

Without Us

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In human service programs, there are individuals who are peers, advocates, consumers, etc. Many of these individuals have previously been relegated to token representation. Today, countless are finding their voices.



Still, some agencies design programs for target audiences, such as deaf people, yet often they do not invite them to comment until the decisions have been made. (“of vs. for”)

What does it mean to be deaf and addressing systemic issues when your contribution is seen as an afterthought?

- *You have to go back and fight for changes in policies after they are written – it is an uphill climb*
- *Advocating for the addition of electronic devices or hardware for accessibility is seen as an annoyance that delays projects-when it could have been installed with the rest of the renovations*
- *People believe that these changes are somehow “extra” when it is an attempt to get everyone close to the same starting line*
- *You are unreasonable if you don’t smile and nod at the programs that were set up for you*
- *You are not capable of understanding the intricacies of the big decisions or you are not able to contribute to the larger system*
- *That mission or value statements are “one size fits all” and aren’t any different for you*
- *You are a burden, costing the conference money because YOU require accommodations (interpreters), and the organizers didn’t plan for that in the budget*
- *You are a troublemaker because the great new video that was just released extolling your program, doesn’t provide captions.*