

Accessibility Strategies

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-  **Live captioning is available:** Click the CC Live Transcription button to show and hide captions during today's event. 05
-  **Need help or have questions for our presenters?** Please type in the Q&A box! 06



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A New Direction for Mobile Crisis Services

- » Change mobile crisis services so that the response is more resolution-focused and works to provide relief to people in crisis in the community.
- » Support people in crisis where they are, while using the least restrictive means necessary.

Mobile Crisis Services

- » *Mobile crisis services provide rapid response, individual assessment and community-based stabilization to Medi-Cal members who are experiencing a behavioral health crisis. Mobile crisis services are designed to provide relief to members experiencing a behavioral health crisis, including through de-escalation and stabilization techniques; reduce the immediate risk of danger and subsequent harm; and avoid unnecessary emergency department care, psychiatric inpatient hospitalizations and law enforcement involvement.*

A New Direction for Mobile Crisis Services



» Mobile crisis services should be:

- Person-centered
- Trauma-informed
- Equity-driven
- Brief intervention: de-escalation and resolution focused
- Working from a lens of least restrictive interventions
- Culturally responsive, linguistically appropriate, and accessible

Welcome and Introductions



Introductions

In the chat box, we invite you to share your:

- » Name
- » Role
- » Organization
- » One thing you're hoping to learn today

Today's Presenters



Jennifer Hodgson, PhD, LMFT

Principal

Health Management Associates
(HMA)

Agenda

- » BHIN 23-025: Accessibility Services Requirements
- » Invisible Disabilities
 - Strategies for Supporting People with Invisible Disabilities
- » What Does It Mean to Be Hard of Hearing?
 - Prevalence of Hearing Conditions Nationally
 - Impacts of Hearing Loss on Mental Health
 - Accessibility Strategies for Mobile Crisis Teams Working with the Hard of Hearing Community
 - Technology to Enhance Accessibility
- » What Does it Mean to Experience Impaired Vision?
 - Impacts of Visual Impairment on Mental Health
 - Visual Impairment Prevalence
 - Accessibility Strategies for Working with Our Community with Visual Impairments

Agenda

- » Accessibility Strategies for Working with the Non-Verbal Community
- » Working with the Limited English Proficiency Population
 - ADA and Use of Interpreters
 - Important Things to Remember about Interpreting
 - California Interpreter Certification
 - DHCS - Free Language Assistance Services
 - Examples of On-Demand Language Assistance Services
 - Who is Not Recommended to Use for Interpretation
- » Summary
- » Q&A

Learning Objectives

Participants will:

- » Address accessibility services requirements as described in [BHIN 23-025](#).
- » Understand the impact of “invisible” disabilities and accessibility needs.
- » Describe communication strategies, adaptive equipment, and other accommodation supports for mobile crisis teams working with individuals with hearing and visual impairments.
- » Identify best practices for using interpreters during mobile crisis services.



Learning Building Blocks

» [Previous trainings](#) related to this topic:

- Consultation and Supervision with Mobile Crisis Teams from a Trauma-Informed and Culturally Responsive Lens
- Community Partnership Coordination Strategies
- Staffing Mobile Crisis Teams and Team Composition
- Introduction to Culturally Responsive Crisis Care for Diverse Communities
- Culturally Responsive Crisis Care for Children/Youth and Families and Children with IDD
- Culturally Responsive Crisis Care for Ind/Families with IDD – Adult

» Upcoming trainings related to this topic:

- Verification, Documentation, and Access to Services

BHIN 23-025: Accessibility Services Requirements



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BHIN 23-025: Accessibility Services Requirements - Telehealth

- » The use of telehealth (which includes both synchronous audio-only (e.g., telephone) and video interactions) can offer an important avenue for expanding the expertise available to an onsite mobile crisis team. In addition to the staffing requirements listed above, mobile crisis teams may utilize telehealth to:
 - Engage translators or interpreters for members who may need American Sign Language or other interpretation or translation services.

