

## **ATTACHMENT L**

### **Code of Professional Conduct for Support Service Providers (SSPs)**

The following principles of ethical behavior and best practices are to guide and protect SSPs working within the deafblind community. SSPs strive to maintain a high level of professional standards and a commitment to supporting the rights of persons who are deafblind in accessing their environment and community.

#### **Confidentiality and Privacy**

SSPs provide services that respect the privacy, integrity and confidentiality of people who are deafblind.

This means that all names, private information and assignment-related information are kept strictly confidential. Any paperwork relating to persons who are deafblind and maintained by the SSP must be kept in a secure location, and destroyed when no longer in use. SSPs never discuss a consumer's activities with others, what they buy, how much money they have in the bank, or any other personal, business, social or confidential information.

#### **Respect and Dignity**

SSPs believe that people who are deafblind have the right to be treated with respect and dignity, and that people who are deafblind are the experts on their own life experiences.

This means that SSPs value and appreciate the diversity of human experiences and cultures. SSPs demonstrate the ability to provide support in a nonjudgmental manner to individuals who are deafblind by displaying behaviors that are cooperative and supportive, and by communicating clearly and respectfully.

The relationship between the person who is deafblind and the SSP is a partnership based on trust, open, honest and comfortable communication. Specifically, the SSP provides support that enhances independence and promotes greater community integration. The exchange of unbiased environmental information is integral to the relationship so that persons who are deafblind can make informed choices and decisions.

When SSPs are working, their attention is fully focused on providing services to the individual who is deafblind. They are not making personal phone calls, chatting with others, doing their own grocery or other shopping, or otherwise combining personal needs or errands with the job.

#### **Professional Development**

SSPs assume personal responsibility for furthering their knowledge and training to

improve their SSP skills, their understanding of the deafblind experience and their communication/language skills.

This means that professional SSPs recognize that they may also have to rely on the use of personal finances and use personal time for professional development, which may include participating in workshops and trainings, interacting with colleagues, reading current literature in the field, and volunteering at deafblind events, clubs and camps. In addition, feedback from people who are deafblind must be taken seriously and with a professional response.

### **Professionalism and Business Practices**

SSPs follow through on commitments, providing a professional level of service consistent with current best practices and within their area of expertise and qualifications.

This means that SSPs accept assignments only after considering their own skills, the activity, the location and the individual who is deafblind. SSPs should not accept an assignment if they are not totally confident in their ability to complete the activity.

SSPs are dependable, arrive on time, are ready for work and stay through the duration of the assignment. At no time during the assignment are SSPs under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

In the provision of services, SSPs display professional conduct and appropriate appearance. Clothing and accessories are in contrast to skin tone and not distracting to the conveyance of the signed message.

The message is expressed faithfully, whether spoken, signed or written, communicating both the content of the message and the essence of the speaker in the preferred language of that person who is deafblind. Hands and arms are to be free for communicating and guiding. Footwear is sensible and allows comfortable and safe travel.

SSPs provide environmental information so that the individual who is deafblind can make informed choices and decisions. SSPs do not add their own opinions or judgments. SSPs ensure safe access to the environment by utilizing proper Human Guide techniques.

The SSP and the person who is deafblind who are friends and also work together are careful to not confuse roles; they are clear about their professional and personal boundaries.

SSPs are trained professionals that maintain the SSP role and responsibilities at all times. SSPs are not certified interpreters. SSPs cannot be expected to interpret spoken language in medical, educational, or legal settings. SSPs can help facilitate communication for social gatherings or for personal needs only.

## **Conflict of Interest**

To ensure impartiality, SSPs do not provide services where there may be personal, financial or professional gain.

SSPs do not serve as a paid interpreter, social worker or any other role while also providing SSP services at the same time.

I have read and agree to uphold the Professional Code of Conduct for SSPs.

---

(Please Print Name)

---

(Signature)