**Intervenor Services**

*The future is in your hands*

# Technical Competencies for Intervenor Services

## Intervenor Services Human Resource Strategy
## Education and Training Sub-Committee

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# Introduction

## Definition of Technical Competence

"An intervenor demonstrates technical competence by consistently using the necessary skills, knowledge and experiences to provide intervenor services to individuals who are deafblind."  This is done while maintaining the highest level of professionalism.

## Preamble

The Education and Training Sub-Committee of the Intervenor Services Human Resource Strategy (ISHRS) was established to identify current training and development opportunities for intervenors, including gap assessment, partnership potential, and improved access to education and training opportunities.   As part of the gap analysis, it was determined that a standardized set of technical competencies, geared to adult intervenor services, was needed.

In creating the technical competencies, the Education and Training Sub-Committee reviewed various documents including: the Canadian Deafblind Association Competency Framework for Intervenors for Individuals who are Deafblind and the SKI-HI Institute Competencies for Training Intervenors to Work with Children/Students with Deafblindness.

While the technical competencies are applicable to all intervenors, some of the knowledge and skills identified under each technical competency may not apply to all intervenors.  Individuals who are deafblind, managers, and agencies may determine which knowledge and skills are appropriate in each situation.  It is always preferred that an individual who is deafblind lead any discussion on the intervenor's role, the assessment process or feedback.

## Purpose

The purpose of the technical competency framework is to identify, for all intervenor service providers, a consistent standard of knowledge and skills necessary for intervenors working with individuals who are deafblind, in alignment with the goals of the Intervenor Services Human Resource Strategy (ISHRS).

The technical competencies were developed for the following stakeholders:
- Trainers and educators to use as a resource tool for training and professional development programs for intervenors
- Employers of intervenors to:
    - assess program delivery
    - guide hiring practices
    - adequately assess the knowledge and skills of an intervenor as part of a performance appraisal process
- Intervenors to evaluate their own knowledge and skills

The Education and Training Sub-Committee of the ISHRS responsible for the development of the technical competencies include:

- Cathy Proll (Chair) - Canadian Deafblind Association Ontario Chapter
- Sue Hall- Canadian Deafblind Association Ontario Chapter
- Allan Wareham- Canadian Hearing Society
- Janine Tucker- CNIB
- Kelly Patterson- DeafBlind Ontario Services
- Renée Toninger- Canadian Helen Keller Centre
- Betty-Jean Reid & Zeenat Janmohamed - George Brown College Intervenor Program

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## Technical Competencies for Intervenor Services

1. Understanding Deafblindness
2. Values, Ethics and Principles of Intervenor Services
3. Strategies Used in Providing Intervenor Services
4. Theories and Practices of Communication
5. Social, Emotional, and Psychological Impact of Deafblindness
6. The Relationship between Deafblindness and Health, Mental Health and Aging
7. Sensory Systems
8. Orientation and Mobility (O&M)
9. Use of Assistive Devices and Technology

# Technical Competency #1: Understanding Deafblindness

In order to provide effective intervenor services, an intervenor must have a comprehensive understanding of theories and practices related to deafblindness.

| | Technical Competency #1: Understanding Deafblindness |
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| | *The intervenor should have knowledge of:* |
| 1.1 | Definition of deafblindness |
| 1.2 | Terms related to Intervenor Services |
| 1.3 | Variety of ways deafblindness can impact an individual |
| 1.4 | Causes of deafblindness, age of onset of vision and hearing loss, and the type of degree of loss |
| 1.5 | History of the field of deafblindness and Intervenor Services |

# Technical Competency #2: Values, Ethics and Principles of Intervenor Services

In order to provide effective intervenor services, an intervenor must demonstrate a thorough understanding of their unique role and the philosophies that guide the delivery of services. Intervenors provide an essential service for individuals who are deafblind. Intervenors must strictly adhere to a code of ethics and deliver services in a professional manner.

