A Tool Kit for Communication and COVID-19

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Special Populations Unit

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Why?

- Essential for sharing symptoms people may be having
- Complying with medical treatment so he/she can get better if they are ill
- Access to information on COVID-19 and what is happening in their community
- To have equal access for communicating their feelings, many people are feeling anxious and scared
Communication Profile
A quick, person-centered tool used to help those that may not know the individual well enough to communicate effectively with them.

Care Needs Form
Quick snap shot made to be provided to medical professionals in case of emergency.
• A tool that can be used to facilitate communication while for any individual that is in the hospital.

• It includes a visual pain chart, a communication board, and communication tips.
Tools & Resources for Individuals who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, or Deaf-Blind
Signs for in Hospital Rooms

I AM **DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING**

WITH UNIQUE

COMMUNICATION NEEDS.

I AM **DEAF-BLIND**

WITH UNIQUE

COMMUNICATION NEEDS.
Tips for Supporting Someone who is Deaf-Blind

- Communication methods are as individualized as the person and may include:
  - Touch cues
  - Gestures
  - Real objects as reference
  - Tactile Sign Language
  - Large print or close up viewing for someone with low vision
  - Braille

- A person with deaf-blindness typically navigates life via touch; touching objects allows people to understand information in the environment.
- Communication may take much longer than expected.
- The individual may prefer more communication than expected, such as describing where things are or what you are doing.
- Many people with deaf-blindness, particularly those with an additional disability such as a developmental disability, may not have a complete system of communication and may not understand a lot that is happening around them.
- Being in an unfamiliar environment and experiencing things out of the normal routine, is very challenging for someone with deaf-blindness. Helping the individual to feel safe and calm is an important prerequisite to communication and treatment.

- What to do:
  - Let them know you are there by touching them gently on the shoulder.
  - Identify yourself in the same way with touch (your watch, ring, long hair, glasses, etc.), your name, and your role, each time you interact with them.
  - Allow extra time for the person to consider their response. A delay does not necessarily mean they do not have a response.
  - Tell them when you are leaving the room.
  - Do not force them to touch something or move their hands or body without permission first.
  - Do not move important items around.
  - For someone with a vision loss, seeing the item up close, in their periphery, with brighter light, or with contrasting colors may be needed.
• Regularly updated information on COVID-19 in American Sign Language (ASL)
  – https://www.nad.org/coronavirus/
  – https://emergencyaccess.info/

• The Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN) has a webpage developed to provide resources and supports:

• Helen Keller National Center also has a webpage:
RA-ODPDeafServices@pa.gov
or
RA-PWSpecialPopUnit@pa.gov