

Social-Haptic Communication

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SAMPLE ONLY



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I would like to acknowledge Riitta and Russ for the time spent teaching me the framework of Social-Haptic Communication. Their expertise and lived experience is invaluable. It is because they were so generous with time that we now use Social-Haptic Communication in many areas of Deafblind people's lives.



It has been a long time coming but I am pleased to make this resource available to the wider community. The Deafblind community of Australia has been an integral part of the appropriate symbols used in this book.

I would like to give a special thanks to the models seen in this book: Heather Lawson, Joe Monteleone and Sarah Fitzgerald

Social-Haptic Communication (SHC)

Touch is reportedly the earliest developing and longest lasting of our senses.

Social-Haptic Communication (SHC) is broadly defined as the interaction of two or more people in a social context where messages are conveyed using the sense of touch. These messages (or haptics) may contain, but are not limited to, information about emotion and facial expression, map out the environment or a room and describe other visual or auditory information such as art or music.

This system originated in Finland and was created by Dr Ritta Lahtinen and Russ Palmer.

SHC can be applied across the spectrum of language users, from those with highly complex signed or spoken language to those just beginning their journey into language and communication.

The SHC approach makes the interaction easier and more efficient among deafblind people, family members and friends, interpreters and other professionals. Thus it improves the quality of information for the deafblind person and gives the person more real-time, spontaneous information about the environment around them.

"The more we use our body and touch, the more sensitive I have become in receiving and interpreting touch messages. Touch will give greater quality to our discussions and interactions, without it, the information does not have the true value. It also saves our energy and any misunderstandings. Touch will give me information on how other people are behaving, their feedback, nonverbal cues and emotions very quickly. It is very important to have feedback to my responses. This means that I am able to be on more equal terms with other people. For me, touch gives a feeling of security and without contact I feel isolated. Being open towards each other is the key."

Lahtinen, R. & Palmer, R. (1996) Holistic Family Communication. Spoken Language by Touch is more than just Words.

Name signs

A name sign is a sign that is given to a person that identifies them, just like a name. It is given to a person by someone in the Deaf community. A body name sign is likewise given to someone by a Deafblind person. It could be the same name sign or if that name sign is too difficult to feel another body name sign may be given.

This is a name sign (See Fig.9 - 11)



Figure 9



Figure 10



Figure 11

This name sign can easily be felt by keeping the same movement but produced on the other person's shoulder. (See Fig.12 - 13)



Figure 12



Figure 1

In a social setting when a speech is made then immediately after the speech this symbol could mean “cheers”. (See Fig.19 - 21)



Figure 12



Figure 3



Figure 4

Shake hands = by placing a finger on the back of the elbow to let the person know someone would like to shake their hand. (See Fig.22 - 23)



Figure 5



Figure 6

Speak up = Volume is adjusted on the upper arm, using the blade of your hand either lower or raise the hand to show up and down. (See Fig.24 - 25)



Figure 7



Figure 8

Lower voice. (See Fig.26 - 27)



Figure 9



Figure 10

“YES” can be said with disinterest, with excitement, with impatience or with confirmation to name a few examples. Try to vary the way the knock is produced to match the emotion behind it.

Yes = is produced by knocking on the person twice. (See Fig.34)



Figure 11

No is produced by rubbing the fist side to side to represent the shaking of your head. Remember to adjust the “NO” according to the emotion, if it is done with a firmer touch and strong side to side movement it could mean “absolutely not” as opposed to a softer touch and small movement to mean “NAH”. (See Fig.35)



Figure 12

ROOM = Starting at the centre of the upper back with two hands trace the shape of the room. (See Fig.41 - 44)

If the room is asymmetric then try breaking the room down to basic geometric shapes. For example, you may divide the following shape into two parts for mapping.



Figure 13



Figure 14



Figure 15



Figure 16

Placing the person in the mapped space is important for the person to work out where other objects are in the space relative to where they are standing.

After mapping the outline of the space, place the person in the map. (See Fig.45)



Figure 17

Emotions

Amazed/Shocked = start with all fingertips together then drag them open. This represents a gaping mouth. (See Fig.61 - 62)



Figure 61

Figure 62

Smile = draw a smile on the upper arm or back of the DB person. (See Fig.63)



Figure 63

Sad = draw an upside down smile. (See Fig.64)



Figure 64

Laugh = use all finger to scratch the shoulder of the Deafblind person up and down several times. Or smaller faster movements for a giggle. (See Fig.65)



Figure 65

Bored/Tired = use all fingertips starting together and then drag fingers open and at the end give a little shake. This represents an open mouth for a yawn and at the end of a yawn we often shudder. (See Fig.66 - 68)



Figure 66



Figure 67

Applause = with both open hands alternate a tapping action. This represents the stomping of feet which is the Deafblind applause. Continue this symbol for as long as the applause lasts. (See Fig.76 - 77)



Figure 76



Figure 77

Deaf applause = place your hands on the person's back and wave both hands in opposite directions. Continue this symbol for as long as the applause lasts.

(See Fig.78 - 79)



Figure 78



Figure 79

Zoom in = starting with both hands together on the area you wish to zoom in on then drag both hands wider and open to enlarge the space. (See Fig.90 - 92)



Figure 90



Figure 91



Figure 92

After mapping the refreshments on the table it is important to replace the table back to the corner of the map by zooming out. After replacing the table anything drawn on the back will be on the original *room map*.