BHIN 23-025 Accessibility Services Requirements: Cultural Competency, Linguistic Appropriate Care and Accessibility

- » Medi-Cal behavioral health delivery systems shall comply with all applicable cultural competence and linguistic requirements in state and federal law, including those in W&I section [14684, subdivision \(a\)\(9\)](#); CCR, Title 9, section [1810.410](#); the contract between the MHP and DHCS, contracts between DMC counties and DHCS, and contracts between DMC-ODS counties and DHCS;¹ [BHIN 20-070](#) and [23-001](#); and DMH Information Notices [10-02](#) and [10-17](#). Medi-Cal behavioral health delivery systems shall explain how they will meet these requirements as part of their implementation plans.

¹ [DMC-ODS Contracts](#), the [DMC Contract](#), and the [2022 – 2027 MHP Contract](#): ([BHIN 23-025, p. 22](#))

BHIN 23-025 Accessibility Services Requirements: Implementation Plan

- » Mechanisms to ensure culturally responsive and accessible care
- » Outreach to advise Medi-Cal members on availability of the service and how to access it

Invisible Disabilities



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What are Invisible Disabilities?

- » Hidden or unseen disabilities, or conditions, that affect an individual's daily life but are not readily apparent to others.
- » It is an unnoticed disability at first glance, when the person in question has not made their difficulties known.
 - 80% of people with disabilities have invisible disabilities
- » **CHAT: What are examples of invisible disabilities?**

Strategies for Supporting People with Invisible Disabilities

- » Ask: "Do you need anything in particular for our visit to be the most helpful to you?"
- » Build a climate of trust so members can express their specific needs.
- » Do not assume the individual does not have a disability.
- » Do not assume that observations (e.g., slurred speech, imbalance, shaking) are signs of a substance use disorder.
- » Pay attention to non-verbal cues (e.g., squinting, cupping hand over ear).
- » Try to face the person while speaking and listening.
- » If you do not understand what an individual is saying, politely ask them to repeat themselves or explain what they just shared so you can better understand.
 - Likewise, if someone does not understand you, volunteer to repeat it again or try and alternate strategy for communicating.
- » Break down complex information or instructions into smaller parts.
- » Listen and ask follow up questions respectfully.
- » **CHAT: What are other strategies that could help support people with invisible disabilities?**

What Does It Mean to Be Hard of Hearing?



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What Does It Mean to Be Hard of Hearing?

- » According to the [National Deaf Center](#), “the deaf community includes people who identify as hard of hearing, late-deafened, deaf blind, deaf disabled, and more. Some experiences are shared by all members of these diverse communities, while others are unique.”
- » Most people who are hard of hearing can perceive sounds but may experience difficulties in following a conversation.
- » Loss of hearing ranges from mild to profound.
- » People who are completely deaf represent a minority of the hard of hearing population.
- » A person who is deaf is not necessarily non-speaking, just as a non-speaking person is not necessarily deaf.
- » There are a range of abilities and preferences related to people who are hard of hearing.
- » Even people who do not have diagnosable hearing loss may have periods where they struggle to hear well (e.g., colds, environmental factors).

Prevalence of Hearing Conditions Nationally (1)

- » According to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention¹ and Hearing Loss Association of America² (HLAA):
 - About 48 million (or 14%) of Americans report some degree of hearing loss.
 - One of out of five men and one of out of eight women report they have at least some trouble hearing.
 - Hearing loss is twice as common as diabetes or cancer.
- » The National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders reports:³
 - Age is the strongest predictor of hearing loss among adults.
 - 91% of adults with hearing loss are aged 50 and older.
 - Approximately 3 of every 1,000 children in the United States are born with a detectable hearing loss in one or both ears.
 - 15% of school-age children (6-19) and 20% of teenagers have some degree of hearing loss.

