



DeafBlind

Communication Guidelines Checklist for Healthcare Providers Working with DeafBlind Patients

Healthcare providers and sign language interpreters can communicate more effectively with people with a combined hearing and vision loss during telehealth appointments by following a few simple tips. Being aware of the unique needs of people with hearing and vision loss and following these tips will ensure that the DeafBlind person can communicate effectively with the healthcare provider and get the services they need.

Health Provider Checklist

- Be prepared to extend your appointment time to allow enough time for communication to be effective
- When taking turns speaking:
 - Pause for three-seconds before talking so that adjustments in interpreting can be made
 - Identify yourself before speaking
- Ask the patient if your rate of speech is working well or if you should speed up or slow down
- Be patient with the communication process
- Do your best to provide services from a quiet and less busy environment
- Have good lighting that illuminates your face
- Turn off auto-focus on webcam
- Ensure that no light is coming from windows behind you that may cause shadows on your face
- Wear a clear facemask if required to wear a facemask
- Make eye contact with the DeafBlind patient and speak directly to them, not the interpreter
- Ask the patient to clarify what you have said to ensure they understand
- Avoid wearing white lab coats and wear a contrasting top. This aids in visibility and lipreading

American Sign Language Interpreter Checklist

- Wear contrasting, solid color tops
- Use contrasting, solid backdrops
- Turn off the auto-focus on your webcam
- Work in a quiet environment with no distractions
- Ensure that there is plenty of light to illuminate your face and signs
- Ensure no light is coming from windows behind you that may cause shadows on your face

To learn more about your rights during telehealth appointments, and how to advocate for your communication access, please contact the [NC DSDHH Regional Center](#) near you.



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This document was developed through a collaborative process involving the National Consortium of Telehealth Resource Centers.