| | Technical Competency #2: Values, Ethics and Principles of Intervenor Services |
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| | *The intervenor should have knowledge of:* |
| 2.1 | The role of an intervenor |
| 2.2 | The definition of Intervenor Services |
| 2.3 | Philosophy and principles of Intervenor Services |
| 2.4 | The Intervenor Organization of Ontario's (IOO) Code of Ethics and understand its application |
| 2.5 | Roles and responsibilities of an intervenor as part of an effective interdisciplinary team working in a variety of settings |
| 2.6 | The theories of empowerment, advocacy, and self-determination |
| 2.7 | The theory of self-reflective practice |
| 2.8 | Professional boundaries and conflict of interest, as it relates to the role of an intervenor |
| 2.9 | The rights of the individual who is deafblind |
| 2.10 | How to professionally complete a variety of different documents/reports within an agency; their function, importance, and to whom they are submitted |
| 2.11 | Abuse, how to report abuse, the intervenor's role within that, and abuse prevention |
| 2.12 | The importance of personal mental health and self-care and how it impacts your ability to provide Intervenor Services |
| 2.13 | Informed consent process and how to reach it |
| | *The intervenor should have the ability to:* |
| 2.14 | Provide intervenor services as outlined in the role of the intervenor and the philosophy and principles of intervenor services |
| 2.15 | Engage the individual in effective interactive communication and provide feedback in order for them to be an active and informed participant |
| 2.16 | Provide continuous environmental, visual, tactile, and auditory information |
| 2.17 | Plan and prepare for the assignment or activity |
| 2.18 | Support the individual's efforts for empowerment, advocacy, and self-determination |
| 2.19 | Effectively communicate the role of an intervenor |
| 2.20 | Demonstrate self-reflective techniques |
| 2.21 | Adhere to the IOO Code of Ethics |
| 2.22 | Interact professionally, respectfully, appropriately within a multi-disciplinary team (family, support network, other professionals, paraprofessionals), and the public at large |
| 2.23 | Adhere to and maintain professional boundaries |
| 2.24 | Demonstrate professionalism by adhering to the IOO Code of Ethics |
| 2.25 | Complete documentation/reports objectively with pertinent, timely, accurate, respectful, factual information |
| 2.26 | Recognize, respond to, and report abuse |
| 2.27 | Recognize when personal mental health and wellness is affecting your performance and use effective |

| | coping strategies |
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# Technical Competency #3: Strategies Used in Providing Intervenor Services

In order to provide effective intervenor services, intervenors must understand and consistently implement appropriate strategies, which reflect the uniqueness of the individual.

| | Technical Competency #3: Strategies Used in Providing Intervenor Services |
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| | *The intervenor should have knowledge of:* |
| 3.1 | Person-centered approach to planning and the philosophy that supports this process |
| 3.2 | The importance of responding to the individual's interests |
| 3.3 | The importance of responding to interactions initiated by the individual who is deafblind |
| 3.4 | The importance of an individual's need for anticipation, motivation, communication, and confirmation and the impact of deafblindness on these needs |
| 3.5 | The importance of a responsive (reactive) environments |
| 3.6 | Concept development in conjunction with skill development and communication |
| 3.7 | The importance of relaying visual/auditory information |
| 3.8 | The impact of various environmental factors on the individual |
| 3.9 | How change in routines can affect an individual |
| 3.10 | How physical change can affect an individual |
| 3.11 | Specific adaptations to techniques with individuals who have changing needs |
| 3.12 | The need to allow an individual sufficient time to process information, orientate, anticipate, and communicate |
| 3.13 | The importance of general conversation, sharing information and news |
| 3.14 | The importance of developing a relationship to establish trust |
| | *The intervenor should have the ability to:* |
| 3.15 | Consistently demonstrate the "Do With, Not For" philosophy |
| 3.16 | Support the individual's goals and objectives by assisting in the design, development, and implementation of activities and experiences |
| 3.17 | Provide anticipatory information to the individual using a variety of methods |
| 3.18 | Utilize tools and strategies to support concept development, skills, choices, and decision-making |
| 3.19 | Relay visual/auditory information |
| 3.20 | Assess, adapt, and deal with the environment |
| 3.21 | Observe and respond to an individual's changing needs |
| 3.22 | Assess the degree of complexity with which a concept should be introduced, relayed and/or expanded |
| 3.23 | Vary the level and intensity of input and ensure that the pace and duration meets the individual's ability to receive and respond |