Prevalence of Hearing Conditions Nationally (2)

- » Thirteen percent of adults aged 18 and over, have some difficulty hearing even when using a hearing aid and 1.6% either had a lot of difficulty hearing or could not hear at all, even when using a hearing aid.¹
 - Non-Hispanic, white adults aged 45–64 had higher rates of some difficulty hearing, a lot of difficulty hearing, or being unable to hear at all, compared with other races and Hispanic-origin groups.
 - In 2019, 7.1% of adults (aged 45 and over) used a hearing aid; use was higher among men than women in all age groups.
 - While hearing loss can occur at any age, prevalence increases with age,^{2,3} and has been shown to be associated with cognitive and functional decline in older adults.^{4,5,6,7}

¹Madans et al. (2021); ²Zelaya (2015); ³Gorman & Lin (2016); ⁴Loughrey et al. (2018); ⁵Deal et al. (2017); ⁶Lin et al (2013); ⁷Chen et al. (2015)

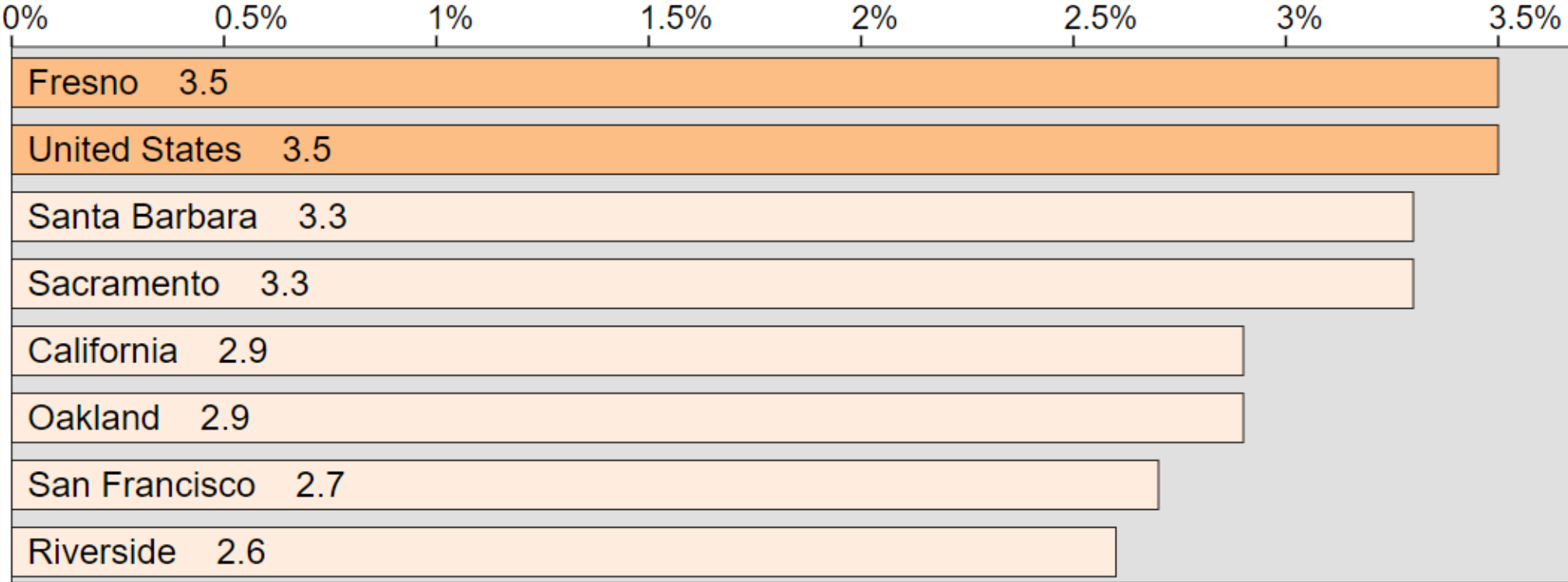
Prevalence of Hearing Conditions Nationally (3)

» According to the HLAA:

- On-the-job exposure is particularly common among U.S. Veterans, who can access VA services for hearing aids.
- Hearing loss and/or tinnitus is the most common service-connected disability among U.S. Veterans.
- 2.7 million veterans receive hearing care or are diagnosed with a disability related to hearing loss.
- Half of all blast injuries experienced by Veterans resulted in permanent hearing loss.

