

DIVERSITY AND GLOBAL INCLUSION DIALOGUES – FACILITATOR CARD

Topic **Communicating with Deaf Partners and Deaf Customers** *“A Sign of Respect”*

Preparation

- Read the information in the *Facilitator Instruction Guide*.
- Watch the video “A Sign of Respect: Communicating with Deaf Partners and Deaf Customers” on ThePartnerCafe.com.
- Review the “Key Points” and “Supporting Information” sections below.

Key Points



- Starbucks has Deaf partners working throughout the business.
- Any person who is Deaf is a potential customer of Starbucks.
- American Deaf people are typically bilingual: American Sign Language (ASL) is their native language; English is their second language.
- Since Deaf people live everyday in a visual world, they are attuned to expressions and body language.
- Be creative and flexible with your communication. Some examples are:
 - Enunciate clearly. Look directly at the Deaf person so they can see your face. Make sure the light is on your face, not behind your head.
 - Gesture, point or demonstrate.
 - Write: Ensure that writing materials are available and accessible for customers who would like to write their order.
 - Sign: Even if you know only a few signs, it will go a long way.
 - If using a sign language interpreter, maintain your eye contact with the Deaf person and speak directly to him/her, not to the interpreter.
- Technology can enhance communication access in a variety of settings.

Discussion Questions

- What experiences have you had with Deaf people or with people who are hard of hearing? How did you communicate with them?
- What can you do in the store that is more welcoming to Deaf customers?
- How would you get a Deaf customer’s attention to “call out” his/her drink?
- How can you be creative and flexible with your communication?
- What would help alleviate any fear or anxiety you have in working with a Deaf partner or serving Deaf customers?

My Commitment

Ask partners to make a commitment. Start with your own. Examples include:

- I will learn how to say “thank you” in sign language.
- The next time a Deaf customer enters the store, I will sign his/her favorite drink.
- When I hear comments like “How could a Deaf person work on the register?” I will speak up and share the possibilities.

Supporting Information

Starbucks Portal – Diversity Community – [Accessibility](#)
Store Operations Manual: Serving Customers with Disabilities, Section 9.6

