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Before exploring ways how hearing allies can support Deaf survivors of domestic violence (DV), we need to cover another aspect of "ism" impacting all aspects of Deaf people's lives called audism.

### **WHAT IS AUDISM?**

1. Audism is the hearing way of dominating, restructuring, and exercising authority over the deaf community. It includes such professional people as administrators of schools for deaf children and of training programs for deaf adults, interpreters, and some audiologists, speech therapists, otologists, psychologists, psychiatrists, librarians, researchers, social workers, and hearing aid specialists. (Lane 1992: 43)
2. An attitude based on pathological thinking which results in a negative stigma toward anyone who does not hear; like racism or sexism, audism judges, labels, and limits individuals on the basis of whether a person hears and speaks. (Humphrey and Alcorn 1995: 85)
3. The notion that one is superior based on one's ability to hear or behave in the manner of one who hears. (Tom Humphries 1977, quoted in Zak 1996)
4. Here are some common quotes reflecting audism in our society-
  - Poor English skills are because the Deaf cannot hear and because the Deaf's first language is American Sign Language (NOT TRUE!)
  - Deaf children look like animals when they sign with their hands
  - Deaf people shuffle as they walk because they have an inner ear imbalance that causes insecurity in movement
  - The Deaf should not be allowed to drive because they cannot hear emergency sirens or other audible warnings
  - The Deaf are broken and need to be fixed medically with Cochlear Implants or Hearing Aids
  - Only Deaf people who learn to voice English without a "Deaf accent" will find successful employment
5. Hearing society tend to view the Deaf as a problem that needs to be fixed. The banning of sign language in Deaf schools is a result of audism.

### **WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP STOP AUDISM?**

1. Don't tolerate it
2. Don't participate in audism
3. Help educate others about audism
4. Discuss audism with others to understand its meaning and impact
5. Read blogs on [www.DeafRead.com](http://www.DeafRead.com) to be aware about issues in the Deaf community

## **EXAMPLES OF LAWS HAVING DETRIMENTAL IMPACT ON OUR DEAF COMMUNITY**

1. Public Law 94-142
2. ADA
3. Mandatory hearing tests for infants
4. Milan Deaf Education Conference

## **ROLE AS HEARING ALLY**

1. Meet Deaf survivor where she is at
2. Do not decide for the survivor
3. Ask her what she wants
4. Balance act between advocating for access and checking in survivor for empowerment process
5. Be profoundly aware of your hearing privilege while advocating with Deaf survivor
6. Be aware of institutionalized audism in our society impacting Deaf survivor
7. Attached below is a visual brochure explaining to the survivor about the advocate's role

## **HOTLINE**

1. TTY--do not throw it out just yet
2. Videophone-- install one in your agency
3. Video relay services (VRS) become comfortable with using VRS
4. Create email option for Deaf survivors
5. TTY and email are not for all Deaf survivors
6. Not all VRS interpreters are properly trained in domestic violence field, so some messages do get lost in translation
7. VRS is for phone calls only--funded by FCC
8. Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) is hiring sign language interpreters using a webcam-- commonly used in rural areas

## **LAW ENFORCEMENT**

1. Deaf survivors do not report DV because they do not trust the law enforcement based on past experience
2. Police officers often ask the children or the hearing abuser to interpreter
3. Hearing abuser often twist the information to protect himself
4. Deaf survivors have been arrested because the hearing abuser said she was hysterical/abusive
5. Restraining order is complicated and the language is not Deaf-friendly
6. DeafHope developed a brochure with visual explanation how restraining order works (attached below)

### **LEGAL SYSTEM**

1. Deaf survivors' abusers rarely get prosecuted because of the system not friendly to Deaf survivors
2. Legal interpreters not trained to handle domestic violence cases
3. Court officials not trained to understand unique dynamics of the Deaf community (i.e. an interpreter may be relative of the abuser)
4. Deaf survivors would rather move on than be revictimized by the legal system