Prevalence of Hearing Disability in California

Percentage of People with a Hearing Disability



Impacts of Hearing Loss on Mental Health

- » Hearing loss can make it more difficult to interact with peers and can lead to decreased social engagement, depression, or mood disturbances.¹
- » Hearing loss is strongly associated with the development of depression in older adults.²
- » Untreated hearing loss may contribute to increased mortality and higher health care spending, also impairing communication and social interactions leading to social isolation, and depression and psychological distress.³
- » Regular hearing aid use has been associated with lower prevalence of depression.^{4,5}
 - Some studies have shown reductions in depressive symptoms within three months of hearing aid use.²

Accessibility Strategies for Mobile Crisis Teams Working with the Hard of Hearing Community(1)

- » Mobile Crisis Dispatch will be asking if there are hearing or visual conditions of which teams should be aware to provide effective care.
- » Teams should have apps installed on phones or other mobile crisis team technology that helps amplify sound and improve readability of websites, forms, resource information, etc.
- » Teams should know what resources are readily available within the county for those with audio or visual needs and preferences.
 - Be familiar with interpreter services and how to access them.
 - Practice using them before and during a visit!

Accessibility Strategies for Mobile Crisis Teams Working with the Hard of Hearing Community (2)

- » Phone, email, live chat, or text SMS are all options for working with members with hearing loss.
- » Speak clearly and distinctly for people who can lip read.
- » If videos are shown, make sure subtitles or closed captions are turned on, or a transcript provided.
- » Use a common vocabulary so if an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter is involved, they can easily translate what your team is saying to the deaf member.
- » Ask if there is a preferred ear to align with, or specific distance from the individual to improve communication and facilitate lip reading.

Technology to Enhance Accessibility

- » Audio induction loops or amplification systems improve hearing quality of those wearing hearing aids.
- » Apps help the deaf community understand and be understood by hearing people through artificial intelligence.

Commonly Used Apps for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community (1)

App	Description
Live Transcribe	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Google's Live Transcribe is a free speech-to-text app for deaf or hard-of-hearing to communicate with deaf and hard-of-hearing communities.• Uses Google's speech recognition technology to automatically transcribe speech in near-real time for Android platforms.• Free• https://www.android.com/accessibility/live-transcribe/
Live Listen	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Designed to turn the iPhone into a remote microphone.• Free• May be used with AirPods, AirPods Pro, AirPods Max, Powerbeats Pro, Beats Fit Pro, or Beats Studio Pro, your iOS or iPadOS device needs iOS or iPadOS 14.3 or later.
Google Translate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Free translation tool.• Subtitle translation capabilities.• https://translate.google.com/

Commonly Used Apps for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community (2)

App	Description
Tap SOS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Allows people who are deaf and hard of hearing to connect with emergency services in a nonverbal way.• When connecting with an emergency service, the app pinpoints the exact location and sends all the data stored in the user's profile in seconds.• Won the 2018 Digital Health Award as the best effective method for all smartphone users to contact the emergency services in situation of distress.• Free• Available on iOS and Android.
Sound Amplifier	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Equivalent of the Live Listen is an option included in basic iPhone settings. It offers more advanced functions in terms of sound volume adjustments and eliminates background noise.• Sound Amplifier apps improve the audio quality of devices when using headphones to provide a more comfortable and natural listening experience. It enhances and amplifies sounds from the real world.• Free• Useful if there is a poor sound environment.• Available on Smartphones• https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.google.android.accessibility.soundamplifier&hl=en_US&gl=US&pli=1

What Does It Mean to Be a Person with a Visual Impairment?



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What Does It Mean to Experience Impaired Vision?

- » Any vision loss, whether it is someone who cannot see at all or someone who has partial vision loss.
- » Three categories:
 - Low Vision- loss of visual acuity while retaining some vision.
 - Legally Blind - may have some useful vision but less than 20/200; visual impairment that requires some special accommodations (e.g., readers, audio-taped texts, large print, magnifying glass, tape record conversations to take notes).
 - Totally Blind- individuals need braille, raised-line drawings, audio recordings, and/or other non-visual media as an accommodation for accessing the content of visually presented materials.

