SCHOOL CLIMATE

CLERC CENTER
AT GALLAUDET

What Not to Do: Meaningful & Ethical Use of Deaf Experience Tip Sheet

To ensure Deaf experience is used responsibly and effectively, leaders should avoid the following practices:

Do not assume Deaf identity alone equals expertise.

Being Deaf does not automatically qualify someone to contribute to all areas of instruction, leadership, curriculum, or hiring decisions.

Do not engage in tokenism.

Avoid including Deaf individuals on committees or panels solely for representation without a clear, meaningful role aligned to their expertise.

Do not place Deaf professionals outside their area of knowledge.

Deaf professionals should contribute in areas where they have relevant training, experience, or lived expertise—not as generalists for all Deaf-related decisions.

Do not ask Deaf individuals to "represent all Deaf perspectives."

Deaf experience is diverse. No single person can or should speak for the entire Deaf community.

Do not bypass preparation or context.

Deaf committee members should receive the same background materials, expectations, and decision-making authority as others to contribute effectively.