

BSL HEALTHY MINDS FROM SIGNHEALTH

BSL Healthy Minds (BSLHM) is a national psychological therapy service for Deaf people

GENERIC CHALLENGES THAT DEAF PEOPLE FACE

- Education** - The standard of Deaf education is rather low which means many Deaf people have little or no qualifications. The average reading age of a Deaf person is 8/9 years old.
- Employment** - Unemployment amongst Deaf people is triple the national average. The main reasons for this is lack of qualifications and employers' lack of Deaf awareness.
- Lack of Deaf awareness** - this is the number one challenge that Deaf people face - people's lack of understanding about how to communicate with Deaf people and lack of understanding of their cultural background.
- Access to services** - many Deaf people fall at the first hurdle when accessing services as contacting them tend to be phone based or calling in person which is difficult without an interpreter.
- Communication** - There is a general lack of understanding in communicating with a Deaf person. There are different types of deafness; you have deaf people who use sign language and those who do not. Each of their needs is different.
- Public services** - Lack of communication access and Deaf awareness means Deaf people cannot fully access vital services such as health, job centres, benefit information, banking, transport, police etc.
- Interpreters** - There are not enough qualified interpreters and they have to be booked well in advance. Deaf people often miss out on next day appointments as they have to wait until one is available which could take a few weeks or go without.
- Discrimination** - Deaf people face discrimination on a daily basis from public services, education, employers as well as private services. Such examples are they may refuse to provide interpreters; not offering jobs/interviews or refuse to allow Deaf people use their services.
- Information** - English is not the 1st language for many Deaf people. This poses a problem as most information documents are in English. Deaf people miss out on a lot of information and are not picked up in other ways unless it is in sign language or plain English.



- CRISIS**
 - there is no crisis service specifically for Deaf people in the UK. They have to use their local services which are not very accessible in terms of getting in touch and when support is offered, they tend to have no idea about how to work with a Deaf person.
- LACK OF PRIMARY CARE SERVICES AVAILABLE TO MEET NEEDS OF DEAF BSL USERS**
 - this leads on to many Deaf people missing out on vital preventative support. Their issues could develop to a level where secondary and tertiary services are needed at a cost of £500 per day.
- INTERPRETERS**
 - there are not many interpreters trained in mental health settings, this can have a detrimental effect on a Deaf person's recovery.
- NOT AWARE OF SERVICE AVAILABILITY**
 - this starts with GPs as they are the first port of call for physical and mental issues. More often than not, GPs are not aware of what is available for Deaf people.
- SERVICE AVAILABILITY (LOCALITY)**
 - access to specialist mental health services depends on where you live. Primary care mental health (BSL Healthy Minds) is available to Deaf people in England but not all areas are covered due to lack of funding. Secondary and tertiary services are far between and Deaf people have to travel far afield to access these services.



- LACK OF CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE STAFF IN MENTAL HEALTH**
 - there are not many staff in mental health sector that are deaf aware nor aware of deaf culture that is important to a Deaf person's recovery when receiving treatment.
- LACK OF PROFESSIONAL DEAF EXPERIENCE IN MAINSTREAM SERVICES**
 - this leads to poor diagnosis, mistreatment, longer recovery for the Deaf person and not very cost effective.
- POOR ACCESS TO INFORMATION**
 - English is not the first language for many Deaf people and there is not much information available in BSL. This means that Deaf people are missing out on vital information that they can learn from.

- LACK OF APPROPRIATE COMMUNICATION SUPPORT**
 - many Deaf people do not get the right communication support if any, they often have to rely on lip-reading or pen & paper method. When an interpreter is booked, more often than not, they are not experienced in mental health settings.
- CHOICE**
 - the NHS is full of guidelines on patient choice and their rights to choose a service which is best for them. This does not seem to apply to Deaf people as they are unable to choose a service that suits their needs. Many GCGs do not offer alternative choices for Deaf people even though there are services that cater to their needs.

DEAF PEOPLE & MENTAL HEALTH



CAN DEAF PEOPLE ACCESS MAINSTREAM PSYCHOLOGICAL THERAPY SERVICES?

It is unrealistic to expect a mainstream therapy services can provide a cultural and linguistic service for Deaf BSL clients. There are many factors that contribute to the unsuitability. Such examples are:

- COMMUNICATION**
 - this is vital to enable depth in which therapy can be achieved. It becomes a barrier immediately if the therapist is a hearing person who cannot sign, has no Deaf awareness or understanding of cultural issues. Having a third party in a therapeutic session affects the therapeutic alliance which means more sessions are required with additional costs of having 2 professionals in the room.
- CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC UNDERSTANDING**
 - this is important if any useful therapy is to take place. Many Deaf people have had poor education and nurturing family experience which means there is limited ability to engage with their own emotions and therefore the therapist has to educate with the client at a lower level to educate and model before therapy can begin. This subtle but necessary work is impossible without any understanding of cultural and linguistic norms of each individual who enters therapy.

WHY USE BSL HEALTHY MINDS?

- 75% fully recover (National APT – 44%)
- 87% fully satisfied (AECQ)
- 8% low drop outs (National APT – 26%)
- It is an equitable primary care mental health service for Deaf people in England
- Provided by culturally aware qualified staff
- Outcome measures (GAD7, PHQ9, WPAAS) – translated and validated into BSL
- Work closely with accredited training courses to enable access for Deaf BSL Practitioners
- Clinical and quality excellence
- Reports to HSCIC
- Evidence based
- No interpreters required

75% FULLY RECOVER RECOVERING OF CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC BARRIERS

60% OF OUR CLIENTS EXPERIENCE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

87% FULLY SATISFIED 87% OF OUR CLIENTS HAVE BEEN THROUGH MAINSTREAM THERAPY BEFORE USING OUR SERVICES

23% OF OUR CLIENTS ARE EMPLOYED

77% OF OUR CLIENTS ARE UNEMPLOYED

GOOD PRACTICE

- Allowing self-referrals – this bypasses the need to see a GP
- Ensuring better access of materials/information that includes plain English and available in BSL
- Enabling Deaf people to have a choice in therapy, allowing them to choose 1:1 therapy in BSL, group work with other BSL users, or working with an interpreter in mainstream services.
- To offer culturally capable staff who are able to address their cultural and language needs through effective and appropriate forms of assessment and clinical interventions
- To offer adaptations in assessments, information and therapy to make it linguistically and culturally appropriate for BSL clients
- To have accessible points of contact i.e. mobile text, email, Skype, Facetime or fax

SERVICE PROVISION

- Step 2 Psychological Wellbeing Practitioners
 - Step 3 GRT Therapist
 - Step 3 Counselling for Depression
 - Supervision
 - Training
 - Mental Health and Deafness
 - Resilience
 - Stress & Anger Management
- REFERRALS**
- Over 16
 - Deaf
 - Experiencing mild to moderate mental health issues i.e. depression and/or anxiety
 - Any type of referral accepted – Self, professional or GP

RESOURCES

- BSL Healthy Minds website: www.bslhealthyminds.org.uk
- Self Help materials in BSL: www.bslhealthyminds.org.uk
- Sign of it Report: www.signofitreport.org.uk/health-information/
- side-of-it-report/side-of-it-in-english
- Psychological Professions Network: www.pnpn.org.uk/index.php/our-work/
- supporting-clinical-excellence/mental-health-deafness
- NHS England: www.nhs.uk



ONLY 14 OF THE 500 SELF-HELP MATERIALS ARE AVAILABLE IN BSL (1.5%)