Visual Impairment Prevalence Nationally

- » Approximately six million Americans have vision loss and one million have blindness.¹
- » More than 1.6 million Americans who are living with vision loss or blindness are younger than age 40.¹
- » Over 350,000 people with vision loss or blindness are living in group quarters, such as nursing homes or prisons.²
- » 20% of all people older than 85 years of age experience permanent vision loss.²
- » More females than males experience permanent vision loss or blindness.¹
- » Higher risk of vision loss among Hispanic/Latino and Black individuals than among White individuals.¹

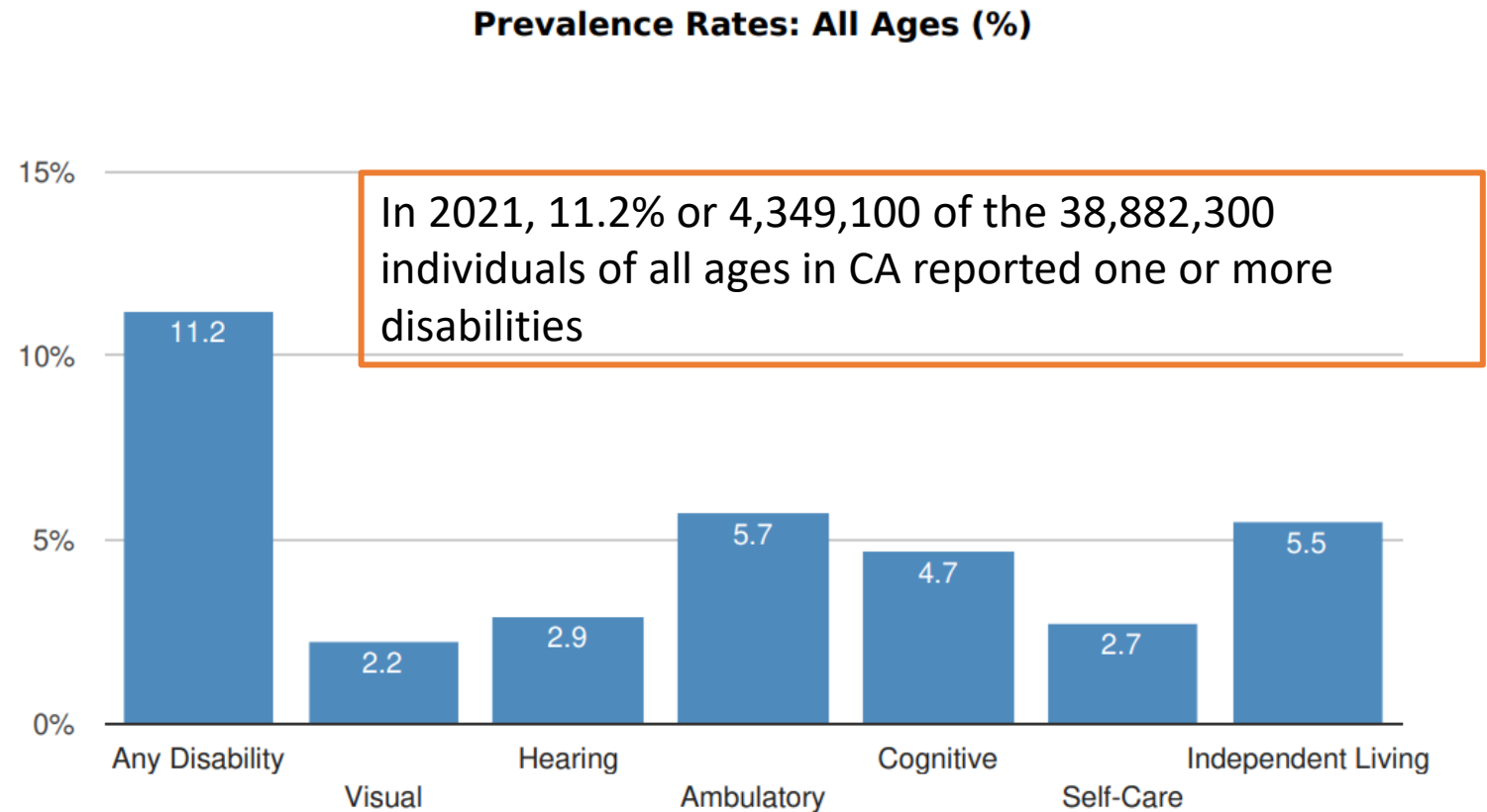
Impacts of Visual Impairment on Mental Health

