

# Writing / Speaking about People with Disabilities

You hold the ability to shape the public image of people with disabilities. The words and images you use can create either a straightforward, positive view of people with disabilities or an insensitive portrayal that reinforces common myths and is a form of discrimination. The following set of guidelines can help you make better choices in terms of language and portrayal. These guidelines explain preferred terminology and suggest appropriate ways to describe people with disabilities. Please use these guidelines when writing or speaking about people with disabilities. **Do Not Focus on Disability...** Focus on the person, not the disability. Avoid tear-jerking human interest stories about

incurable diseases, congenital impairments, or severe injury. **Focus instead on...** issues that affect the quality of life for those same individuals, such as accessible transportation, housing, affordable health care, employment opportunities, and discrimination. **Do not use Generic Labels...** Avoid generic labels for disability groups, such as "the retarded" or "the deaf". Emphasize people not labels. *Say, people with mental retardation or people who are deaf.* **Do Not Portray People with Disabilities as Superhuman...** Avoid portraying people with disabilities as superhuman. Even though the public may admire super-achievers, portraying people with disabilities as su-

perstars raises false expectations that all people with disabilities should achieve this level. **Do Not Sensationalize a Disability ...** Do not sensationalize the disability by saying afflicted with, crippled with, suffers from, victim of, and so on. Instead *say person who has multiple sclerosis or man who had polio.* **Put People First...** Put people first, not their disability. *Say a man who is blind, children who are deaf, people with disabilities.* This puts the focus on the individual, not the particular functional limitation.

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## Civil Rights Review Completed

Mary Rookwood, State Civil Rights Reviewer, arrived on 9/3/02 and departed on 9/4/02 with her satchel full of paperwork from the Department's required Civil Rights Review.

The Program Managers

met with Mary first thing on the morning of 9/3/02. She outlined the process for us and identified the criteria for cases and workers she needed to review and interview during her two day stay with the Human Services side of the

Department. In addition to the cases reviewed and staff interviewed, the client services areas of the facilities were given a thorough once over to see if they met the State requirements for ADA services.

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### Special points of interest:

- *Being Politically Correct when Speaking or Writing about People with Disabilities*
- *Update on State Civil Rights Review*
- *What you need to know about Mandatory Civil Rights / Cultural Diversity Training*

# .....People with Disabilities

Cont. from pg. 1

**Emphasize Abilities...** Emphasize a person's abilities not their limitations. For example: she uses a wheelchair, he walks with crutches. Never say confined to a wheelchair, wheelchair-bound, or crippled. Similarly do not use emotional descriptors such as unfortunate, pitiful, and so forth. Most disability groups strongly object to using euphemisms to describe disabilities. **Terms** such as handicapped, mentally different, physically inconvenienced, and physically challenged **are considered condescending**. They reinforce the idea that disabilities cannot be dealt with up front. **Show people with Disabilities as Active...** Show people with disabilities as active members of society. Portraying persons with disabilities interacting with non-disabled people in social and work

environments helps break down barriers and open lines of communication.

...Adapted from the ADA Task Force Bulletin dated 07.07.02



## ...Civil Rights Review

cont. from pg. 1

At the exit interview, on 9/4/02, Mary reviewed with the Managers what she had found during her review process. She will formalize her findings in a report to the State. The State will then forward the Department a compliance copy. This should take approximately 4-6 months.

But, there is no need to wait that long before we begin the compliance process. There are things which can be done, prior

to receiving the official report from the State.

The Department needs to upgrade some of the services to bilingual persons. More forms / publications in languages other than English.

The North Parking Lot needs to have more "accessible" parking spaces and the current ones brought up to code.

Additionally training is needed on documentation of bilingual services and the use of a "minor child" as an interpreter.

*"We will receive a corrective action plan, from the State, to advise what actions are needed to bring us into compliance"*

## Did you Know?

This is an International Symbol for Disabled Persons.



Did you know that it is no longer "PC" (politically correct) to use the term "handicapped" when referring to disabled persons.

There is a parking sign in the North parking lot which is labeled "handicapped". It will need to be replaced in order for the Department to be in compliance with the Civil Rights and ADA requirements.

