

WHAT IF I CAN'T HEAR YOU?

Dr Leena Vuorinen
Deaf Services Queensland
Aged care Forum
19th May 2017

This presentation will

- Introduce Deaf Services Queensland
- Give a snapshot of Deaf people, culture and identity
- Take you to a journey with Deaf seniors who want to access aged care
- Identify challenges and barriers deaf people experience in aged care
- Give you some tips and ideas how to provide deaf friendly services

Deaf Services Queensland

- Leading end to end provider of support services and information to Deaf and hard of hearing people across Queensland
- Operating since 1903
- Our Vision: Individuals and community empowered, connected and achieving

Deaf Services Queensland

- A state wide not-for profit organisation
- 6 Offices: Cairns, Townsville, Mackay, Rockhampton, Maryborough and head office in Brisbane
- Outreach locations: Charters Towers, Ayr, Yeppoon, Bundaberg, Hervey Bay, Maroochydore, Caboolture, Toowoomba, Ipswich, Gold Coast

Ageing Well services



AGEING

WELL

- Ageing Well team provides
 - information on aged care and other aged related topics
 - Home care to eligible seniors
 - Friendly visits to deaf seniors in residential care
 - Home care services in Brisbane, Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast and Rockhampton

Deaf people

- 95% of Deaf children are born to hearing families
- Most hearing families with Deaf members do not sign
- Deaf people do not view themselves as being disabled
- It is hearing (mainstream) society that makes Deaf people disabled
- English is a second language, many are not proficient
- Interpreters are not just for Deaf people but for hearing people who don't know Auslan

Facts on Deaf people

- Not all Deaf people are literate
- Auslan is not the same as English
- Only 70% at best can be lip-read
- Informal supports, friends and family are not always fluent in Auslan. Often do not sign at all
- An affirming nod does not mean the person has understood
- Support person is not the interpreter and cannot support and interpret simultaneously

Deaf culture and community

- Deaf people have their own language, their own community and identity
- Deaf people, their language, the Deaf community is one of the LEAST understood of all disability cohorts and cultural linguistic minorities

Cultural differences

HEARING CULTURE	DEAF CULTURE
Personal questions = nosey	Personal questions = expected
If late, no questions asked	If late, must know why
Money is a private subject	Money is discussed
Goodbye = 1 time possible hug	Goodbye = many times with a hug expected
Use 'sandwich' approach for feedback	Be clear and straight to the point with feedback (blunt)
If you don't have anything nice to say, don't say it.	Personal comments (positive or negative) are a sign of caring

Aged care and Deaf older people

First contact with My Aged Care

- Contact made by phone
 - National Relay Services (NRS) available
 - However not all seniors have equipment or/and know how to use NRS

First contact with My Aged Care

- Contact made by internet
 - Online referral form not easy to find on MAC website
 - Sign languages are not an option of a client's native language when completing the form

Referrals and assessments

- How to inform a client about their referrals and assessment meetings when deaf people cannot take phone calls?
- If a mobile number is given;
 - MAC call centre calls three times, if not reaching a client, they will remove them from the register

Make sure information given to MAC highlights specific communication needs of a client!

Face-to-face assessments

- Always a qualified interpreter to ensure accurate communication and information gathering
- A pen and paper is not adequate for communication

Accessing services

- Information on aged care is complex and has a lot of terms and concepts that are not familiar to deaf seniors
- Provide enough time to explain and answer questions
- Unpacking concepts and terms

Service delivery

- Good communication between clients and support staff is a key for high quality, individualised and consumer directed care and services
- Deaf clients cannot learn your language -> you need to learn their language

Lack of Auslan interpreting services

- No funded interpreting services available for deaf people over 65 years old if a nature of an appointment is non-medical
- Who will pay for interpreting costs?

Representative of a client

- MAC doesn't share information to a third party (family members, friends etc.) without first getting a consent from a client

BUT

What if a client can't hear them on the phone?

- A medical certificate needs to be provided to MAC prior to a nomination of a representative
- What if a matter is urgent?

What can you do?

- Have a qualified interpreter always when communicating important information e.g. assessments, support planning, home care agreement
- Written messages: short and clear
- Keep your deaf clients well informed: e.g. who will visit when?
- Respect their rights to access services in a fair and equal way

Questions?

Dr Leena Vuorinen
Aged Care Manager
Deaf Services Queensland

Deaf individuals and the community empowered, connected and achieving