

Transcript of Community Resources Video
Valerie Stafford-Mallis of the FCCDHH

Hi. At this point in the training you're probably feeling a little bit overwhelmed because you've heard a lot of things that perhaps you've never heard before. But the good news is you're not in this alone. There are resources out there in the community you can turn to that will help you. In fact, we strongly encourage you to do that, and the settlement agreement requires you to do that. So, my purpose here today is to give you information about these community resources that will help you reach out to them. First of all, as you've probably realized by now, the deaf and hard-of-hearing community is not a single entity—it is a very diverse entity. And there are a lot of resources out there that cater to each one of the special interest groups within the deaf and hard-of-hearing community.

First of all I would like to help you understand who you could turn to for information on the culturally Deaf community. For that population the Florida Association of the Deaf comes to mind. There are many many chapters around the state that you can turn to that would be more than happy to assist you in understanding this population. If you are interested in information on assisted devices and services the Hearing Loss Association of Florida is a leader in helping people utilize technological aids in order to augment their hearing. If you're concerned about the psychosocial implications of hearing loss, the Association of Late-Deafened Adults does a wonderful job in providing information on the psychosocial supports that we have. Having said that, there are other groups as well that you may want to turn to. The deaf service centers are the ones who are on the ground with the deaf and hard-of-hearing population providing interpretative services and other auxiliary aids and services. If you don't have a deaf services center in your area you might be fortunate enough to have a center for independent living. They also provide support services to persons who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. In addition in many many communities the deaf service centers and centers for independent living are the sources for the Florida Telecommunication Relay equipment distribution program. And that is a great place for you to start learning about the deaf and hard-of-hearing community.

We have the statewide council, the Florida Coordinating Council for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing, that is an advisory and coordinating body that connects all of these groups. I'm going to read you a list of the constituent organizations that serve on the Florida Coordinating Council for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing:

- The Alexander Graham Bell Association of Florida
- Hearing Loss Association of Florida
- Deaf Service Centers Association of Florida
- Florida Association of the Deaf
- Association of Late Deafened Adults
- Florida Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf

In addition, on the council, we have a parent of an individual who is deaf, a hearing aid specialist, a person who is deaf-blind, a Certified Communication Access Realtime Translator, and an audiologist. We also have representatives from Florida's Department of Children and Families, Florida's Department of Health, Florida's Department of Education, and Florida's Department of Elder Affairs. You can go to the council website at www.fccdhh.org, and find links to all of these organizations. Or you can just type

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their names in and Google them, and you'll get the links. There is no reason for you to feel like you have to go it alone when you're conducting this training.

So, you may ask: "Why do I want to contact these organizations?" Well, they can help you understand what the local characteristics of your deaf and hard-of-hearing population are. For instances, in some parts of the state you may have a huge concentration of persons who are culturally Deaf, and communicate almost exclusively with sign language. In other parts of the state you may have a larger population of persons with age-related hearing loss who may or may not know sign language and will need other methods of communication. If you're in an area with a large veterans population with large numbers of returning service people who have noise-induced hearing loss from their overseas experience in the Gulf wars, your local deaf service centers and centers for independent living will know about that as well. So there's just a wealth of info. And the sooner you reach out to the organizations and bring them into your fold, then the more rapidly you will be developing your own little personalized think tank you can turn to when you need real-life advice.