Building Deaf Allied Services:

Vera House and the Syracuse Deaf Community (part 2)

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Who We Are

• Jennifer Shaw
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• Vera House, Inc
Summary of Project EMERGE

• OVW Funding
• Needs and assets assessment forming the strategic plan
• Accomplishment of various goals
So, what has becoming Accessible to Deaf individuals looked like?
Tools for Building Relationships

• Expand your knowledge and understanding of Deaf Culture
• Meeting guidelines
• Policy/Protocol Development
• Deaf/Signing Advocates
• Trauma Informed Qualified Interpreters
• Interpreters at Events
• Videophones at shelter and main offices
A closer look at building relationships:

- Identify leaders within the Deaf Community
- Hold Deaf Dialogues
- Invite Deaf Community to Vera House and ARISE for an open house
- Attend Deaf Advisory Counsel meetings
- Include Deaf survivors in the Project EMERGE Advisory Group
- Ongoing education for staff on Deaf Culture and Deafhood
- Offer ASL Classes
Meeting Guidelines

• Determining seating arrangements lead by Deaf individuals

• Ensuring effective communication
  – Securing ASL Interpreters
  – Defining Concepts and Terms
  – Multiple conversations
  – Pausing when writing
Interpreter Policy

Policy should include language that:

• Establishes the agency is responsible for providing interpreters, including the financial responsibility
• Instructs staff to engage in communication with the Deaf individual, not the interpreter
• Provides confidentiality for the Deaf individual
• Asks for preferred method of communication
• Asks for names of preferred interpreters
• Reminds staff and volunteers to not act as interpreters
• Provides information on agencies that provide interpreting services
Trauma Informed Qualified Interpreters (TIQIs)

• Need to have ASL Interpreters trained to be more effective in communicating with Deaf Survivors, both for themselves and for the survivor
  
  – Received 30+ hours of training on understanding domestic and sexual violence, understanding Deaf Culture and the intersection of domestic and sexual violence, providing trauma informed interpreting
Trauma Informed Qualified Interpreters (TIQIs) part 2

• Regular conversations about maintaining boundaries
• Used by other agencies
• Provide a deeper foundation from which trust can be built
Deaf/Signing Advocates

• Provide advocacy services in a far more meaningful and culturally based manner
• Teams with Employed Advocates
• Assists to decrease isolation in shelters
• Received over 30+ hours of training
Other tools

- Publicizing the availability of ASL Interpreters
- Interpreters at events
- Videophones at shelter and main offices
- Security/fire alarm changes at shelters
Increasing Accessibility for Deaf individuals outside of Vera House

• Partnering with law enforcement agencies
  – Policy/protocol
  – Training on Deaf Culture facilitated by A Deaf person
    • Myths about Deaf individuals
    • Activities
    • Information on ASL Interpreters
Disability/Community Service Providers

- Interpreter policies
- Deaf Culture/Communication Education