- » Depression and anxiety are elevated among people with visual impairments.
 - Individuals of lower socioeconomic status are at increased risk for vision impairment and subsequent mental health problems.
- » Existing psychosocial interventions for improving mental health in people with visual impairment show some promise but are limited by low adherence and lack generalizability.
- » Unseen messages such as facial expressions, eye contact, and gestures may lead to confusion and cause anxiety.

Prevalence Rates of Vision Difficulty: California

Total	747,867
Sex	
Male	342,612
Female	405,255
Age	
Under 5	8,344
5-17	41,089
18-34	96,956
35-64	258,872
65-74	130,248
75 and older	212,358

Prevalence of disability among non-institutionalized people of all ages in California in 2021*



Accessibility Strategies for Working with the Community Experiencing Visual Impairment (1)

- » Always ask first before offering any help, and do not be offended if it is refused. Some people have had bad experiences with what a sighted person thinks is helpful!
- » The use of a white cane or service dog does not necessarily mean that a person is totally blind.
- » Be precise if giving instructions – giving directions by pointing and saying, ‘it is down there on the right’ is thoughtless.
- » When possible, provide large print books, electronic visual aids, or other magnifying devices for reading materials.
- » Voice-based mobile apps allow the blind or visually impaired to read anything that contains text, such as websites and local files on your device.

Accessibility Strategies for Working with the Community with Visually Impairment (2)

- » Use everyday descriptives and include words like 'look,' 'see,' and 'read,' remembering that people who are blind or have visual impairments have the same vocabulary as people without visual impairments.
- » Explain noises and silences, and do not shout.
- » Do not expect or invite others to speak for blind people.
- » Do not be afraid to touch but be sensitive to cultural differences.
- » Describe any sudden changes in the environment (e.g., changing ground surfaces, moving to a different seat or standing location in the room).

Accessibility Strategies for Working with the Community with Visual Impairments (3)

- » Some people may be accompanied by a guide dog, but the animal must never be distracted.
 - Do not pet, feed, or distract a guide dog. They are not pets; they are working companions on whom a blind person depends.
- » Once in a conversation, never leave without saying you are doing so.
- » Speak first and introduce yourself.
- » Shake hands but only if a hand is offered.
- » Look at them during conversation and adopt the same level of position, (e.g., sit or stand).

Accessibility Strategies for Working with Our Community Members Who are Non-Verbal



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Accessibility Strategies for Working with Our Community Members Who Are Non-Verbal

- » When someone cannot or will not talk, try other non-verbal ways of communication (e.g., experiment with writing, pictures, hand motions, eye contact, and facial expressions) and use best judgment on what seems and feels appropriate in the moment.
- » Guidelines:
 - Introduce yourself and be inclusive – do not assume someone cannot hear or understand because they will not speak.
 - Watch your tone – if you are talking with a teen, speak as if you are talking with a teen and not a child.
 - Reduce distractions (e.g., side conversations).
 - Be aware of your physical presence (e.g., your size in comparison).

