

Education and Workforce Development Cabinet
Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
Support Service Provider Expectations

Roles of the Support Service Provider

1. Confidentiality must be maintained in conversations between the Support Service Provider and the consumer. In situations that a Support Service Provider is called to interpret between two individuals who are deaf-blind but have different communication methods, these conversations must be confidential. Remember, the Code of Ethics “confidentiality” applies in all situations.
2. Guiding, orientation and mobility as required. This includes meals, tours, social activities, recreation, workshop or any other activity that consumer chooses to participate in. A consumer will need to learn the layout of meeting rooms, bathroom locations, social facilities, and so on.
3. Interpreting as required. Providing the consumer with access to as much information as possible. This may include reading or explaining written, visual or oral information that might not normally be a part “interpreting”. It may also include providing environmental information such as who is in the room, P/S system announcements, facial expressions, voice phone calls, interruptions, knocks at the door, etc.
4. Encourage the consumer to make their own choices, especially when several choices are possible. Respect their decisions and reserve your own opinions unless asked.
5. Make clear arrangements with the consumer regarding where and when you will meet. Be aware that it is difficult or impossible for the consumer to find the Support Service Provider on their own. It is very important that the Support Service Provider and consumer agree exactly when and where they will meet--and be on time. “I’ll see you tomorrow afternoon at the meeting” is not good enough. “I’ll meet you at 12:45pm at the front door of Elliot Park” is much better.

6. Maintain clear and open communication with the consumer. Share your feelings and concerns about interpreting situations. If the Support Service Provider has questions related to how a situation should be handled, discuss it with the consumer to get their ideas. This is very important since each person is different with varying communication and mobility needs or preferences. It is essential that the Support Service Provider and consumer work as a team to avoid frustration within the Support Service Provider/consumer relationship and to maintain the patience needed when working with a dual sensory loss population.
7. Be accountable to the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor and the State Coordinator for Deaf-Blind Services. The Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor or State Coordinator for Deaf-Blind Services may match Support Service Providers with consumers. Respect their authority and keep them informed of how things are going for you and the consumer, inform them of any problems or concerns you may have.
8. Know your own strengths, weaknesses/limitations, and preferences. If there are interpreting situations a Support Service Provider cannot work in, they should make appropriate choices or changes. This will avoid situations and misunderstandings during events.
9. Communicate with other Support Service Providers. Support Service Providers may be team interpreting or be trading off providing support to a consumer. Clear and open communication must be shared (except confidential information) between Support Service Providers. The consumer must also be aware of changes and shifts that occur.
10. The Support Service Provider is to provide cross-cultural, multi-lingual information for blind, hearing, deaf and deaf-blind consumers.

Interpreter versus Support Service Provider

(Author: Kathie Anderson)

SSP is a term that means Support Service Provider and we use it for persons who provide communication and access for the deaf-blind. The American Association of the Deaf-Blind coined this term during their National Convention in Minnesota.

The Support Service Provider may provide service at a variety of events where formal interpreting may or may not be required. These are typically events where people who are deaf-blind, deaf, blind or sighted/hearing interact equally. These events are geared toward reducing isolation. All Support Service Providers who come to these events are familiar with methods of communication of the deaf-blind, such as sign language, fingerspelling, typing, large print, oralism, etc.

Novice Support Service Providers usually come as volunteers to gain “hands-on” experience with the deaf-blind community. Other Support Service Providers have advanced certified interpreter skills. A few of these Support Service Providers volunteer while others are paid for their work. Some Support Service Providers opt to “barter” their services for a Thanksgiving banquet or for a dance, for example.

The National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc. has set forth the following ethical principles to protect and guide interpreters/transliterators and consumers. Underlying these principles is the desire to ensure for all, the right to communicate.

This Code of Conduct applies to all Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf members and all certified non-members. Specific guidelines for each of the following statements are available from the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf national office.

Code of Conduct for Interpreters and Translators

Tenets:

1. Interpreters adhere to standards of confidential communication.
2. Interpreters possess the professional skills and knowledge required for the specific interpreting situation.
3. Interpreters conduct themselves in a manner appropriate to the specific interpreting situation.
4. Interpreters demonstrate respect for consumers.
5. Interpreters demonstrate respect for colleagues, interns, and students of the profession.
6. Interpreters maintain ethical business practices.
7. Interpreters engage in professional development.
8. No hats.

Support Service Provider Guidelines

1. Support Service Providers **cannot** provide the following services:
 - Teach, counsel, give advice or their opinions.
 - Clean up after the consumer, walk or clean up after their pets.
 - All service animals must stay with the Deaf-Blind consumer at all times and may not be left alone or in the care of the Support Service Provider.
 - Provide personal care services (assist with medication, bathing, feeding, etc.).
 - Do errands without physically being accompanied by the Deaf-Blind person.

(Continued Support Service Provider Guidelines)

2. Ready on time:

- If a consumer is a “no-show”, please send a message to the counselor regarding this situation. All Support Service Providers must wait approximately 15 minutes after the scheduled time to meet before exiting the location site.

3. Liability and medical attention:

- If a consumer gets sick and/or gets hurt during the meeting, the consumer agrees that they will not hold responsible the Support Service Provider. Please immediately seek Medical assistance & call 911 if anyone is injured. Inform the counselor and State Coordinator of Deaf-Blind Services as soon as possible.

4. Abuse – Consumer or Support Service Providers will **not** abuse each other by:

- Verbal or physical abuse.
- Sexual advances, flirting or talking in a sexual manner.
- Using profanity or dirty jokes.
- Any behavior that makes the individual feel uncomfortable or threatened.
- Please do not abuse the services provided & respect each other during each & all assignments.

5. Confidentiality

- All assignments are held strictly confidential.

Support Service Provider Physical Attire

1. Always wear plain/non-shiny **black** shirts. Try to provide ample contrast for light skin; light clothes (pastel colors are good) are recommended for dark-skinned interpreters/Support Service Providers.
2. Never wear jewelry which may distract during your interpreting.
3. Long earrings can get caught during tactile situations.
4. Long chains or bracelets can interfere during signing
5. Many rings can injure yourself and the consumer.
6. Avoid any strong scents (perfumes, colognes, deodorants) and odors such as cigarette smoke. Avoid the use of greasy hand lotions.
7. Be careful of long hair; some hair can interfere during tactile situations.
8. No hats.

Sources

[American Association of the Deaf-Blind](#)
[Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf](#)