**Alberta Society of the DeafBlind**

**Support Service Provider Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct**

**ASL Summary**

**Video Description and Transcript**

**Slide: Alberta Society of the DeafBlind logo**

The logo is a circle divided into four sections, each one a different colour: blue, red, gold and green. In the centre is a black circle with a small white circular section on the upper right side. The outer circle with the black centre represent an ‘eye’ and the colours represent diversity. To the right of the logo are lowercase letters asdb in large font. Below the asdb acronym the name of the organization is printed in full: Alberta Society of the DeafBlind.

A Deaf man, Randy Dziwenka, is standing, in front of a black fabric background. He has short blonde hair. He is wearing a black dress shirt with sleeves folded just below his elbows. He narrates the entire video in American Sign Language. The video has English voice-over and is captioned.

**Slide: Support Service Provider - Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct**

Welcome, to the Alberta Society of the DeafBlind ASL presentation of the Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct for Support Service Providers (SSP)

**Slide: Code of Ethics - Confidentiality**

SSPs are often involved in the personal affairs of the DeafBlind person. As a result, everything must be kept confidential including who is involved, and the communication or activities that took place.

**Slide: Code of Ethics - Report Abuse**

 If the SSP witnesses abuse, as required by law, it must be reported.

**Slide: Code of Ethics - Empowerment**

The purpose of SSP services is to enable and empower the DeafBlind person to make their own decisions. To enable and empower the DeafBlind person to do everything possible, even simple things, as independently as possible. The SSP will promote the DeafBlind person’s autonomy and independence in a supportive and respectful manner.

**Slide: Code of Ethics – Enable Independence (do not persuade or restrain)**

The SSP does not influence, force, or persuade the DeafBlind person,

The SSP does not criticize or limit the DeafBlind person. The SSP provides the DeafBlind person the information necessary to make their own decisions. With safety in mind, the SSP takes direction from the DeafBlind person.

**Slide: Code of Ethics – Ensure Safety**

To ensure safety, the SSP is expected to use good judgement. Factors that should be taken into consideration include the design of the environment, the demands of the setting, the purpose of the outing.

Other important considerations include the DeafBlind person’s medical, physical, cognitive and developmental abilities, when determining how to proceed safely.

**Slide: Code of Ethics – Honesty & Integrity**

The SSP will behave honestly and with integrity. They must endeavour to avoid any situations that can appear as a conflict of interest.

**Slide: Code of Conduct – Do not lend or borrow**

The SSP is not permitted to lend to, or borrow money or goods from the DeafBlind person.

**Slide: Code of Conduct – Financial Matters: Protect all parties**

When assisting the DeafBlind person with financial or money situations, SSPs must protect themself and protect the DeafBlind person by taking actions and making decisions to ensure that no misunderstandings and/or concerns of theft or fraud will occur.

**Slide: Code of Conduct – Work-related cell phone use**

While working, the SSP should not be using their cell phone or other mobile devices, unless is it is related to their work duties with the DeafBlind person. No texting or phone calls with others, unless permission is given from the DeafBlind person. Checking social media or looking at web sites should be work related. No photos, ‘selfies’ or videos should be taken without the permission of the DeafBlind person, and others involved.

**Slide: Code of Conduct – Personal errands while working**

SSPs do not do their own personal business such as shopping, errands, or other tasks when working with a DeafBlind person. The consumption of alcohol or other intoxicating substances is prohibited while on the job, even if the DeafBlind person is partaking.

However, if the SSP is volunteering, these restrictions regarding personal shopping, drinking, etc. may be relaxed, if agreed upon in advance by the DeafBlind person.

**Slide: Code of Conduct – Punctuality, Attire**

The SSP is expected to behave in a respectful manner at all times.

Be punctual and ready to work.

Dress appropriately for the setting. Remove jewelry that is distracting.

Wear colours preferred by the DeafBlind person. To help with effective communication, DeafBlind consumers may also prefer SSPs to wear tops with a certain length of sleeve, or higher necklines. Where possible, please respect these preferences.

**Slide: Code of Conduct – Scents, Smoking**

Get permission from the DeafBlind person before using perfume or other scented products, unscented products may be preferred.

Unless permission is given, smoking should be avoided while working as an SSP

**Slide: Code of Conduct - Neutrality**

SSPs must remain neutral throughout all their assignments.

If asked by the DeafBlind person, SSPs can offer opinions regarding colour and style of clothing, items of food, quality and price (sales) of products, etc. without making decisions or choices for the DeafBlind person.

SSP observations or experiences can be helpful information, but encourage the DeafBlind person to make their own choices, or to ask the sales person’s opinion, especially when several options are available.