### **SHELTER**

1. Deaf women often prefer to stay at hotels where the rooms are ADA accommodated
2. Average length of stay at shelter for Deaf women is 24 hours
3. There is communication access at home with the abuser
4. Deaf culture and hearing culture often clash, creating crises
5. Support groups are hard to follow event with interpreter

### **GETTING SHELTER READY**

1. Install video phone
2. Let Deaf women have same access to video phone as hearing women with the phones
3. Do not take away their pagers
4. Allow them to watch TV with closed captions to compensate for not being able to communicate
5. Support groups-- you get more use out of your money paying for a Deaf advocate to do one-on-one counseling

via video phone than to pay for an interpreter for a support group

6. Use video created by ADWAS called "Handbook for Shelters Serving Deaf women and their children" which you can order at

[www.ADWAS.org](http://www.ADWAS.org) for \$60.00

7. Use DeafHope's power and control wheel and its movie called "Till DV Do Us Part" to help Deaf survivor recognize different areas of abuse and be able to process with you via an interpreter or a Deaf advocate through the video phone

8. If there is a DV agency nearby, allow the Deaf survivor to attend their Deaf DV support group

9. Create a visual version of the shelter rules with pictures and an ASL version with DVD or video signed by a Deaf person

## **CHILDREN**

1. Hearing children of Deaf parents are often asked to interpret by the medical professionals, law enforcement, shelter staff, and court officials. California has a law banning the use of children for interpreting

2. Children are often taken away from Deaf mothers because of audism

3. Children get their Deaf mother's attention by tapping on her body, stomping on the floor or flickering the room light -- this behavior is part of Deaf culture and often perceived by hearing as unruly behavior

4. When a child needs something, he already has a system of getting help from mom

5. Do not take over and help the child--always redirect the child to the mother

6. Do not judge -- be aware of your own hearing bias

7. Deaf mothers need their eyes for paging, filling out papers, reading legal forms, etc., so they are not ignoring their children --have a place for the children to read, play and draw while their mother takes care of business

8. It is normal for the children to be loud in deaf household--they blast their televisions, radios, and video games

9. You can work with the Deaf mother as a team for her to explain to the children how to embrace both worlds as bilingual children in a positive, empowering manner

10. [www.DoublePride.com](http://www.DoublePride.com)- website about how to support hearing children of Deaf parents

## **SYSTEM ADVOCACY**

1. Learn about audism everyday
2. Go to Deaf events to experience what its like not to understand what is going on
3. Ensure that the Deaf advocate has access on all levels
4. Do the system advocacy side by side with advocate, not for advocate
5. System advocacy includes ensuring communication access on all levels
6. Be an ally to pave ways for Deaf survivor to be able to get resources to get help for herself
7. Constantly check in with yourself about using your hearing power positively
8. Use [www.AccessingSafety.org](http://www.AccessingSafety.org) as your resource site--it includes contact information for Deaf DV agencies

## **WEBSITES**

[www.Deaf-Hope.org](http://www.Deaf-Hope.org)

[www.ADWAS.org](http://www.ADWAS.org)

[www.AccessingSafety.org](http://www.AccessingSafety.org)

[www.DoublePride.com](http://www.DoublePride.com)

[www.DeafRead.com](http://www.DeafRead.com)

<http://www.raa-deaf.org/sandbox1.html> (good article about audism)

## **VRS WEBSITE LIST**

[www.hovrs.com](http://www.hovrs.com)

[www.snapvrs.com](http://www.snapvrs.com)

[www.hamiltonrelay.com](http://www.hamiltonrelay.com)

[www.csdvrs.com](http://www.csdvrs.com)

[www.sorensoncommunications.com](http://www.sorensoncommunications.com)

[www.hawkrelay.com](http://www.hawkrelay.com)

## **Attachments**

1. A Deaf Survivor's journey in shelter



2. DeafHope Power and Control Wheel



