

Did you know that ASL— American Sign Language— is a visual language comprised of its own grammatical structure, facial expressions, use of body language, interactivity, the use of space, and abstract concepts that allow communication to take place through a visual means using your hands and eyes? Language is synonymous with culture. I'd like to share a couple of examples of culture, one being cultural norms.

To get the attention of a Deaf person, yelling and calling out will not work because we will likely keep walking and not hear the verbal cues, so save your voice. One of the best ways to get the attention of a Deaf person would be to approach them directly and tap them on the shoulder. You do not need to be cautious when approaching a Deaf person from behind and scaring them because this is something that we are accustomed to. Once you have their attention, ensure that you're positioned so that your face is clearly accessible. If you were in an office environment, and you cannot get up to approach the individual, another way to get someone's attention is by getting the attention of someone else in close proximity to ask the individual to approach you. You can ask a series of individuals to pass along the message to each other until it reaches the intended recipient. If there are no other individuals around to get their attention you can send a text or an email and look at the message on their smartphone or other technology.

When it comes to values, Deaf individuals value their eyes, bodies, and hands which they use in order to communicate. You wouldn't communicate with a Deaf person behind their back, or necessarily to their side which might play strain on your neck. So place yourself in a position whether it be seated or standing and you have a good line of sight and eye contact. That is the ideal way to carry on a conversation, because we don't have eyes in the backs of our heads. Place yourself in the person's visual field so they can access this area around the body and carry on a conversation when both parties are on the same page they can carry on with their work.