

TRANSCRIPT

Effective Communications with Law Enforcement Officers (Police)

Question 2: Deaf and Hard of Hearing Culture Training

Michael Baer, Emergency and Public Communication Access Program Coordinator

Good, now I understand the training involved. I'm wondering, is there any training provided on Deaf and Hard of Hearing culture? I've noticed over the years that there are times when communication breakdowns occur and cultural conflicts and misunderstandings happen. We've seen some improvement in these areas somewhat, but did your training specifically include learning about Deaf and Hard of Hearing culture?

Chief Ted Baran, Director of Campus Security at Gallaudet University

Unfortunately, not a lot. For basic training at the academy, you learn about mental health, various disabilities, and a little bit about working with the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community is thrown in. Sometimes the person who conducts the training is Deaf themselves, but more often than not, the training just touches on the topic. As you can imagine, it's definitely not enough. Ideally, that kind of training would take place earlier in the officer's career. But, sometimes you hope that kind of information is included in the annual trainings that officers take. But ideally, that's what people have been asking me to do and what you're doing now, which is to throw that kind of information into the training curriculum, so it's more than just 5 minutes but an in-depth 2-3 hours long training on Deaf culture looking at where police and Deaf people intersect. That's really key. It really involves more than what's been done in the past. It's more than officers learning some basic signs, like "license" and "registration" when they pull over a Deaf person on the road. It involves a lot more than that. We need more than that. Unfortunately, it doesn't happen early and it's not really a priority yet.

