print to read, to being legally blind to no light perception and totally blind. Other factors can contribute to vision loss such as having visual field loss, sensitivity to light, night blindness, color blindness, and contrast sensitivity issues. The DeafBlind population is a very diverse group of people with different ages of onset, degrees of loss, communication methods, and individuals who may or may not identify themselves as DeafBlind.

See [NC DSDHH Telehealth Glossary](#) for more definitions.



# Statistics Related to Hearing Loss

- Hearing loss affects approximately 48 million Americans [1.](#)
- 30-35% of adults ages 65-75 have hearing loss [2.](#)
- 40-50% of adults ages 75 and older have hearing loss [2.](#)
- “Only 1 in 5 people who would benefit from a hearing aid actually uses one” [3.](#)
- “An estimated 1 in 5 American teens experiences some degree of hearing loss” [3.](#)
- “Hearing issues are the most common service-connected disability among American veterans” [3.](#)
- “People with hearing loss wait an average of 7 years before seeking help” [3.](#)
- “Untreated hearing loss increased the risk of developing dementia by 50 percent” [4.](#)
- Significant depressive symptoms increase approximately 45% for each 20 dB of hearing loss [5.](#)

# Common Communication Accommodations for Telehealth Appointments

## Deaf

- American Sign Language interpreter on platform

## Hard of Hearing

- Captioning
- Assistive Listening Device

## DeafBlind

- Onsite (In-person at client's location)
  - Tactile American Sign Language interpreter (TASL)
- Close Vision American Sign Language interpreter (For telehealth, can sometimes be provided on platform)
- Captioning
- Assistive Listening Device

# Best Practices for Providing Communication Accommodations

- **Telehealth Platform**

- 3<sup>rd</sup> party communication access provider/vendor needs to be able to access appointment to provide communication accommodation
- Good video quality

- **Telehealth Appointments**

- Patients with hearing loss must be provided a telehealth appointment in a way that is functionally equivalent to those for patients without hearing loss
  - Federal laws that mandate compliance:
    - [Guidance on Nondiscrimination in Telehealth](#)
    - [The Americans with Disabilities Act](#)
    - [Section 1557 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act](#)
    - [Final Rule prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act](#)

# Common Misconception

**Provision of  
Auxiliary Aid  
or Service**  $\neq$  **Compliance**

# Experiential Learning Activity

## Lipreading Exercise

- You are a patient with hearing loss getting instructions from a nurse on how to take your medication.
- Write down what you think that the nurse says.

# Experiential Learning Activity

## Lipreading Exercise

### No sound

# Experiential Learning Activity

## Lipreading Exercise

### Distraction

# Experiential Learning Activity

## Lipreading Exercise

### Covering the Mouth



# Experiential Learning Activity

## Lipreading Exercise

### The Answer

# Best Practices for using ASL Interpreters in Tele-Mental Health

- Interpreter credentials (RID CI and CT, NIC, BEI: Advanced/Master, QMHI)
- Interpreters with specialized training
  - Mental Health Interpreter Training Institute (MHIT)
    - ASL interpreter specific training
  - Non diagnostic indicators of language dysfluency
  - Language deprivation, education history, medication, or mental health?
- Pre and post conference with interpreters
- Consider the impact of interpreters on the interaction

# Captions in Tele-Mental Health Settings

- Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) vs Auto-generated captions
- Platform considerations
- Interpreters vs. Captioning

# Accessible vs. Specialized Treatment When Working with Deaf and DeafBlind Populations

## Accessible Treatment

- American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters are provided for appointments, groups and informal occurrences
- Telehealth platforms are accessible
- Materials are adapted as much as possible for clients

## Specialized Treatment

- Treatment is provided by clinicians fluent in American Sign Language (ASL) and knowledgeable about Deaf culture
- Telehealth platforms are accessible
- Materials are adapted for use with Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deafblind clients (videos in ASL, reduced emphasis on reading, writing, use of role play, drawing and other techniques)

# Prioritizing Client Preference

When a patient prefers a therapist that is fluent in American Sign Language (ASL)

- Refer when possible
  - Considerations
    - Are there therapists fluent in ASL available?
      - Are those therapists covered by the client's health plan?
      - Are there conflicts of interests between patient and ASL fluent therapists?
        - Share the names of potential therapists with the client
    - Empower the client with making the choice; don't make it for them
- When communicating options, ensure that the client has access to effective communication.
  - Often an email will not provide effective communication

