

Deaf Awareness in Dentistry

Anthony Sinclair

Sign Source

Aim

To raise awareness of the experiences and communication needs of D/deaf individuals in dental settings, and to introduce participants to the basics of British and Irish Sign Language (BSL & ISL) to improve patient care and inclusivity.

Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- **Understand the key barriers D/deaf patients face in dental environments.**
- **Demonstrate basic BSL signs relevant to dental care.**
- **Reflect on ways to create a more inclusive and accessible practice.**
- **Recognise the importance of Deaf Awareness in providing patient-centred care.**

Learning Contents

- **Basic BSL vocabulary (e.g. greeting patients, pain signs, appointment language)**
 - **Introduction to Deaf Awareness**
 - **Understanding D/deaf culture and communication needs**
 - **Communication tips and best practice in clinical settings**
 - **Roleplay scenarios or examples in dental environments**
 - **Resources for further learning**

GDC Development Outcomes

This presentation meets the following GDC Development Outcomes

- **A) Effective communication with patients, the dental team, and others.**
- **B) Management of self and effective working with others in the dental team.**
- **C) Maintenance of skills, behaviours, and attitudes which maintain patient confidence and uphold high standards of care.**

BSL Greetings

➤ **Hello!**

➤ **How are you?**

➤ **I'm good, thank you!**

➤ **It's nice to meet you!**

- **VOWELS**

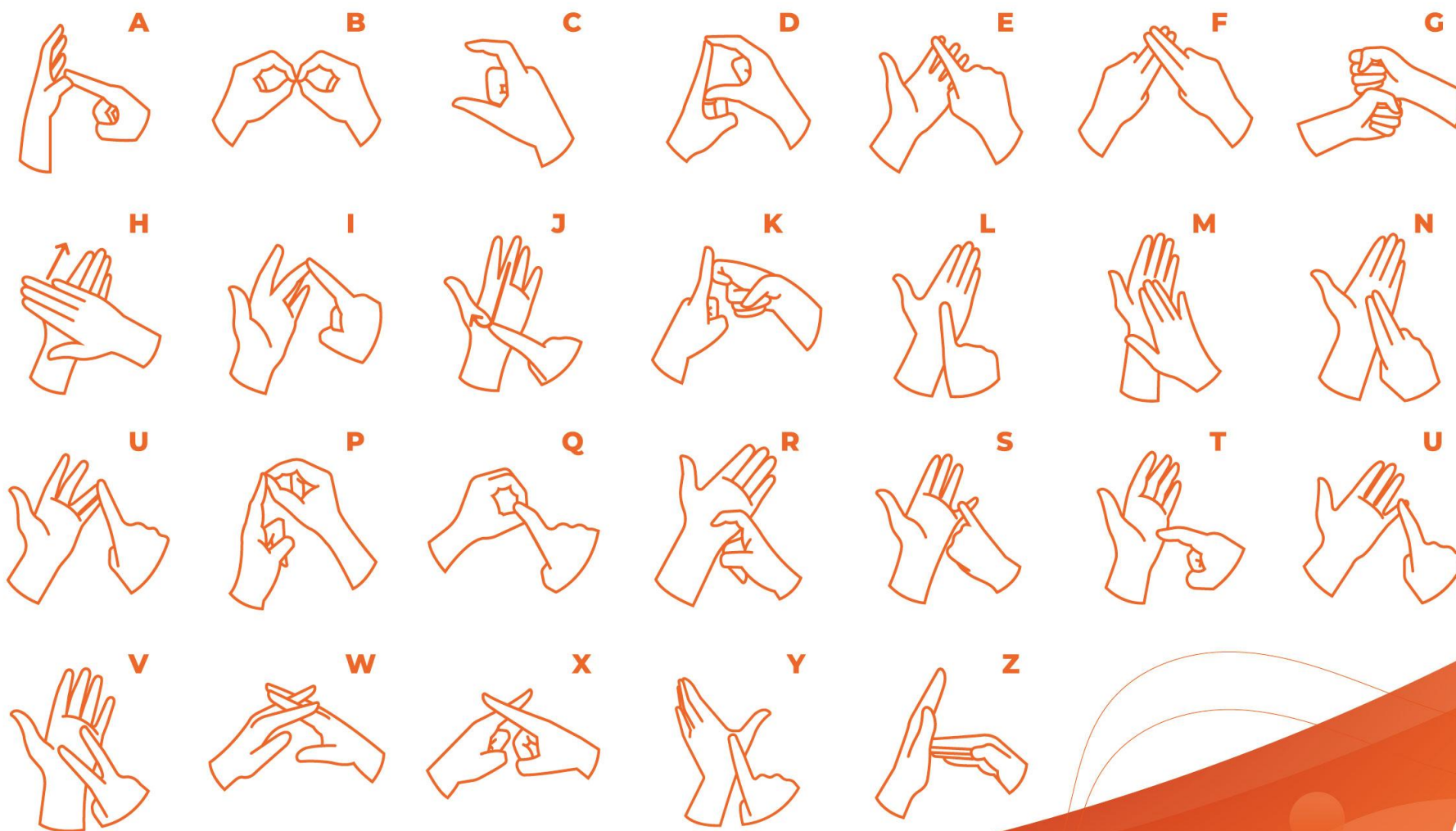
- **Hand Dominance in BSL Alphabet**

- **All signs shown use the right hand.**

- **LH - mirror the signs using your left hand.**

- **I'm right handed**

- **C**



RIGHT HANDED VERSION

signsource 

anthony@thisissignsource.com

+44 (0) 7970984340 (text only)

www.thisissignsource.com

BSL Greetings Everyday

Useful Phrases

➤ **My name is**

➤ **Yes/No**

➤ **Sorry**

➤ **Are you ok? Any pain?**

Dentistry-Related BSL Signs

- **Dentist**
- **Dental nurse**
- **Receptionist**
- **Patient**
- **Waiting room**
- **Dental surgery**
- **Appointment**
- **X-ray**

Dentistry-Related BSL Signs

➤ **Teeth**

➤ **Gums**

➤ **Broken tooth**

➤ **Cavity/hole**

➤ **Infection**

➤ **Cleaning/polish**

➤ **Filling**

➤ **Bridge**

Why Deaf Awareness Matters

- **1 in 6 people in the UK have some form of hearing loss.**
- **Clear communication builds trust.**
- **Improved accessibility leads to better patient care.**
 - **It fulfils legal and ethical responsibilities.**

My unique background!