Do you know what the fine is for parking in one of these designated spots without having the appropriate placard?

Check here next time to get the answer to...



**What is the Fine?**

# What Does it Mean in Other Cultures?

Excerpts from "Gestures" by Roger E. Axtell

## Arms Akimbo (hands on hips)

In many cultures this stance signals aggression, resistance or a challenge.



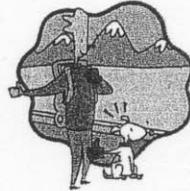
## Eye Contact



American, Canadian, British, Eastern European, and Jewish cultures favor "face-to-face" relationships. But, many Asians, Puerto Ricans, West Indians, and African Americans tend to avoid such direct eye contact.

## Thumbs

An American teenager was hitchhiking in Nigeria. A carload of locals passed him. The car screeched to a halt. The locals jumped out and promptly roughed up the visitor. Why? Because in Nigeria, the gesture commonly used in America for hitchhiking (thumb extended upward) is considered a very rude signal.



An American couple on an auto tour in Australia was stopped by a policeman in Sydney for failing to signal before turning. Seeing that they were tourists, the officer gave them only a friendly warning. Relieved, the American man responded with a smile and the thumbs-up sign. The policeman enraged, ordered the couple out of the car, searched the car, and finally gave the driver an expensive ticket. Later, back in their hotel and recounting their experience, the tourists learned that in Australia the thumbs-up gesture is the equivalent of "flipping the bird".



## From the Desk of the Civil Rights Coordinator... *Judi Jensen*

Welcome to the first issue of the Civil Rights and Cultural Awareness News. This is a part of the new format for Civil Rights Training for staff.

I am sure all of you are wondering why you haven't been herded into the Oak Room and read to this year for Civil Rights Training.

OK, OK...so you're not wondering.

You were all hoping the Staff Development Division was too busy with the move to corner you for this annual event? No way, we have not forgotten you.

However, the Division is looking at new and more pleasant ways to present the knowledge you need to have on the topics of Civil Rights and Cultural Awareness.

As a public service department, we are

mandated to abide by certain laws/rules (Title 24 and the ADA Guidelines). A part of which requires providing training to all public contact staff.

This newsletter is one of the ways to impart to you the information you need in order to do your jobs and also be in compliance with the laws and rules that govern these topics.

Hopefully you will look forward to the coming issues.



## What to Expect in the Next Issue...

1. Bilingual Services ... What are they and why do we have to have them?
2. Update on the Civil Rights Compliance Plan
3. Answer to Did you Know?
4. More Did You Know?
5. Got Question?

## Got Question?



Got Questions about Civil Rights ?

Send them to the Civil Rights Coordinator via email: [jjensen@ychsa.org](mailto:jjensen@ychsa.org) and watch for the answer in the coming newsletters

Volume 1, Issue 1

Quarter Ending

September 30, 2002

# Compliance Certification

Date Reviewed: \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewed by: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

In signing this form you are certifying the required materials were reviewed with you by the person listed above on the above date

Printed Name

Signature

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
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Once all staff in attendance have printed their names and signed, please return this form to the Civil Rights Coordinator. This becomes the official record for audit purposes.

YUBA COUNTY HEALTH / HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT

## Civil Rights and Cultural Awareness



# Civil Rights and Cultural Awareness

## Bilingual Services

### What are they? Why do we have to have them?

Title VI Civil Rights Act of 1964 requires Social Service Agencies to provide services to all applicants and recipients who are non-English speaking.

In Yuba County there are many people who do not speak English or use English as their second language.

In order to provide the necessary services it must first be determined what languages are needed. Have you ever wondered what happens to all the data you input into the computer systems? You know, such things as the primary language and ethnic code indicators.

You will be glad to know this is not just "busy-work". The information is reported on the ABCD350 report. This information is reported to the State of California and used to determine how many bilingual workers are needed and what languages they need to know.

When the population of a specific language group reaches / exceeds five percent they are considered a "threshold" language and we are required to have bilingual workers on staff

to serve them. The non-English or "threshold" languages most familiar to Yuba County are Hmong and Spanish.