## Technical Competency #4: Theories and Practices of Communication

Communication is an integral part of intervenor services. In order to be effective in their practice, intervenors must understand the theories of communication and demonstrate their practical application, as it relates to an individual who is deafblind.

| | Technical Competency #4: Theories and Practices of Communication |
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| | *The intervenor should have knowledge of:* |
| 4.1 | The impact of deafblindness on communication, interaction and the development of language |
| 4.2 | The role of the intervenor in facilitating the use of receptive and expressive communication and ensuring the understanding of information |
| 4.3 | The role of the intervenor as part of a communication team |
| 4.4 | Communication theories and practices |
| 4.5 | The importance of preparing for an assignment/activity |
| 4.6 | Modes of communication and different languages used by individuals who are deafblind |
| 4.7 | The linguistics of American Sign Language (ASL) and/or Langues des Signes Québécoise (LSQ) |
| 4.8 | English and/or French language and grammar |
| 4.9 | The interpreting process, models and skills |
| 4.10 | How your body, speed, and touch can affect communication |
| | *The intervenor should have the ability to:* |
| 4.11 | Demonstrate proficiency in English and/or French |
| 4.12 | Demonstrate proficiency in the language or communication mode used by an individual |
| 4.13 | Voice what the individual is communicating |
| 4.14 | Communicate and use language adapted to the level of an individual |
| 4.15 | Enhance and expand communications through various mediums and experiences |
| 4.16 | Implement methods and strategies for providing information |
| 4.17 | Observe and identify an individual's expressive communication |
| 4.18 | Interpret the meaning of an individual's communication, relay to others, and respond appropriately |
| 4.19 | Encourage expressive communication by an individual |
| 4.20 | Recognize, respond, and provide feedback for all attempts at communication |
| 4.21 | Shadowing and/or copying sign language |

## Technical Competency #5: Social, Emotional, and Psychological Impact of Deafblindness

In order to provide effective intervenor services, intervenors need to have an understanding of the social, emotional, and psychological impact of deafblindness, and the requisite skills to support individuals.

| | Technical Competency #5: Social, Emotional, and Psychological Impact of Deafblindness |
|---|---|
| | *The intervenor should have knowledge of:* |
| 5.1 | The impact of deafblindness on relationships, sexuality, and social interaction |
| 5.2 | The effects of an individual's etiology on their social, psychological, and emotional well-being |
| 5.3 | The grieving process and how it relates to an individual who is deafblind, families, social networks, etc. |
| 5.4 | Challenging behaviours and their possible precipitating factors |
| 5.5 | How isolation affects an individual |
| 5.6 | The impact of familial background, upbringing, spirituality, and culture |
| 5.7 | What a trusting relationship is, and why it is important |
| 5.8 | The importance of a professional working relationship with the family and support circles |
| | *The intervenor should have the ability to:* |
| 5.9 | Recognize their role in situations related to an individual's social, psychological, and emotional well-being |
| 5.10 | Support a culture of acceptance, safety, and security that is reliable and consistent |
| 5.11 | Support the individual's opportunities for self-determination, self-esteem and well-being |
| 5.12 | Implement strategies and protocols for challenging behaviours |
| 5.13 | Support social interactions and the development of meaningful relationships |
| 5.14 | Establish and maintain a professional working relationship with the family and support circles |

## Technical Competency #6: The Relationship between Deafblindness and Health, Mental Health and Aging

In order to provide effective intervenor services, intervenors must demonstrate knowledge of health, mental health, and aging, and be aware of implications for an individual who is deafblind.

| | Technical Competency #6: The Relationship between Deafblindness and Health, Mental Health and Aging |
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| | *The intervenor should have knowledge of:* |
| 6.1 | What is health and mental health |
| 6.2 | Health conditions, medications and possible side effects as it relates to the individual you are supporting |
| 6.3 | The impact of deafblindness on health |
| 6.4 | The impact of an individual being deafblind and medically fragile |
| 6.5 | The impact of deafblindness on mental health and well-being |
| 6.6 | The impact of additional disabilities, diseases, and conditions |
| 6.7 | The natural aging process and associated conditions, including its effect on deafblindness |
| 6.8 | Specific adaptations to techniques when working with older individuals who are deafblind |
| | *The intervenor should have the ability to:* |
| 6.9 | Utilize observation skills to recognize that changes could be related to health, mental health and aging |
| 6.10 | Make adaptations appropriate to the environment, medical and physical needs ,and cognitive needs of the individual |
| 6.11 | Follow appropriate protocols to meet the individuals' health, mental health, and aging |
| 6.12 | Access community resources and services for health, mental health, and aging |

