

Deaf Support Specialist (Deaf)

A person who is Deaf and works as a Deaf support specialist may work in a variety of job positions. However, in order to work in any of these capacities, an individual must have certain requisite skills, experience, and education. This individual must also have the ability to perform the essential job functions of the position. To this end, the San Antonio College Department of American Sign Language and Interpreter Training has compiled this list of essential functions for those working with people who are Deaf in a support position.

It is important for students, who are Deaf, to consider the following essential functions when pursuing a career as a Deaf support specialist.

Essential Physical Abilities

Speech: A Deaf support specialist must have the ability to speak clearly so that it is understandable to a listener.

Vision: A Deaf support specialist must have the ability to see details of another person's handshapes, hand movements, and facial expressions at a range from three to six feet.

Facial: A Deaf support specialist must have control over the muscles of the face in order to manipulate the eyebrows, cheeks, mouth, and nose.

Manual Dexterity: A Deaf support specialist must have the ability to quickly make coordinated movements of one hand, a hand together with its arm, two hands, or two hand together with arms.

Finger Dexterity: A Deaf support specialist must have the ability to make precisely coordinated movements of the fingers of one or both hands.

Wrist-Finger Speed: A Deaf support specialist must have the ability to make fast, simple, repeated movements of the fingers, hands, and wrists.

Limb Movement: A Deaf support specialist must have the ability to move the arms in order to place the hands slightly above the head as well as extend the arms out toward the front of the body and out to the sides of the body.

Limb Movement Speed: A Deaf support specialist must have the ability to quickly move the arms.

Dual-Limb Coordination: A Deaf support specialist must have the ability to coordinate movements of both arms while sitting or standing.

Head: A Deaf support specialist must have the ability to control the head in order to nod and to turn it from side to side.

Physical Stamina: A Deaf support specialist must have the ability to endure a medium amount of physical exertion without getting winded or out of breath for at least 30 minutes at a time.

Essential Cognitive Abilities

Critical Thinking: A Deaf support specialist must have the ability to use logic and analysis to assess communicative events in order to make adjustments in approaches to interpretation.

Deductive Reasoning: A Deaf support specialist must have the ability to apply general rules to specific problems to come up with logical answers.

Inductive Reasoning: A Deaf support specialist must have the ability to combine separate pieces of information, or specific answers to problems, to form general rules or conclusions.

Deductive Reasoning: A Deaf support specialist must have the ability to apply general rules to specific problems to come up with logical answers.

Information Ordering: A Deaf support specialist must have the ability to correctly follow a given rule or set of rules in order to arrange things or actions in a certain order.

Problem Sensitivity: A Deaf support specialist must have the ability to recognize when something is wrong or is likely to go wrong.

Fluency of Ideas: A Deaf support specialist must have the ability to come up with a number of ideas about a given topic. This concerns the number of ideas produced and not the quality, correctness, or creativity of the ideas.

Breadth of Knowledge: A Deaf support specialist must have at least introductory-level knowledge in a broad variety of topics and fields of interests.

Essential Cultural and Linguistic Abilities

Written English Comprehension: A Deaf support specialist must have the ability to read and understand information and ideas presented in writing

Written English Expression: A Deaf support specialist must have the ability to communicate information and ideas in writing so others will understand.

American Sign Language: A Deaf support specialist must have knowledge of the structure and content of American Sign Language including the meaning of lexical and phrasal items, features, rules of grammar, and articulation.

American Sign Language: A Deaf support specialist must have the ability to watch and understand information and ideas presented through signs, gestures, classifiers, and fingerspelling.

American Sign Language: A Deaf support specialist must have the ability to communicate information and ideas through signs, gestures, classifiers, and fingerspelling so others will understand.

Culture: A Deaf support specialist must have an in-depth understanding of the cultural norms and mores of members of the American English-speaking community.

Culture: A Deaf support specialist must have an in-depth understanding of the cultural norms and mores of members of the American Deaf Community.

Essential Professional Attributes

Social Perceptiveness: A Deaf support specialist must have the ability to be aware of and sensitive to others' reactions and the ability to understand why others react as they do.

Independence: A Deaf support specialist must have the ability to develop independent approaches to doing things, work with little or no supervision, and depend on oneself to get things done.

Interpersonal Relationships: A Deaf support specialist must have the ability to develop constructive and cooperative working relationships with others, and maintain them over time.

Adaptability/Flexibility: A Deaf support specialist must have the ability to adapt to considerable variety in the workplace and be flexible and accepting of change, both positive and negative.

Emotional Well Being: A Deaf support specialist must have the ability exercise emotional control and stability in order to fully utilize intellectual abilities and good judgment.

Self Control: A Deaf support specialist must have the ability to maintain composure, keep emotions in check, control anger, and avoid aggressive behavior, even in very difficult situations.

Professional Decorum: A Deaf support specialist must have the ability to show respect and act in a professional manner during interactions with all parties.

Problem Solving: A Deaf support specialist must have the ability to make complex decisions, including the ability to identify problems, collect information, establish facts, and draw valued conclusions

Organizing, Planning and Prioritizing Work: A Deaf support specialist must have the ability to develop specific goals and plans to prioritize, organize, and accomplish your work.

Conflict Resolution: A Deaf support specialist must have the ability to identify and resolve conflicts related to the meanings of words, concepts, practices, or behaviors.

Time Management: A Deaf support specialist must have the ability to manage one's own time and the time of others.

Background: A Deaf support specialist must have the ability to pass a criminal background check.

Ethical Standards: A Deaf support specialist must have the ability to follow the tenets of the Code of Professional Conduct as set forth by the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf as they apply to working as a Deaf support specialist. The seven tenets are:

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.