



Your Rights

- ✓ Deaf people are entitled to interact with government agencies and accommodations should be provided so that they can do so.
- ✓ The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms & Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) protects your right to an ASL/LSQ interpreter.
- ✓ It is important that you request a professional interpreter with experience in legal settings.
- ✓ It is your right to access the justice system in your own language; ASL or LSQ.
- ✓ Deaf prisoners are entitled to the same rights as all prisoners including access to all mandated programs.

- ✓ It is your responsibility to be informed. CAD-ASC can provide you with helpful relevant information.

Recommendations

- Policy development involving Deaf consumers and Deaf legal experts is essential.
- Advocacy & training in the Deaf community are important. Learn about your own rights in the justice system.
- Personnel working in the justice system need training regarding Deaf language, culture and the rights of Deaf, Deafblind and Deaf people with additional disabilities.
- Interpreters and intervenors working in the legal system need specialized training.

For more information or help please contact:

CAD-ASC : www.cad.ca

Canadian Association of the Deaf Research Project

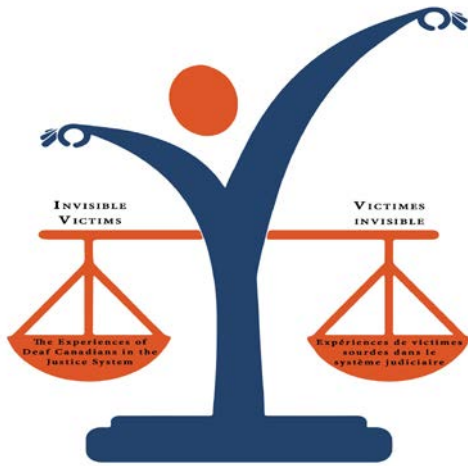
ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE:

EXPERIENCES OF DEAF, DEAFBLIND & DEAF PEOPLE WITH ADDITIONAL DISABILITIES IN ACCESSING THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

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What did we do?

We asked Deaf, Deafblind and Deaf people with additional disabilities about their contact with police services, lawyers, courts, correctional centres, halfway houses, victim support services, social workers and/or parole and probation officers.

How did we do it?

We used surveys conducted in ASL, LSQ, spoken English & spoken French, facilitated group discussions and individual interviews.

What did we find?

Throughout Canada, Deaf, DeafBlind, and Deaf people with additional disabilities reported many experiences with the justice system that indicate they **do not** have equitable access to communication when interacting with the justice system.

- There are communication barriers with police, social workers, parole and probation officers, victim support workers, lawyers and correctional officers.
- Although many courts book sign language interpreters, there were consistent concerns about the qualifications and

specialized training of interpreters working in legal settings.

- Few Deaf Interpreters possess the skills necessary to meet the communication needs of DeafBlind and Deaf people with additional disabilities. Intervening services for Deafblind people was identified as a major gap.
- There were significant differences between urban and rural access to quality interpretation services at legal events.
- There are few advocacy organizations specifically for the Deaf community in the justice system.
- Many individuals were unclear about their own rights regarding justice.

Quotes from Participants

"I would say that the interpreter's skills and knowledge is a barrier to my access and Deaf interpreters are not readily available and those that are lack specific legal training."

"I don't have ready access to intervenor services – government has cut the service, so even travelling to appointments is difficult without an intervenor, as is getting around a courthouse without a guide."

"Advocacy organizations are critical to providing assistance for deaf individuals who need support to navigate the legal system."

"I have experienced police officers who think that another officer who has taken two levels of sign language classes can act as an interpreter."