- **My background and experiences as a Deaf individual**
- **My work and advocacy for Deaf awareness**
- **My journey in education and medical settings.**



<https://youtu.be/3KAsJ0-GGQQ?si=NZu9EbAIYkq3MuzA>



Access to Services - Public Attitudes

- **“Over two thirds (67%) of Deaf people and people with Hearing Loss have experienced negative attitudes or behaviours in the last year” (RNID, 2023)**
- **“A third (33%) of people with Hearing Loss, and just under two thirds of Deaf people (61%) and British Sign Language (BSL) users (63%) have experienced people talking to someone who is with them, rather than directly to them in the last year.” (RNID, 2023)**

VRS/VRI

- **SIGN VIDEO**
- HSC



History of Sign Language & Its Suppression

- **1880 Milan Conference banned sign language in education**
- **Oralism forced Deaf individuals to rely on speech and lipreading**
- **Stigma and lack of awareness reduced Sign Language popularity**
 - **The fight for recognition and inclusion continues today**

Who Should Fix the Problem?

- **Deaf people are always expected to adapt**
 - **Hearing people learn sign language?**
- **Communication is a two-way street, not just a Deaf person's burden**

Workplace

- **65% of Deaf workers experience workplace anxiety**
- **50% report feeling isolated due to lack of communication**
- **30% have left jobs due to poor accessibility and discrimination**

BSL/ISL Act: What It Means for Workplaces

- **Recognises British and Irish Sign Language as official languages**
 - **Encourages better access and inclusion in workplaces**
- **Employers should provide BSL and ISL interpreters and accessible communication**

The Dream World as a Deaf Person

- **A world where sign language is normalised**
- **Equal job opportunities without communication barriers**
 - **Full accessibility in workplaces and hospitality**
- **Respect and understanding from hearing individuals**

<https://youtu.be/Kjep4G2OWzc?si=p2ANOYE4xoTqmg27>

References

- **Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID) *The Experience of Deaf People and People with Hearing Loss in the UK.***
- **SignHealth. *Improving Health Access for Deaf People.* www.signhealth.org.uk**
 - **British Deaf Association. *BSL and Deaf Culture Resources.***
 - **NHS Accessible Information Standard (AIS) Guidance.**
- **"Working with Deaf People in Healthcare" - *Jornal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education.***



Thank you

Anthony Sinclair

anthony@thisissignsource.com

www.thisissignsource.com

Facebook/Instagram: Sign Source learning