It’s important to be supportive, but remain neutral.

**Slide: Scope of Practice (SSP Responsibilities) - Navigation**

Navigation is one of the two main responsibilities of SSPs. As sighted guides they are required to be knowledgeable about various guiding techniques used with DeafBlind persons in all kinds of environments, as well as the preferred techniques of individual consumers.

**Slide: Scope of Practice - Describing the Environment**

The second main responsibility of the SSP is to constantly describe the physical environment and dynamic surroundings. By sharing what is seen . . . what is going on . . . the DeafBlind person is more connected to and engaged in their community.

**Slide: Scope of Practice - Communication**

The SSP must be fluent in the language, and various communication methods and techniques used by DeafBlind persons, as well as the preferences of individual consumers.

**Slide: Scope of Practice - Communication Facilitator**

Some SSPs may also be skilled Communication Facilitators (CF). The skills required of a CF are very different than the skills required for working as an SSP. The CF role is to relay a signer’s ASL message as well as other visual information to the DeafBlind person, to ensure the full depth of the message and its intent are relayed. The CF must use the preferred communication techniques of the DeafBlind person.

Specific settings where CF services maybe be used include:

Video calls . . . such as video relay services . . . where the CF would relay the video caller’s part of the conversation, and the DeafBlind person would respond for themself.

Meetings or events hosted by the Deaf community where the CF would relay the Deaf presenters’ messages to DeafBlind person. As well, meetings or events that are interpreted, and the CF would relay the interpretation to the DeafBlind person. In these settings, if the DeafBlind person wishes to contribute, then they would respond for themself.

The CF, like an interpreter, cannot offer opinions, comments, or participate in discussions. The CF focuses only on communicating the messages and environmental information present in the setting. If the CF is volunteering, this restriction may be relaxed, if agreed upon by the DeafBlind person.

**Slide: Scope of Practice - Accepting work qualified to do**

SSPs (and CFs) will accept work they are qualified to do. If they are not qualified, they must decline the work.

**Slide: Respectful Relationships - Clear and open communication with DeafBlind consumers**

Try to discuss in advance any issues or potential problems that might come up in future and to explore options for how to handle them. If issues or problems do happen, they are to be discussed with the other person immediately, with the goal of trying to work out a resolution and finding ideas about how to work well together in the future (the goal is not to accuse or blame).

Disrespectful, bullying or intimidating behaviour from either party toward the other should not be tolerated. Such actions should be reported.

**Slide: Respectful Relationships - Working relationships with others in a team**

When working together at events, SSPs will cooperate with interpreters, CFs, and other SSP colleagues, as a team, to ensure effective successful communication for everyone: Deaf, DeafBlind, hard of hearing, and hearing.

**Slide: Business Practices - Confirming assignment details**

When accepting an assignment, make clear and specific arrangements with the DeafBlind person regarding the meeting place and time. Rendezvous and transportation details must be agreed upon and confirmed in advance.

**Slide: Business Practices - Accepting or declining assignments**

SSPs may politely decline requests to work.

When SSPs agree to accept an appointment, they must follow through on this responsibility. If necessary, the SSP must find a substitute SSP to go to the appointment, making sure the DeafBlind person agrees to the change.

**Slide: Business Practices - Invoicing for hours and expenses**

SSPs will bill only for services provided. SSPs must discuss and have agreements in advance about payment for services as well as any payment for expenses incurred during the assignment.

**Slide: Professional Development**

SSPs are responsible to advance their knowledge and skills by participating in professional development opportunities specific to the work of an SSP.

SSPs are responsible to keep current about trends and practices with respect to SSP services, as well as activities and advocacy efforts in DeafBlind communities. Activities include watching videos on the Internet about SSP, CF and DeafBlind topics and issues. Where available and permitted, SSPs should be members of organizations representing DeafBlind people and associations of SSPs.

**Slide: More professional development resources at www.albertadeafblind.a**

The ASDB website has many valuable educational materials in both ASL and English. We encourage you to review these resources.

**Slide:** **Resources and materials used to create the ASDB SSP Code of Ethics and Code of conduct are cited in the English document**

**Slide:** **Thanks to Tracy Hetman for researching and writing the English document SSP Code of Ethics & Code of Conduct**

**Slide:** **Thanks to Randy Dziwenka for providing this ASL summary of the SSP Code of Ethics & Code of Conduct**

**Slide:** **Thanks to Dallas McEwen for providing the voice-over for this video**

**Slide:** **Thank you!**

**Slide:** **Alberta Society of the DeafBlind logo**