Working with Our Community with Limited English Proficiency



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Working with the Population with Limited English Proficiency [LEP] (1)

- » According to a report published by the World Health Organization, language barriers constitute one of the most important factors constricting mental healthcare access for immigrants who lack proficiency in the host country language.^{1,2}
- » The pandemic and its social and economic repercussions are contributing to increased stress and anxiety among people.³
 - Although all people are likely to be affected, immigrant communities of color are especially vulnerable to the mental health fallout from the pandemic and the need for linguistically accessible mental healthcare is even more acute.
- » A population-based cohort study in Ontario, Canada found that immigrant youth were more likely than non-immigrants to seek emergency department services for a first mental health crisis without previous outpatient mental healthcare.⁴

Working with the Population with Limited English Proficiency(2)

- » In the absence of bilingual and bicultural mental health providers, professional interpreters (those with formal training) are considered the most important resource to overcome language barriers, more important than ad hoc interpreters (untrained volunteers such as friends and family members), multilingual brochures and resources, and bilingual staff members.^{1,2}
- » A systematic review on the quality of mental health services for LEP patients found that use of professional versus ad hoc interpreters facilitates disclosure of sensitive material and improves patient satisfaction.³
- » California is the leader in percentage of the population who are non-English speaking.³
 - 45 percent of California's inhabitants speak a language other than English in the home.

Most Commonly Spoken Languages in California

- » According to Worldatlas.com, the most spoken languages in California include (in order of prevalence):
1. English (20,379,282)
 2. Spanish (10,672,610)
 3. Chinese (1,231,425)
 4. Tagalog (796,451)- standardized national language of the Phillipines
 5. Vietnamese (558,932)
 6. Korean (367,523)
 7. Armenian (192,980)
 8. Persian (203,770)

CHAT: What are the most commonly spoken languages in your county?

Use of Interpreters and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

- » The ADA places responsibility for providing effective communication, including the use of interpreters, directly on covered entities.
 - Entities cannot require a person to bring someone to interpret.
- » A covered entity can rely on a companion to interpret in only two situations:
 - In an emergency involving an imminent threat to the safety or welfare of an individual or the public, an adult or minor child accompanying a person who uses sign language or a language other than English may be relied upon to interpret or facilitate communication only when a qualified interpreter is not available.
 - In situations not involving an imminent threat, an adult accompanying someone who uses language other than English or sign language may be relied upon to interpret or facilitate communication when:
 - the individual requests this,
 - the accompanying adult agrees, and
 - reliance on the accompanying adult is appropriate under the circumstances. This exception does not apply to minor children.

Important Things to Remember about Interpreting Services

- » BHIN 23 025 (p. 9) requires mobile crisis services engage translators or interpreters for members who may need American Sign Language or other interpretation or translation services.
- » Translators do the writing and interpreters do the talking.
- » Phone interpreting is especially useful for offering support in rare languages, where finding a translator could prove more difficult.
- » Interpreters also help understand mannerisms, cultural practices, expectations, slang, and body language.
- » Types of interpreter services:
 - **on-site**- preferred but can also be more expensive since they may charge for travel time and parking expenses in addition to interpretation services.
 - **over-the-phone & video remote interpreting**- less expensive option than a face-to-face interpreter, but it can also come with technological challenges (e.g., poor video connection, weak Wi-Fi signal, missed nonverbal cues).

California Interpreter Certification

- » In California, interpreter certification is required for medical appointments.
 - To be a California certified interpreter, a person must be at least 18 years old and possess applicable language skills.
 - A “qualified interpreter” is someone who is considered competent to interpret in at least two languages after meeting a set of standards or criteria.

On-Demand Language Assistance Services

- » Counties should identify companies to contract with that offer professionally trained on-site, over-the-phone, video remote, American Sign Language, and real-time mental health interpreters.
- » Counties are responsible for the costs of interpretation services.
 - There are vendors but they will charge for this service.
- » **CHAT: What types of language assistance services have you found to be most helpful in your work?**

California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS): Free Language Assistance Services

- » If members need to interact with DHCS directly, DHCS provides free aids and services to people with disabilities to communicate effectively with DHCS, such as:
 - Qualified sign language interpreters and real-time captioning
 - Written information in other formats such as Braille, large print, audio, accessible electronic formats and other formats
- » Provides free language services to the public whose primary language is not English, such as:
 - Qualified interpreters
 - Information written in other languages
- » Contact numbers:
 - Call (800) 896-4042 (TTY (800) 896-2512) for issues related to Mental Health services.
 - Call (800) 879-2772 (TTY 711) for issues related to Substance Use Disorder services.