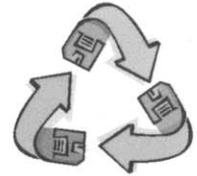
Nine percent of the people we serve speak Hmong. Five percent speak Spanish and eighty-five percent speak English. The other one percent is a mixture of Slavic and other Southeast Asian languages. We are still required to interpret and meet the needs of that one percent population even if we have to bring someone in from the outside to provide the services.

Non-English speaking also includes the non-verbal language of American Sign Language (ASL). There is little demand for ASL in Yuba County. If the occasion should occur that you need an ASL interpreter to assist you, the county has a contract with NorCal Center on Deafness. You would contact this agency and make arrangements for an interpreter.



There is also a "Language Line" at the One Stop. For those of you who are unfamiliar with a "Language Line", it is a means of communicating with someone in a language, other than English, when you do not have an interpreter on site.

If you can identify the language needed, you call the "Language Line" and they put the appropriate inter-



preter on the phone, then you, the client and the interpreter have a three way conversation.

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Example of American Sign Language

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#### Special points of interest:

- Bilingual Services
- Use of Minors as Interpreters
- How would you define Discrimination
- Cultural Awareness
- New Areas of Expansion for CR Staff Development

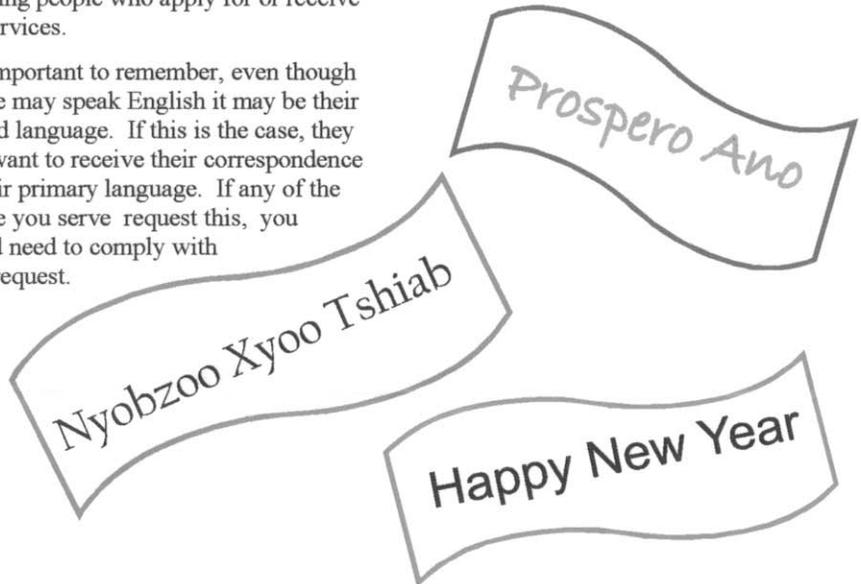
# Bilingual Services continued

Bilingual services are about more than just having interpreters / bilingual workers, and written communications in threshold languages. It includes other services as well. If you were to look around the reception area you would find other types of services provided to the non-English speaking people this department serves.

Publication 13, the pamphlet that tells people about their rights, is available in all three threshold languages in the reception area. It is also available at reception in 9 other languages and Braille. State and Federal Posters are also available in languages other than English. The Rights & Responsibilities video is in more than one language.

These are a few of the ways the department provides services to non-English speaking people who apply for or receive our services.

It is important to remember, even though people may speak English it may be their second language. If this is the case, they may want to receive their correspondence in their primary language. If any of the people you serve request this, you would need to comply with their request.



## Discrimination Defined - *Researched and Submitted by M. Mazerolle*

We all know that Federal Law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, political affiliation, religion, marital status, gender, age or disability but what is discrimination? Discrimination is defined as making a distinction on the basis of a class or category without regard to individual merit. To set apart as being different. To separate from another by discerning differences; to distinguish. To treat unequally. Simply put, discrimination occurs when you treat someone differently because of a characteristic. Remember to use good judgment and avoid discrimination.

