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# DeafBlind Ontario Services



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# Deafblindness – A Distinct Disability

- ❑ If 95% of what we learn comes from our eyes and ears, imagine what it must be like to be deafblind.
- ❑ Deafblindness is a combined loss of hearing and vision to such an extent that neither the hearing nor vision can be used as a means of accessing information to participate and be included in the community.
- ❑ Individuals who are deafblind are not a homogenous group. The common factor is a combined loss of vision and hearing that impacts access to information, communication, and mobility.



# About Deafblindness

- ❑ Acquired deafblindness is a description applied to people who experience both vision and hearing loss later in life. Losses may occur at separate times or may occur simultaneously. They may also be progressive.
- ❑ Congenital deafblindness is a description applied to people who are born with both hearing and visual loss or who became deafblind before developing symbolic language.
- ❑ Individuals who are deafblind have both a hearing and a vision impairment that is severe enough to affect communication, mobility and access to information and the environment.





# Intervenors – A Specialized Profession

- ❑ Intervenors are specially trained professionals who act as the “eyes” and “ears” of the individual who is deafblind through the sense of touch.
- ❑ The Intervenor is a communication partner, acting as the bridge between the person who is deafblind and the world through a Total Communication Approach.
- ❑ The philosophy of DeafBlind Ontario Services’ Intervenors is “Do with, not for”. They work with individuals who are deafblind, helping them learn through experience, empowering them to make informed decisions and be active participants in all areas of their lives.



# Intervenor Services

- ❑ Through partnerships with complementary community agencies and internal expertise, DeafBlind Ontario Services takes a holistic approach to providing Intervenor services that are customized to each client's unique needs, desires and goals to increase their independence and enrich their life.
- ❑ Since every individual who is deafblind has a varying degree of sensory loss, they will have their own unique, individual way of communicating: smartphones, tablets and computers, various forms of sign language, braille, or large print.



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# Our History

- ❑ In 1989, a group of motivated parents lobbied the Ontario government as advocates for their deafblind children in an attempt to secure funding for community-based supported living programs.
- ❑ On April 6, 1989, we were incorporated as a not-for-profit organization.
- ❑ Initially, we had 3 homes housing 3 individuals, with congenital or early adventitious deafblindness in each location.



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# DeafBlind Ontario Services Today

- ❑ DeafBlind Ontario Services is a not-for-profit organization that helps individuals who are deafblind to increase their independence and improve their quality of life through specialized services.
- ❑ With residential locations and community services programs across the province, our reach extends into a wide range of communities in Ontario.







# A Leader in the Field

- ❑ True to our vision of being a leader in the field of deafblindness, DeafBlind Ontario Services was the first Ontario organization providing Intervenor Services to be accredited in 2012, and the first to be reaccredited in 2016.
- ❑ We elected to be accredited as a demonstration of accountability and as a way of having independent validation of the quality of the services we provide.
- ❑ DeafBlind Ontario Services is also a Canadian Nonprofit Employer of Choice (2015 and 2016). The Nonprofit Employer of Choice Awards (NEOC) recognizes organizations whose people leadership and vision has translated into exemplary talent management practices.



# Participation in Research

## STATISTICS

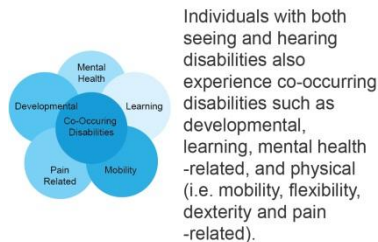
According to the 2012 Canadian Survey on Disability (CSD), vision and hearing loss affects people of all ages.



Of those 15 years and older with a seeing disability, around one in four also reported having a hearing disability.



Of those 15 years and older with a hearing disability, around one in three also reported having a seeing disability.



Individuals with both seeing and hearing disabilities also experience co-occurring disabilities such as developmental, learning, mental health -related, and physical (i.e. mobility, flexibility, dexterity and pain -related).

As individuals age (65 and above), they are likely to experience sight and hearing changes.



One in four individuals (65 and over) are living with vision and hearing loss in long term care homes and home care programs.

Canadian Institute of Health Information (CIHI) data for 2014-15, 2015 and 2016\*

\*The CIHI data only includes those who have come in contact with services through Long Term Care and Home Care programs during the fiscal years.

- DeafBlind Ontario Services participates and facilitates research by networking with universities, colleges, community partners, and other national and international research networks that focus on improving the quality of life for individuals with deafblindness and dual sensory loss.
- Through research, DeafBlind Ontario Services strives for equal opportunity and access for all, and effective, holistic programs and services for its clients.



