



Examples of Experiences That May Be Important to Tell Your Lawyer

Many Deaf people have lived through experiences that they think are "just part of being Deaf." Sometimes these experiences may be important in an asylum case. Every case is different, and these examples do **not** mean someone automatically qualifies for asylum. They are simply meant to help you think about your own experiences and decide what to tell your lawyer.

School

Tell your lawyer if:

- You were not allowed to go to school because you are Deaf.
- You were sent home instead of being educated.
- Teachers hit you or punished you for using sign language.
- No one taught you sign language or another language you could understand.
- Hearing children were allowed to learn, but you were not.

Family

Tell your lawyer if:

- Your family locked you inside the house because you are Deaf.
- Your family refused to communicate with you.
- You were beaten because you are Deaf.
- Your family believed Deaf people were cursed, possessed, or a punishment from God.
- You were forced to work or treated differently than your hearing brothers or sisters because you are Deaf.

Community

Tell your lawyer if:

- People regularly insulted you because you are Deaf.
- People attacked you because you signed in public.
- You were excluded from community events because you are Deaf.
- People believed Deaf people should not marry, work, or have children.



Police or Government

Tell your lawyer if:

- The police refused to help you because you are Deaf.
- You tried to report a crime, but no one would communicate with you.
- You were arrested because you could not understand the police.
- You were forced to sign papers you did not understand.
- A judge or government office refused to provide communication access.

Healthcare

Tell your lawyer if:

- A doctor refused to treat you because you are Deaf.
- You could not understand what the doctor was saying because there was no interpreter.
- You were forced to make medical decisions without understanding what was happening.

Work

Tell your lawyer if:

- Employers refused to hire you because you are Deaf.
- You lost jobs because you are Deaf.
- You were paid much less than hearing workers only because you are Deaf.
- No one in your community would hire Deaf people.

Relationships

Tell your lawyer if:

- Someone hurt you because they believed you could not tell anyone.
- Your partner controlled your life because you depended on them to communicate.
- Your partner made decisions for you without your permission.
- Someone took advantage of you because you are Deaf.

Crime and Violence

Tell your lawyer if:

- Someone robbed, assaulted, or sexually abused you because you are Deaf.
- People believed Deaf people were easy targets.
- The police refused to investigate because you are Deaf.



- You were afraid to report crimes because you knew no one would communicate with you.

Feelings About Being Deaf

Tell your lawyer if:

- You grew up believing Deaf people were worth less than hearing people.
- You believed you could never have a good job because you are Deaf.
- You believed you did not deserve an education.
- You felt ashamed of being Deaf because of how people treated you.
- You believed the discrimination you experienced was "normal."

Standing Up for Deaf People or Deaf Rights

Tell your lawyer if:

- You tried to help Deaf people get equal rights or better treatment.
- You asked the government, your school, or your employer to provide interpreters or other communication access.
- You spoke up because Deaf people were being treated unfairly.
- You joined a Deaf organization or participated in activities to improve the lives of Deaf people.
- You helped other Deaf people understand their rights or access services.
- You encouraged Deaf children to learn sign language when others opposed it.
- You protested or complained about discrimination against Deaf people.
- You were threatened, harassed, arrested, attacked, fired, or otherwise punished because you stood up for yourself or other Deaf people.
- People accused you of causing trouble simply because you asked for equal treatment or communication access.
- You became afraid to continue helping Deaf people because of how others reacted.

Even if you were never physically harmed, tell your lawyer if you were threatened, intimidated, or treated differently because you tried to improve life for Deaf people or asked to be treated equally.

Remember

Many Deaf people do not realize that these experiences may be important because they have lived with them their entire lives. Even if something happened many years ago, or if you think it is "not a big deal," tell your lawyer. Small experiences, when added together, can help your lawyer understand your life and determine whether they are important to your case.