Using Family and Friends for Interpreting Services

- » Children should not be used as healthcare interpreters.
- » Friends, relatives, or children should not be used for interpreters as they may make mistakes that could lead to wrong diagnoses or other problems.
- » People closely connected to the individual seeking support should not be interpreters as they would be placed in a difficult position to interpret content that they may struggle to share.
- » **CHAT: What are some additional challenges with having family and friends provide interpreting support?**

Summary (1)

- » Counties are required by [BHIN 23-025](#) to have mechanisms to ensure culturally responsive and accessible care and to advise Medi-Cal members on availability of the service and how to access it.
- » To provide people with invisible disabilities with the best possible outcome, it is important you build a climate of trust so they can freely express their specific needs.
- » There is a whole range of abilities and preferences related to people who are hard of hearing.
- » There is a close connection between hearing and visual conditions that are untreated or undertreated and mental health outcomes.
- » Mobile Crisis Dispatch will be asking if there are any hearing or visual conditions of which teams should be aware to provide effective care.
- » It is important to have apps installed on your mobile crisis team technology that helps amplify sound and improve readability of websites, forms, resource information. etc.

Summary (2)

- » Always ask first before offering any help, and do not be offended if it is refused.
- » In the absence of bilingual and bicultural mental health providers, professional interpreters (those with formal training) are the gold standard for working through language barriers, rather than ad hoc interpreters (untrained volunteers such as friends and family members), multilingual brochures and resources, and bilingual staff members
- » There are a variety of types of interpreter services. On-site services are preferred but can also be more expensive. Over-the-phone and video remote interpreting are a less expensive option than a face-to-face interpreter, but it can also come with technological challenges (e.g., poor video connection, weak Wi-Fi signal, missed nonverbal cues).

Questions?



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Your feedback is important to us!

Post-Survey, attendees need to opt into the 90-day survey so we can collect your emails to send out the Certificates of Completion

The completion of this survey is vital to our quality control and to the future funding of this project, as it allows us to provide you with training and technical assistance at no cost. In addition, it allows us to continually improve our services and provide the information and resources you need in the field.

**Please take a few minutes to complete the survey!
Your time and feedback are greatly appreciated and valued!**

Thank You!



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Resources

- » [**American Translators Association**](#)
Nation's largest Translators association. They are well-known for their annual and specialized conferences. There is an Interpreters Division that includes medical interpreting.
- » [**California Healthcare Interpreting Association \(CHIA\)**](#)
The California Healthcare Interpreting Association is dedicated to improving the quality and availability of language services in the delivery of health care. California's most important professional association of interpreters. They are responsible for writing California's Interpreter Standards of Practice.
- » [**Dos and Don'ts: Guidelines for Clinicians Working with Interpreters in Mental Health Settings**](#) (Nyculturalcompetence.org)
Website with concisely written and helpful information for working with individuals in mental health settings.
- » [**International Medical Interpreter Association**](#)
US-based international organization committed to the advancement of professional medical interpreters as the best practice to equitable language access to health care for linguistically diverse patients.
- » [**National Board of Certification for Medical Interpreters & California Interpreters**](#)
The National Board of Certification for Medical Interpreters (National Board) is recognized by the State of California's Division of Workers' Compensation (DWC) as an approved credentialing and certification program.
- » [**Northern California Translators Association**](#)
Site serves as a focal point for translators in Northern California. They are considered the region's chapter of the American Translators Association.
- » [**National Counsel on Interpreting in Health Care**](#)
Organization that promotes culturally competent professional healthcare interpreting as a means to support equal access to health care services for individuals with limited English proficiency.
- » [**Using Interpreters in Health and Mental Health Settings**](#)
Landing page for a course that can be taken for educational credit. However, on this page is a Table of Contents that is linked to a lot of great information within the page.

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