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# Programs & Support Services

- ❑ We currently support over 65 individuals in residential locations and apartment programs, as well as through our Community Services across the province.
- ❑ Residential locations are based in: Durham-Peterborough, Middlesex-Oxford, Ottawa, Simcoe County, Sudbury, TriCities and York Region.
- ❑ Community Services include: **Community Services - *Bridge***, **Community Services - *Partnerships***, **Community Services - *Sensory Exploration Arts (SEA™)*** and **Community Services - *Tremplin***.



# Residential Services: Snoezelen

- ❑ Snoezelen (pronounced SNOOZE-e-len), derived from the Dutch words for "to doze" and "to sniff", is a non-threatening environment designed to give those with developmental disabilities and sensory impairments a multi-sensory experience.
- ❑ Due to the generosity of donors, DeafBlind Ontario Services has one Snoezelen Room in 5 of our regions for our clients to enjoy.



# Community Services

- **Community Services - *Bridge***
- **Community Services - *Partnerships***
- **Community Services - *Sensory Exploration Arts (SEA™)***
- **Community Services - *Tremplin***



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# Community Services – *Bridge*: Sensory Loss Communication Training

- ❑ **Community Services – *Bridge*** offers customized training opportunities for organizations that support individuals with a sensory loss and/or communication challenges.
  
- ❑ A flexible and adaptive approach to learning is cornerstone to this program, which is designed to augment and strengthen an organization’s services while focusing on the unique needs of the individuals they support.
  
- ❑ **Community Services - *Bridge*** can enhance the services of:
  - Developmental Services Agencies
  - Long Term Care Facilities
  - In Home Support Services
  - Other Community Organizations



# Community Services - *Partnerships*

- ❑ **Community Services - *Partnerships*** offers specialized expertise and services to individuals who are deafblind through their supporting agency.
- ❑ Every partnership is uniquely designed to ensure the needs of each individual are met in collaboration with the supporting organization.
- ❑ **Community Services - *Partnerships*** begin with an assessment of the needs of the individual and discussion on how Intervenor Services can benefit the individual and augment the services they already receive. A custom program is developed, specialized training for the partnering agency's staff and ongoing mentorship and coaching.





# Community Services - *Partnerships*

- ❑ The Community Services - *Partnerships* program is supported by DeafBlind Ontario Services' TOUCH™ training program, which covers:
  - The role of the Intervenor
  - Common Etiologies
  - Communication Methods
  - Total Communication Approach
  - Behaviour as Communication
  - Vision and Hearing Loss
  - Sensory Integration
  - Assistive Devices
  - Concept Development
  - Orientation & Mobility



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# Community Services - *Partnerships*

- ❑ Partnering agencies engage in interactive, customized training that focuses on the communication needs of the individual they support. Mentorship is a cornerstone of the Community Services - *Partnerships* program.
- ❑ After the training is complete, the Community Services Team continues to follow-up and provide guidance to the support team sharing advice, knowledge and experience to ensure the on-going success of the individual's program.
- ❑ Funding support for this program may be available through the Ministry of Community and Social Services.



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# Community Services – *Sensory Exploration Arts (SEA™)*

- ❑ Created to promote and foster artistic and creative expression among individuals with sensory impairments in a visual arts program.
- ❑ The program provides not only provides a meaningful outlet for artistic expression, it provides a tool for communication and connection to the world.
- ❑ Artists explore and experience many themes through their senses. They are given the opportunity to express their responses to these sensory experiences through visual arts, music, dance and drama without direction.





# Community Services - *Tremplin*

- ❑ *Tremplin* is the French word for “springboard” or “stepping stones”. This program is designed for the needs of individuals who are deafblind and Francophone and the desires of their families.
- ❑ Community Services - *Tremplin* is a blend of our current residential program, in terms of maintaining our highly recognized program model focusing on community involvement and our Community Services - *Partnerships* program which will allow for each of the participants to return to their family home on nightly basis, while still providing the family with predetermined respite support throughout the year.



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# Program Module Framework

- ❑ The framework consists of three components:
  - (1) Client Program Portfolio**
  - (2) Service Tracking of Client Program Plans (goals)**
  - (3) Service Evaluation – Internal Audit**
  
- ❑ Each component of the Program Module is inextricably linked.



