

TRANSCRIPT

Effective Communications with Law Enforcement Officers (Police)

Question 12: Police and Deaf and Hard of Hearing Partnership

Michael Baer, Emergency and Public Communication Access Program Coordinator

Great. Very good. That's it for our list of questions. I've learned something new and I'm sure viewers have learned something new too. Like, for example, the Miranda Rights-when they are read to you and when they are not. We've learned about exigent circumstances and the fact that police officers have to make critical decisions in the moment. We've learned about when interpreters are required. For example, when pulled over on the road by police, interpreters are not typically required. But if a person is arrested, taken into custody and questioned, an interpreter is necessary. All really good information, Chief Baran. Appreciate it. Now, I was wondering if you could sum up for us any suggestions you might have on how the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community and the law enforcement community can become good partners, to make that relationship more effective? I know it's not easy to sum up, but in a nutshell, what are your thoughts?

Chief Ted Baran, Director of Campus Security at Gallaudet University

Ok, I'll try. The bottom line really is mutual understanding of each other. That's where the breakdown occurs many times, where police do not understand Deaf Culture. And that's what we're doing now, trying to provide that kind of exposure. At the same time, we want the Deaf Community to be safe too, so consumer education and exposure is important. Really, it's about mutually understanding that the police have a job to do too. But the duty is on them to understand that the Deaf Community is part of their community. At the same time the Deaf Community needs to understand that police officers do not see Deaf people on a daily basis. So, we can only hope. Funny you ask about my closing. Always in my closing with officers, I always ask them to be understanding to be empathetic, to avoid those kinds of horrible situations that can arise. Because if you take a moment to establish mutual understanding, that moment can save a life.

Michael Baer

Yes, that is so true. So for the Deaf Community, and as a Deaf person, we may need to be more patient and not overreact in situations. We know that interactions involving the police, like an arrest, is never a pleasant situation. In fact, those situations can be

distressing. But, it's important that we be patient and cooperate. Chief Baran emphasized that. Follow the officer's instructions, like with handcuffing, for example, just do it, until an interpreter can arrive on the scene to ensure that communication is effective.

Chief Baran

And we ask for police officers to be patient too. Patience in considering that the person may be Deaf and knowing how to identify a Deaf person. Having patience in that moment. And upon learning a person is Deaf, having patience in how you communicate and being patient with their culture and norms of behavior. It's a two-way street.

Michael Baer

That's right. I like the way Chief Baran signs "mutual understanding". That's how successful partnerships happen. Again, I really appreciate your time and I'd like to thank Gallaudet University for sending Chief Baran here to work with the RI police and the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community. We really appreciate it!

Chief Baran

My pleasure. Thank you for having me here.

Michael Baer

You're welcome. Thank you.

