

# Signs of Safety

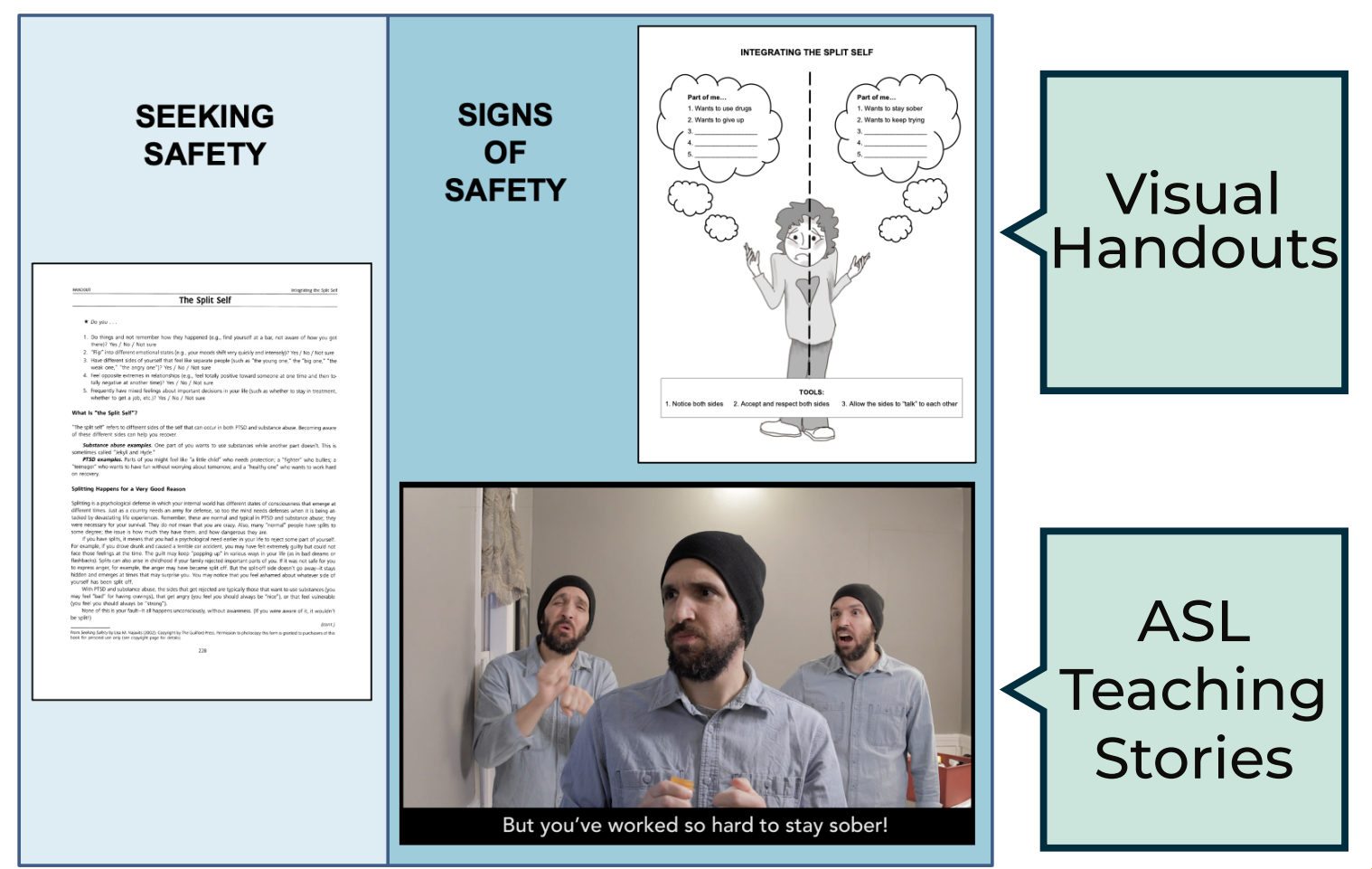
A Deaf-Accessible Therapy Toolkit for Trauma and Addiction

## BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

- The U.S. Deaf community experiences 3x the rate of problem drinking and 2x the rate of trauma exposure compared to the general population.
- Hearing individuals have access to several validated treatments for comorbid alcohol use disorder (AUD) and PTSD.
- There are no evidence-based treatments to treat any behavioral health condition with Deaf clients.
- Deaf clients have unique language access needs:
  - 4th grade median English literacy
  - Health literacy parallels non-English speaking U.S. immigrants

## INTERVENTION DEVELOPMENT

- Community-engaged process involving Deaf and hearing researchers, clinicians, filmmakers, actors, artists, and Deaf people with AUD/PTSD.



The collage features several key components of the intervention:
 

- SEEKING SAFETY:** A document titled 'The Split Self' with numbered steps for implementation.
- SIGN OF SAFETY:** A document titled 'INTEGRATING THE SPLIT SELF' with a cartoon character and thought bubbles.
- Visual Handouts:** A callout box pointing to the 'INTEGRATING THE SPLIT SELF' document.
- ASL Teaching Stories:** A video frame showing three men in a scene, with a caption 'But you've worked so hard to stay sober!'.

## RESULTS

Open Pilot (2014 - 2019):



Randomized Feasibility Pilot (2018 - 2022):

- Participants assigned to the active treatment arm (n = 8) exhibited a 22% decrease in PTSD symptom severity from baseline to follow-up, compared to a 9% decrease among those assigned to waitlist control (n = 7).
- Active treatment participants reduced binge drinking by 1.75 days per month, as compared to 0.14 days per month in the waitlist control arm.

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- First-ever full-scale psychotherapy trial in the Deaf community, to be conducted in partnership with Deaf-owned agency National Deaf Therapy.
- Primary outcomes at immediate post-treatment and follow-up are past 30-day alcohol use frequency/quantity and PTSD severity.
- 144 Deaf adults with past-month PTSD and problem drinking will be enrolled into a national trial comparing (1) Signs of Safety with (2) treatment as usual and (3) a no-treatment control condition.