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**RCLS-385-01**  
**Part 4: Activity Plan (#1)**

# Signed Role Playing Gaming

## Appropriate Setting:

Safe, quiet, comfortable, non-distracting room, or outdoor setting. Seating reasonably close enough and sufficient lighting for everyone to see each others signing., Seating usually best in the shape of a circle or a square rather than a rectangle so signing can be seen by all fairly equally (compared to long rectangle making it a bit more difficult to see everyone).

## Goals:

Provide a social activity to deaf and hard of hearing (and any signing-capable hearing) participants through a social recreational event to help reduce isolation and encourage interaction in a cooperative, fun, team/friendship-building series of activities.

RPGs (Role Playing Games) provide an unprecedented range of benefits for a leisure activity, some of these include: Social cooperation with diverse peoples/cultures/background on common goals, leadership, walking in others' shoes/experiences, exposure to other cultures, religions, histories, etc.

languages/linguistics, multicultural mythologies and histories, learning to follow the rules but also "thinking outside of the box" when needed, intellectual challenges (math, reasoning, problem solving), reading/writing - both technical and creative, history, geography, cartography, geology, economics, government systems, politics, ecology, metallurgy, meteorology, astronomy, physics, demographics, warfare tactics and strategies, technologies, past and present architecture, creative areas such as theatrics/acting and many other social, creative, and intellectual benefits. For more details on the potential therapeutic benefits of role playing gaming, see my essay "An Overview History, and Therapeutic Value of Role Playing Gaming"

<http://www.merp.com/essays/hawke/HawkeAnOverviewHistoryOfRPGing>

## Population:

Deaf and hard of hearing, or anyone who can sign in ASL (or any signing language appropriate to the locale and/or population) with sufficient proficiency. Ages can range in groups from 8 to 13, 14 to 21, and 21 on up. Both male and female can equally participate.

## Explanation of activity:

Participants gather around a table for an interactive shared imaginary adventure(s) using just paper, pencil, dice, agreed-upon rules/game-system and their imaginations.

In this particular variation of the role playing gaming theme, an added difference is that participants will be using sign language to communicate rather than the usual verbal communication.

Also for maximum therapeutic benefit the adventure setting must be cooperative not competitive, and all participants must play "good" aligned characters rather than "neutral" or "evil" alignment.

The game referee/narrator, commonly known as the Game Master meets with the players in a comfortable setting around a table, or anywhere they find comfortable, and begins with a description of the imaginary setting. An example: *"You and your friends have just walked into the courtyard of an ancient building. The courtyard is approximately forty feet square. The walls, built of a tan colored stone material apparently indigenous to the area, are built to the points of the compass. They are about thirty feet high. You entered from an opening in the south wall. You see the north wall has some stairs going up, and the east wall on your right has what appears to be a solid metal door hanging open on rusted hinges. The walls are crumbling in places, and much is overgrown with ivy and weeds. In the center is a large fountain about fifteen feet high in what*

*appears to be the form of a series of three flower-like terraces. Surprisingly, the fountain is currently spouting clear and cool-looking water. Viewing the water, you're more acutely aware of how dry your mouths are after the long day's hike to arrive here, with no water previously in sight. The wind is picking up as a storm from the south, with lightning and dark clouds gathering, quickly approaches. It is getting colder by the minute. What do you do?"*

At this point, those playing in the game each take turns telling the GM and the other players what actions they take. Some will have mundane results, others could have surprising consequences. Dice are generally used to simulate the random events that can occur in life, and make it unknown in advance, even to the referee, what exactly will be the outcome. For example, someone may decide to climb the stairs, there are some loose steps, and depending on how agile the player's made-up "character" is, with a roll of the dice, that character may leap to the top unscathed, or may have a bit of a fall to deal with. Of course, there also could be trouble in the form of "ill-intentioned bandits" lurking within the entrance of the door...

**Activity costs:**

Entry/participation is free. Food and beverages will be provided sponsors and/or participants in a "pot luck" style to share with other participants.

**Leadership necessary:**

One person to play the role of referee/narrator, also known as Game Master or Dungeon Master (GM or DM). Typically a ratio of 1 GM per 1-8 "players".

**Equipment:**

Required table, chairs (enough for GM and as many players participating), paper, pencils, polyhedron dice, player and GM rulebooks

Optional additional equipment can include: gridded and/or hexagonal "battle mats", miniature figurines.

**Evaluation procedures:**

GM and participants fill out evaluation forms provided at the end of each gaming session. The questionnaire would include for example (see attached sample form from MerpCon Convention):

- Rating of fun factor
- Level of interaction with others
- Comfort level
- Level of opportunity for involvement
- Challenge level
- Suggestions for improvements

**Suggested sponsors:**

Merlyn's Games & Hobbies

- Provide gaming facilities
- Could provide prizes
- Provide gaming materials

Hobbytown

- Could provide gaming facilities
- Could provide prizes - such as a miniature used to represent their player character
- Could provide gift certificate for discount on role playing gaming purchases.

EWDHHC (Eastern Washington Deaf and Hard of Hearing Center)

- Could providing gaming facilities
- Could provide ASL translators if non-hearing participants a little weak in ASL
- Could generally promote the event(s)