Tips for Working with Deaf and DeafBlind Colleagues

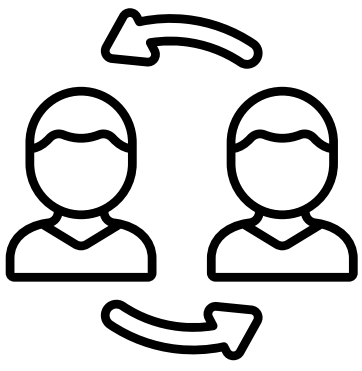
Communication Access

- Ask colleagues **their** preferred communication method (ASL, written English, captioning, tactile interpreting, etc.)
- Be flexible and open to adjusting depending on the situation.
- Face the Deaf or DeafBlind colleague directly.
- Make eye contact with your colleague (for DeafBlind, direct your body toward them).

In Meetings

- Provide agendas, notes, and materials in advance if possible.
- Use accessibility features (such as captions, interpreters, screen reader-friendly documents).
- Clearly indicate who is speaking.
- Ensure clear sight lines or tactile access to interpreters and communication partners.
- Avoid side conversations or interruptions by having one person speak at a time.

Everyday Interactions



- Include your Deaf/DeafBlind coworkers just as you would anyone else.
- Check in by asking how they prefer to communicate in the moment.
- Repeat or rephrase instead of saying “never mind” if something isn’t understood.
- Include colleagues in casual conversations, small talk, and group activities.
- Don’t assume — ask questions respectfully if you’re unsure.

Tips for Clear Communication

- ✅ **Pace yourself** – speak at a moderate speed.
- ✅ **Positioning** – ensure a clear sight line or tactile access.
- ✅ **One at a time** – avoid talking over others in group settings.
- ✅ **Get attention first** – gently wave, tap on the shoulder, or use agreed signals.
- ✅ **Be patient** – allow extra time for communication without rushing.
- ✅ **Respect preferences** – ask the individual how they prefer to communicate.