



Empowering Connections through Effective Communication

Communication Spotlight

May 6 is Interpreter Appreciation Day!

As we **spring** into this first edition of the Communication Corner newsletter, we can begin by celebrating communication with National Interpreter Appreciation Day! This day is observed on the first Wednesday of May, and recognizes the remarkable professionals who bridge language gaps, facilitate communication, and unite people.

An interpreter is someone who conveys spoken English into another language such as Spanish or American Sign Language. Make this day special by expressing gratitude to an interpreter at your workplace or in your community, for their hard work and dedication!



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Communication Tips



How to Work with an Interpreter

- Familiarize the interpreter with essential information like who, what, where, and why.
- Assure the individual understands the interpreter's role, which is to facilitate communication.
- Speak clearly and in a normal tone and speed.
- Avoid metaphors, acronyms, slang, or idioms.
- Pause between subjects or thoughts.
- Don't interrupt when the individual is signing, and the interpreter is interpreting.
- Speak directly to the non-English speaker.
- Do not use phrases like "tell them I said..."
- Never ask the interpreter not to sign something.
- Only one person speaks at a time.
- Don't talk when the interpreter is not interpreting.

Stories that Matter



Smitha is a Deaf individual who shares why having an interpreter with a shared identity is important. Deaf individuals have a wide range of language backgrounds, identities, and access needs. It's valuable to have interpreters with diverse experiences. Smitha talks about the importance of finding an interpreter that is the right fit for you. [See Smitha's story here!](#)

Resources and Upcoming Events



Office for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing (ODHH) 2026 Hearing Loss Expo

- **What:** See technology in action, learn about services, and attend informative sessions for D/deaf, hard of hearing, or DeafBlind individuals.
- **When:** March 10-11, 2026
- **Where:** Penn Harris Hotel, Camp Hill, PA
- [More Information](#)

POWER Library Resource - An online library that is free to any Pennsylvanian, and contains thousands of magazine, journal articles, and reference materials for people of all ages! There's even a resource where you can learn 140+ languages including ASL! [Check out this great resource!](#)

For help using an interpreter or creating social stories, contact Lori Milcic, ODP's Deaf Services Coordinator, at RA-ODPDeafServices@pa.gov.

Communication Tools

What is a Social Story?

A social story is a short, individualized narrative that can help someone better understand a situation, routine, or skill. They are often used to support individuals with limited communication or social skills and can benefit people of all ages!

Social stories use simple, clear language and visuals (pictures, symbols, photos) to convey information and should be shared, modeled, and repeated with the individual before the event, routine, or skill. Social stories do the following:

- Explain each step.
- Describe what to expect.
- Show what the individual can do.
- Reduce fear and anxiety by making things predictable.
- Support understanding, even if the individual cannot ask questions.
- Prepare an individual for new situations (going to the doctor) and daily activities (getting dressed).
- Help build confidence.



You can even create a social story that shares how to use an interpreter!

Did You Know?

Your brain processes visual information faster than text. Research shows that the human brain can identify images seen for as little as 13 milliseconds, while text processing requires 100 milliseconds or more to interpret symbols and assign meaning. That is why visual supports, such as social stories, are so important!