

Are closed meetings accessible to Deaf, deafened, and Hard of Hearing alcoholics who need professional sign language interpreters??

In order to build a list of closed meetings where deaf alcoholics and their interpreters can attend without having to seek special permission in advance, please do the following:

- 1) Request all groups in your district or area to take a group conscience to see if their group is willing to allow an interpreter for Deaf AA members to attend their closed meetings. Note: This does NOT mean that the group would be responsible to pay the interpreter.
- 2) Add one of the meeting codes below to the directory listing:
 - (SIW) non-AA certified sign language interpreter is welcome at this closed meeting for Deaf AA members
 - (CSI) closed to non-AA sign language interpreters for Deaf AA members.
 - (ASL) meeting conducted in American Sign Language
 - (SI) Sign Interpreted meeting
 - (ALD's) Assistive Listening Devices for the Hard of Hearing available
 - (RTC) Real-time captioning/CART available
- 3) Inform your Accessibility Committee Chair/DCM/webmaster/meeting schedule person of your vote. WHY? It is often very difficult for the Deaf alcoholic to attend a closed AA meeting. While a Deaf member may prefer to go to a closed meeting to better discuss their alcohol problem, the issue of whether the group will allow a non-AA professional interpreter to attend must be addressed. If a Deaf member "just shows up" with their interpreter at a closed meeting, to ask the group if they can attend, there are very awkward moments while the group takes a group conscience. In some cases there are objections to the interpreter being there, and even if the group conscience votes to have the Deaf member stay with their interpreter, the feeling is NOT at all one of welcome. If the group votes no, it's even worse! Once again, the Deaf alcoholic encounters a unique problem that most people in AA have never even thought of. A suggested solution for this particular problem is to inform the groups of this dilemma, and ask groups who hold closed meetings to take a group conscience on whether or not they will allow a non-AA professional interpreter at their meeting.