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I work with people that are Deaf, Hard of Hearing and have Speech Disabilities.

As an Outreach Specialist I come across many a person that has a speech disability and most of them are depending on other people to make calls for them and are often frustrated with people on the opposite line not understanding them or hanging up on them. Working with those that have difficulty with speech, I find that they often want to be able to make the calls themselves, like everyone else.

With the speech to speech relay it opens up a whole new world for them and makes them feel like they are part and able to do for themselves without having to depend on others to make calls for them.

Sometimes it is still frustrating even with using speech to speech relay , when the caller assistant has to make a change or relieve another caller assistant it often takes time for the relay caller assistant to familiarize with the speech disabled person , keeping the same caller assistant until the person hangs up with make it more user friendly with the speech disabled person.

Also I am finding that it is often difficult for those with speech disabilities like those with CP or other limited mobility to dial the long 10 digit number having a 3 digit helps those to dial directly to the speech to speech relay makes it easier and quicker to get a call through..

No matter how many presentations that I give in the Community, I am finding that many people with speech disabilities are often unaware of this service. Agencies that serve people with disabilities are often unaware or some are aware but don't inform those who need this service, More training and interagency requirements need to be changed so those with speech disabilities can be made aware of speech to speech relay.

Because many people who have speech disabilities have other limitations often use computers to communicate therefore the above statements are included for those that use computers.

Rather than having any caller assistant to assist the person with a speech disability it would be more efficient and quicker and user friendly if the speech to speech relay center had designated caller assistants that are truly skilled in speech to speech recognition and better paid and better training to utilize the service to benefit the speech disability caller.