## Technical Competency #7: Sensory Systems

In order to provide effective intervenor services, intervenors must demonstrate an understanding of the complexity of combined hearing and vision loss, and the integration of the sensory systems, in relation to an individual who is deafblind.

| | Technical Competency #7: Sensory Systems |
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| | *The intervenor should have knowledge of:* |
| 7.1 | The anatomy and functions of the eye and ear |
| 7.2 | The conditions that affect the eye and ear |
| 7.3 | Strategies that support the use of residual vision and hearing |
| 7.4 | Methods used to test vision and hearing |
| 7.5 | The impact of deafblindness on sensory integration and the processing of sensory information |
| 7.6 | The importance of the eight senses and the impact on an individual who is deafblind |
| | *The intervenor should have the ability to:* |
| 7.7 | Support an individual to use residual vision and hearing |
| 7.8 | Facilitate an individual's use of other senses to supplement auditory, visual and tactile information |
| 7.9 | Utilize strategies that support the sensory needs of an individual |
| 7.10 | Understand the results of audiograms and vision reports, and the functional impact on an individual |
| 7.11 | Make adaptations for visual and auditory needs |
| 7.12 | Understand how an individual integrates their senses and allow sufficient time for information to be processed |
| 7.13 | Utilize observational skills to recognize changes in vision and hearing |

# Technical Competency #8: Orientation and Mobility (O&M)

In order to provide effective intervenor services, intervenors must understand orientation and mobility and support an individual's use of O&M techniques, strategies, and aids.

| | Technical Competency #8: Orientation and Mobility (O&M) |
|---|---|
| | *The intervenor should have knowledge of:* |
| 8.1 | The impact of deafblindness on movement, spatial awareness, exploration or navigating and understanding of the environment |
| 8.2 | The role of the O&M specialist |
| 8.3 | O&M techniques, aids, and required adaptations |
| 8.4 | Technology and tactile cues available to support the O&M process |
| 8.5 | The role and function of a guide dog |
| | *The intervenor should have the ability to:* |
| 8.6 | Adjust to changing environmental factors |
| 8.7 | Support and provide sighted guide as recommended by an O&M specialist and/or by an individual's preferences |
| 8.8 | Support the individual who is deafblind in the use of appropriate mobility devices, as recommended by an O&M specialist |
| 8.9 | Relay information from the environment |
| 8.10 | Develop tactile cues and maps |
| 8.11 | Recognize and assess their own physical ability and limitations to provide sighted guide as an O&M technique, and make accommodations as needed |
| 8.12 | Provide a safe environment for exploration |

## Technical Competency #9: Use of Assistive Devices and Technology

Assistive devices and technology enhance an individual's ability to communicate and access information.  An intervenor must demonstrate an understanding of assistive devices and technology used by, or available to, an individual.

| | Technical Competency #9: Use of Assistive Devices and Technology |
|---|---|
| | **The intervenor should have knowledge of:** |
| 9.1 | Various technical and augmentative devices available to an individual who is deafblind |
| 9.2 | Use and maintenance of amplification, cochlear implants and assistive listening devices, as appropriate |
| 9.3 | Use and maintenance of glasses, low vision devices, and prostheses |
| 9.4 | Variety of resources and funding sources for assistive devices and technology |
| 9.5 | Technology, including new and emerging technology, and its application |
| | **The intervenor should have the ability to:** |
| 9.6 | Demonstrate effective and efficient use of various technical devices used by an individual who is deafblind |
| 9.7 | Assist an individual in utilizing various technical devices |
| 9.8 | Research new and emerging technology and share with individuals |
| 9.9 | Demonstrate basic computer skills |