Double hinged doors = only the right door is opened away from us. (See Fig.102 – 103)



Figure 102



Figure 103

Single sliding door = left blade of the hand placed on the back while right flat of the hand shows that the door slides open to the right. (See Fig.104 - 105)



Figure 104



Figure 105

Pianissimo *pp* = pinch and softly tug the clothing on the shoulder twice. This symbol is derived from the Deafblind alphabet where you pinch the index finger of the other person to sign “P”. (See Fig.129 - 130)



Figure 129



Figure 130

Crescendo = using the blades of both hands draw this symbol \angle on the back to show that the music is getting louder (See Fig.131 - 132)



Figure 131



Figure 132

Diminuendo = using the blades of both hands draw this symbol \angle on the back to show the music is becoming quiet. (See Fig.133 - 134)



Figure 133



Figure 134

Granger = Percy Granger = with your fist strike the shoulder twice. (See Fig.126 - 127)

This is an example of where you create a symbol in conversation with the Deafblind person because it is vocabulary often used within the specific setting. The person in question was working with two pieces of music to rehearse Percy Granger and Debussy. To give instruction from the tutor we need symbols for both the composers. We agreed that “GG” on the back would represent “Granger”.



Figure 126



Figure 127

Debussy = all finger of both hands strike the piano at the same time across the back of the shoulders from the centre to the shoulders. This follows the way in which the particular piece is played, there are a lot of two handed chords in the piece.

(See Fig.128 - 129)



Figure 128



Figure 129

Photography

Find out what the desired frame is, look through the viewfinder and adjust the frame up, down, left and right.

People passing = using index finger and middle finger to walk on the DB person's back. This is directional, meaning if the person is approaching from the right then you start the symbol to the right and walk left. (See Fig.159 - 160)



Figure 159



Figure 160

Frame Up/Down = place the blades of both hands on the back and adjust accordingly (up or down).

Frame Down (See Fig.161 - 162)



Figure 161



Figure 162

Computer (IT)

Drop-down menu = After counting across the upper back to show which menu to open, click on that menu then use the “drop-down menu” symbol. Staying in contact with the person’s back, drop your right hand down while splaying open the fingers. (See Fig.169 - 170)



Figure 169



Figure 170

2nd menu item = tap down the back twice to ask the person to open the second menu item. NB: the left hand is the reference point. (See Fig.171 - 172)



Figure 171



Figure 172

GUIDING using Social-Haptic Communication

Yes = shrug your shoulder up and down about three times. The guided person can feel your elbow go up and down (See Fig. 183)



Figure 183

No = shake your elbow side to side (See Fig. 184)



Figure 184

Don't know = one strong shrug of the shoulder will be a clear symbol for "I DON'T KNOW". (See Fig. 185)



Figure 185

Emergency evacuation = use the blade of your hand to draw a very large "X" on the DB person's back starting from left shoulder to right hip and right shoulder to left hip. This is the only international SHC symbol. If no other SHC symbol is taught this one is essential and should be taught to all Deafblind people.

(See Fig. 227 - 230)

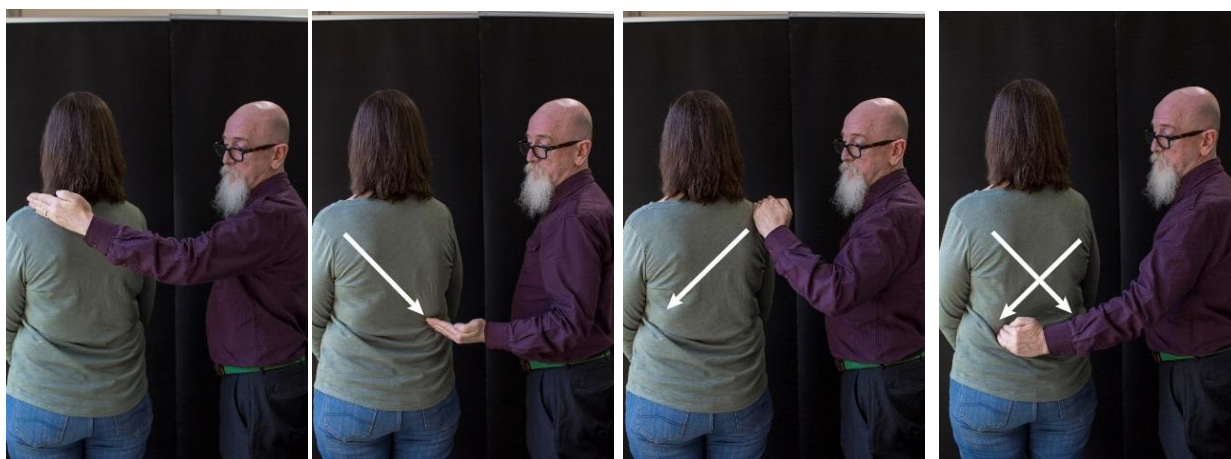


Figure 227

Figure 228

Figure 229

Figure 230

In SHC we must be very mindful not to use a cross when describing things as this may be misunderstood as an emergency.

Thank you!

Thank you to Heather Lawson for helping to work out the symbols and for modelling.



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