# Cultural Competency

## Provider competency when working with populations with hearing loss

- Cultural humility and open-mindedness
- It's Not One Size Fits All
  - Clients with hearing loss have different experiences and have different communication needs
- Avoid using labels and terms i.e., “Hearing Impaired”
- Learn about Deaf Culture
- Learn about the impact of hearing loss on Hard of Hearing individuals and their families
- Some training resources:
  - Deaf clients: [Tips and Resources for Providers](#)
  - Hard of Hearing clients: [Working with People with Hearing Loss: Mental Health Practitioner Online Training](#)
  - DeafBlind clients: [Working with Individuals Who Are DeafBlind: A Course for Mental Health Professionals](#)
  - [Alabama's Mental Health Interpreter Training Project](#)

# What is Telehealth Accessibility and Guidance?



Learn More by clicking on [NCSDSHH Telehealth Accessibility Guidance](#)

Detailed telehealth resources and guidance that are now available to assist Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind patients, their healthcare providers and American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters in achieving fully accessible telehealth experiences.



# What Types of Guidance Are There?

Factsheets



**Deaf**

Guidance and resources for Deaf patients.

Checklists



**Hard of Hearing**

Guidance and resources for Hard of Hearing patients.

Resources



**DeafBlind**

Guidance and resources for DeafBlind patients.



**Healthcare Providers**

Guidance and resources for healthcare providers.



**Interpreters**

Guidance and resources for American sign language interpreters.



**Telehealth Glossary**

Glossary of telehealth resources.



# Additional Resources on DSDHH Telehealth Landing Page



**Communication  
Accommodations  
Request Letter**

**Fillable letters to send to your  
healthcare providers.**



**General Healthcare  
Resources**

**General healthcare resources  
and publications.**

# Resources

- Alabama Department of Mental Health Tips and Resources for Providers: <https://mh.alabama.gov/tips-and-resources-for-providers/>
- Helen Keller Services: Working with Individuals Who Are DeafBlind: A Course for Mental Health Professionals: <https://www.helenkeller.org/courses/working-with-individuals-who-are-deafblind-a-course-for-mental-health-professionals/>
- Mental Health Interpreter Training Institute: <http://www.mhit.org/>
- [MHIT Clinical Training October 25<sup>th</sup>](#)
- Minnesota Department of Human Services Working with People with Hearing Loss Mental Health Practitioner Online Training [https://pathlore.dhs.mn.gov/Courseware/DisabilityServices/HearingLoss/welcome\\_intro.html](https://pathlore.dhs.mn.gov/Courseware/DisabilityServices/HearingLoss/welcome_intro.html)
- National Association of State Agencies for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing: <https://nasadhh.org/>
- National Association of the Deaf: <https://www.nad.org/about-us/position-statements/position-statement-on-mental-health-interpreting-services-with-people-who-are-deaf/>
- North Carolina Division of Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Telehealth Guidance and Resources: <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/dsdhh/telehealth-resources>
- Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf: <https://rid.org/about/resources/#spp>
- Washington State Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing: <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/altsa/odhh>

# Resources Available through MATRC Website

<https://www.matrc.org/explore-telehealth/telehealth-disabilities/>

- Office of Civil Rights Guidance on Nondiscrimination in Telehealth: Federal Protections to Ensure Accessibility to People with Disabilities and Limited English Proficient Persons
- Office of Civil Rights Rule on Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability in Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance
- ADA Telehealth Considerations infographic
- Telehealth & Disability: Recommendations for Providers fact sheet
- Equity in Telehealth: Toolkit for Telehealth Providers
- iCanConnect
- National Assistive Technology Act Technical Assistance and Training Center
- National Association of the Deaf resources
- Hearing Loss Association of America resources
- North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Resources
- National Consortium of Telehealth Resource Center webinars

# Works Cited

1. [Forbes Health: 'Deafness And Hearing Loss Statistics'](#)
2. [American Academy of Audiology: 'Seniors and Hearing Loss'](#)
3. [Hearing Loss Association of America: 'Hearing Loss Facts and Statistics'](#)
4. [The New York Times: 'Hearing Loss Threatens Mind, Life and Limb'](#)
5. [National Library of Medicine: 'Increased risk of depression in patients with acquired sensory hearing loss: A 12-year follow-up study'](#)

# Additional Free Resources for Washington State Behavioral Health Providers

## EDUCATIONAL SERIES:

- UW Traumatic Brain Injury – Behavioral Health ECHO
- UW Psychiatry & Addictions Case Conference ECHO
- **UW TelePain series**

## PROVIDER CONSULTATION LINES

- **UW Pain & Opioid Provider Consultation Hotline**
- Psychiatry Consultation Line
- Partnership Access Line (pediatric psychiatry)
- Perinatal Psychiatry Consultation Line