# Service Evaluation – Internal Audit

- ❑ Internal Audit are performed annually in Client Services
- ❑ Audits are performed by the Director of Human Resources & Organizational Strategy and one appointed member from the Client Services Committee
- ❑ Committee randomly selects 3 to 5 client names in order to evaluate the facilitation of the Program Module, Goal focused - Service Tracking with the clients and internal policies & procedures.
- ❑ Quarterly reports, MDPT processes, internal review and outcome measurements are utilized for this evaluation



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# TOUCH™

**T**rainning  
**O**ngoing  
**U**nique  
**C**ommitted  
**H**olistic

*DeafBlind Ontario Services is strengthening the competencies of people who touch the lives of individuals who are deafblind.*



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# TOUCH™

- ❑ The specialized training of Intervenors has always been a priority at DeafBlind Ontario Services. This was formalized in the development of our TOUCH™ training program, which has strengthened the competencies of those who touch the lives of individuals who are deafblind.
- ❑ TOUCH™ is inclusive to 2 levels of training.
- ❑ Each level builds upon consistent components that exist in each level.



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# TOUCH™ Components

- ❑ Knowledge of deafblindness and its impact on learning and development.
- ❑ Knowledge of the intervention process, the role of the Intervenor and the ability to facilitate the process.
- ❑ Knowledge of communication, including methods and adaptations, and the ability to facilitate the development and use of communication skills.



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# TOUCH™ Components

- Knowledge of DeafBlind Ontario Services; Service Model – Program Module.
- Knowledge of the eye and ear.
- Knowledge of assistive devices and current technology.
- Professionalism and ethical practices.



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# Total Communication Curriculum (TCC)

- Teaches Intervenors what their roles are as communication partners.
- The implications of communicating with vision/hearing loss.
- Adapting methods of communication to meet the deafblind person's needs.
- Recognizing behaviour as communication.



# Total Communication Curriculum (TCC)

- Effectively implement total communication (S.E.E., speech, cues, A.I.T.S.L., picture communication symbols, A.S.L.).
- Provide a reactive environment.
- Comprehend the role of a communication partner.
- Demonstrate proficiency with the manual alphabet and finger spelling.



# Certified Congenital DeafBlind Specialist (CCDBS 1 & CCDBS 2)

## **Purpose of Certification**

The purpose of Certification as a Certified Congenital DeafBlind Specialist - Level 1 – 2 is to recognize, by way of the certification process, those who have acquired an acceptable standard of training, skills, related work experience and effectiveness in the field of congenital deafblindness.

## **Certifying Body:**

Canadian Council of Professional Certification (CCPC) is a recognized certifying body. The application and documentation is first be screened for eligibility for certification by an Evaluator and then reviewed by the Board of Examiners of the CCPC.

The Certified designations (CCDBS 1 or CCDBS 2) are professional designations.



# Certified Congenital DeafBlind Specialist (CCDBS 1 & CCDBS 2)

## The focus is:

- 1.To provide the avenue for qualified persons who have studied, worked and developed skills in the field of congenital deafblindness and providing Intervenor Services to receive professional recognition.
- 2.To provide clients, stakeholders, families and the public with the confidence that Certified Congenital DeafBlind Specialists have attained an acceptable level of competency.
- 3.To provide Certified Congenital DeafBlind Specialist with encouragement for continual awareness, education, and professional development.



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# Certified Congenital DeafBlind Specialist (CCDBS 1 & CCDBS 2)

## **Certified Congenital DeafBlind Specialist**

The Certified Congenital DeafBlind Specialist (CCDBS) certification is directed at employees with the designated training or graduate diploma focused in the field of congenital deafblindness and Intervenor Services practice. In conjunction with the required TOUCH™ level(s), practical work experience hours, in accordance with each level, full membership in a designated professional organization and Performance Appraisal rating Meets Expectation (ME).

## **Renewal Requirements:**

Renewal is an essential component of CCPC's certification framework. The objective of the renewal requirement is to ensure that individuals certified by CCPC participate in ongoing professional development activities in conjunction hours requirements, PA rating and membership.





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# Access Intervenor Services

The process will include a consistent eligibility practice and the completion of a standard assessment.

Effective April 1, 2017, the application process for individuals who are deafblind to apply for individualized Intervenor Services funding has been moderately modified to more closely reflect the future access to services utilizing a Access to Interevenor Services currently being developed. The process will include a consistent eligibility practice and the completion of a standard assessment.



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# Q&A –Intervenor Need in Thunder Bay and Area

How many people are you aware of that require intervenor and communication support?

Are you familiar with intervenor services

Have you or your staff worked with intervenors to provide communication support before?

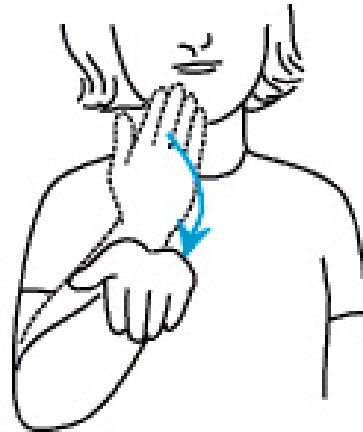




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# Thank You

## from DeafBlind Ontario Services



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