Discrimination is sometimes straightforward as defined above. Other times discrimination is more complicated. **Disparate Impact** discrimination is where a company policy excludes a certain individual or individuals from a job or a promotion.

This article, from [discriminationattorney.com](http://discriminationattorney.com) provides an example of disparate impact.

This example arose often in fire departments. These agencies had various strength requirements for job applicants. Women were frequently unable to meet these requirements. In some instances, the require-

ments were absolutely necessary to ensure the firefighters were qualified. But in many instances, the requirements were simply too high; they were more than what was necessary. Qualified women were therefore being excluded unnecessarily. This does not mean the fire departments were trying to exclude women. That was just the result of their policy; it had a disparate impact upon women. Because the policy wasn't sufficiently job-related (too much strength was required) there was discrimination. The policy may not have been designed to exclude them; it was just the unfortunate result.

## Did You Know?

Minors as Interpreters Did you know that as workers in a public service department, you should not use minor children to act as interpreters except in extreme situations. In addition, you should always make some type of assessment of the interpreter's ability to translate competently. If you feel the interpreter is not affective, you would need to terminate the interview and arrange for another interpreter.

Do you know:

- How many American citizens/residents speak Spanish at home?
- How many American citizens/residents speak Asian or Pacific Island Language at home?

Look for the answers in next quarter's publication.

Answer to previous quarter's question:

**Q.** What is the fine for parking in an ADA accessible space without having the appropriate placard?

**A.** In the City of Marysville, the fine is \$325 for this parking violation. It is found under City Code 1050—D11. Chapter 9 CA Vehicle Code.

# Cultural Awareness

## Spousal Abuse in Asian Cultures

According to the Asian Pacific American Legal Center in Los Angeles, 60 to 70 percent of cases of domestic violence in Asian families are not reported.

Representatives from different Asian Pacific social service agencies agree: Spousal abuse is a problem in part because in many of their home countries it is socially acceptable for men to batter their wives as a method of training them. Spousal abuse is allowable where people feel men are superior to women. Even if their lives are in jeopardy wives fear letting authorities know.

In the Asian family, the man is the head of the household. He dominates. Thus, no one is supposed to take action against his authority. And because spousal abuse has been a traditionally accepted form of husband/wife interaction, many women have likely seen their mothers abused and view spousal abuse as a norm.

Furthermore, part of the Asian wife's established duty is to please her husband.

That is what it means to be a good wife. If there is a problem, she must change herself. She is also reluctant to bare the truth. To share family secrets runs counter to her *cultural code*.

Many immigrant women who are victims of spousal abuse are as fearful of the American justice system as they are of their husbands.

What can be done to alleviate some of these issues:

- Social Service agencies catering to specific ethnic groups should offer more education regarding the illegalities of spousal abuse in this country.
- Women and their children need to be informed about availability of counseling and shelter services.
- Women need to be taught how to obtain restraining orders against abusive spouses or boyfriends.

- Police need to be sensitized when trying to assess whether abuse has taken place.
- Children of an abused parent are not reliable informants. They are placed in a *culturally conflicting* position of power when the police question them. The children feel it is disloyal to accuse the abuser.
- Authorities need to seek evidence of spousal abuse from other sources, such as medical records.



Research Material used in this article, "Multicultural Manners" Norine Dresser

## Civil Rights Compliance Review Update...

There is no further news on the Civil Rights Audit at this time. The Department is still waiting for the final audit report.



## What too Expect In the Next Issue

1. CR Complaint Process
2. Statistics on Complaints
3. Publication 13, What is it? When do you need to use it?
4. Answer's to Did You Know?
5. More Did You Know?
6. Got Questions?

Send them to the Civil Rights Coordinator via email: [jjensen@ychsa.org](mailto:jjensen@ychsa.org) and watch for the answer in the coming newsletters.



## Got Questions?

**Q.** What if there is cultural information in the newsletter that someone of that culture does not agree with?

**A.** All cultural information is taken from valid reference sources which are usually quoted with the article. It is important to understand the material read and researched for this information is based on the research group used by the author. There are never absolutes with any statistics. They use terms such as: usually, large majority, in my experience, etc.