

2-2022

## Law and Ethics in Counseling with the Deaf Community

Jessica Ellen Kuehne

*Liberty University*, [jkuehne@liberty.edu](mailto:jkuehne@liberty.edu)

Joy Mwendwa

*Liberty University*, [jmmaweu@liberty.edu](mailto:jmmaweu@liberty.edu)

Mary Deacon

*Liberty University*, [mmdeacon@liberty.edu](mailto:mmdeacon@liberty.edu)

Brianna Higgins

*Liberty University*, [bdjackson6@liberty.edu](mailto:bdjackson6@liberty.edu)

Nathan Roberts

*Liberty University*, [naroberts@liberty.edu](mailto:naroberts@liberty.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/ccfs\\_fac\\_pubs](https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/ccfs_fac_pubs)



Part of the [Counseling Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Kuehne, Jessica Ellen; Joy Mwendwa; Deacon, Mary; Higgins, Brianna; and Roberts, Nathan, "Law and Ethics in Counseling with the Deaf Community" (2022). *Faculty Publications and Presentations*. 219. [https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/ccfs\\_fac\\_pubs/219](https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/ccfs_fac_pubs/219)

This Presentation is brought to you for free and open access by the Department for Counselor Education and Family Studies at Scholars Crossing. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Publications and Presentations by an authorized administrator of Scholars Crossing. For more information, please contact [scholarlycommunications@liberty.edu](mailto:scholarlycommunications@liberty.edu).

A photograph of a classical marble column base on a marble floor. The column is white with fluted details and sits on a tiered base. The floor is also made of light-colored marble tiles. The lighting is soft, creating gentle shadows.

# Law and Ethics in Counseling with the Deaf Community

---

Jessica Kuehne, M.A., LPC, LCMHC, NCC

Joy Mwendwa, Ph.D., LPC, NCC, ACS

Mary Deacon, Ph.D., LPC, NCC, CCMHC, ACS

Brianna Higgins, M.A., ALC, NCC

Nathan Roberts, M.A.

# Learning Objectives

- Understand Deaf culture and the mental health needs in the Deaf community.
- Identify the ethical issues in providing deaf and hard of hearing counseling services.
- Identify strategies and resources for addressing ethical issues and challenges.
- Apply best practices for mental health counselors when working with the deaf and hard of hearing population will be discussed.

# Deafness and Deaf Culture

- More than 28 million Americans have a broad spectrum of deafness (3 out of 1,000 infants).
- Deaf identity spectrum of individuals- linguistic-cultural and disability models
- **Deaf**= cultural term and **deaf**= medical/legal term
- Communication preferences
  - American Sign Language, cued speech, oralism, speechreading, Signed Exact English, and simultaneous communication

# Deafness and Deaf Culture

- Deaf President Now (DPN)- one of the significant events in Deaf history
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990
- Collectivist characteristics in Deaf culture (close-knit community, advocacy, deaf ecosystem)

# Counseling Services in the Deaf Community

- Sign language fluency is vital for clients who use ASL.
- There are a very few Deaf-owned counseling services and Deaf counselors in the US.
- Mental health services are challenging for d/Deaf and hard of hearing individuals to access due to a lack of communication accessibility and knowledge of Deaf culture.
- Cultural competence is required when working with d/Deaf clients.
- Counselors must be familiar with the ADA law and accommodation needs.

# Ethical Concerns in Counseling Services

- “Small World” Deaf community
- Lack of knowledge in deafness, Deaf culture, and mental health needs
- Counselors who are fluent in sign language- takes a role as an interpreter
- Confidentiality and trustworthy issues
- Dual relationships- very common in the Deaf community

# Best Practices for Counseling Professionals

- Counseling professionals need additional training, knowledge with Deaf culture, and ongoing supervision or consultation with experts on Deaf culture and deafness.
  - ACA, 2014, Standards C.2.b., C.2.c., C.2.d., C.2.e, and C.2.f.
- It is vital for counseling professionals to be aware of their ignorance, countertransference, and biases due to a lack of exposure to deafness and Deaf Culture. Counselors are more likely to sympathize their clients that may reinforce them to low self-esteem if counselors view deafness as pathological.
  - ACA, 2014, Standards B.1.a. and C.2.f.



# Best Practices for Counseling Educators

- Counselor educators are strongly encouraged to develop a broad understanding of Deaf culture and deafness in two models (linguistic cultural and disability).
- Multicultural/diversity competency includes awareness, knowledge, and skills in working with students along the deaf spectrum.
  - ACA, 2014, Standards F.11.c

# References

- Fusick, L. (2008). Serving clients with hearing loss: Best practices in mental health counseling. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 86(1), 102-110. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6678.2008.tb00631.x>
- Gutman, V. (2002). *Ethics in mental health and deafness*. Gallaudet University Press.
- National Association of the Deaf. (2016, December 6). *Community and culture – frequently asked questions*. Retrieved from <https://www.nad.org/resources/american-sign-language/community-and-culture-frequently-asked-questions/>
- Steinberg, A. G., Sullivan, V. J., & Loew, R. C. (1998). Cultural and linguistic barriers to mental health service access: The deaf consumer's perspective. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 155, 982-984.
- Sussman, A. E., & Brauer, B. A. (1999). On being a psychotherapist with deaf clients. In I. W. Leigh (Ed.), *Psychotherapy with deaf clients from diverse groups* (pp. 3-22). Gallaudet University Press.
- Whyte, A. K., Aubrecht, A., McCullough, C., Lewis, J., & Thompson-Ochoa, D. (2013). *Understanding deaf people in counseling contexts*. Retrieved from <https://ct.counseling.org/2013/10/understanding-deaf-people-in-counseling-contexts/>