

Culture, Language and Communication

Where do Deaf and Hard of Hearing People Fit In?

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Statistics

- Over 36 million deaf and hard of hearing people in America
- 30-40% of the population 65 y/o and older have some type of hearing loss
- *300,000 to 500,000 sign language users in U.S.
- 5 in every 1,000 babies born deaf
- Over 90% of deaf children have hearing parents

“Facts about Hearing Loss.” *Center for Hearing and Communication*. June 2010

*no definitive numbers have been verified

Deaf vs. deaf...what's the difference and why is it important?

- deaf means “loss” of hearing
- Deaf means culture, language, “deaf world”.

Disability is a label attributed suggesting one needs help, services, rehabilitation, cures, personal assistance.

Deaf people are not asking for these interventions or services.

Myths that continue ...

- 1985 – “Profound deafness that occurs prior to the acquisition of verbal language is socially and psychiatrically devastating.”
- Another “authority” on deafness states:
“Suspiciousness, paranoid symptomatology, impulsiveness, aggressiveness have been reported as typical of deaf adults...”
- “The deaf are more impulsive and aggressive than the hearing, they have deficiencies in language skills, their intellectual development is delayed...”

Eugenics, Oppression and Audism

- Eugenics - Alexander Graham Bell believed that deaf people should not marry other deaf people to avoid more deaf babies being born.

Sterilization – movements in the 20th century in the U.S. and Germany to see voluntary sterilization

- Oralism – To be able to speak means to be human. Speaking equates with hearing.
- Audism – “The notion that one is superior based on one’s ability to hear or behave in the manner of one who hears.” (Humphries 1977)
- “Like racism and sexism, audism insists that inherent biological factors determine individual traits and capacity”

-- Harlan Lane --

Colonization

“Whenever a more powerful group undertakes to assist a less powerful one, whenever benefactors create institutions to aid beneficiaries, the relationship is fraught with peril.” -- Harlan Lane –

*“The Mask of Benevolence”, *The Colonization of African and Deaf Communities*. 1992*

It's not just about language, it's about communication. It's not always about disability, it's about culture.

- ✓ Collective shared experiences
- ✓ Language
- ✓ Historical perspective
- ✓ Storytelling and narrative
- ✓ Practices and beliefs
- ✓ Customs, rituals, traditions

What do we know about cultural humility?

We need to understand, respect and recognize:

- ✓ Collective shared experiences
- ✓ Language
- ✓ Historical perspective
- ✓ Storytelling and narrative
- ✓ Practices and beliefs
- ✓ Customs, rituals, traditions

ADA and Title VI

- Americans with Disabilities Act (1990)
- Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act (1964)
- The Joint Commission - Incorporating all guidelines to meet CLAS standards

Medical model of hearing loss

- Late deafened
- Hard of hearing
- Situational hearing loss
- Specific etiologies (NF2)

Communications needs vary...again, it's not about language!

Auxiliary aids and services...

- Lip-reading
- Hearing aids
- Cochlear implants
- Speech therapy
- Auxiliary aids and services (amplified handsets, etc.)
- Written communication

Does our Cultural Competency Training include Deaf people?

- What do we need to know?
- Whom do we ask?
- What do we know about sign languages?
- What about the immigrant or refugee who is Deaf? What are their language/communication needs?

Health Literacy...where do Deaf people fit in?

- What do we understand about the literacy and health literacy levels of deaf and hoh people?
- What do we know about written communication and many Deaf people?
- Why can't we just give a Deaf patient a consent form to read?

Considerations...

- How do we ensure effective communication?
- How and where do we document services provided?
- What sort of cultural adjustments do we need to make?
- How do we incorporate these populations into our education and training?

What do we know about effective communication?

- Fewer visits to an Emergency Department
- Fewer re-admissions
- Shorter LOS
- Better medical follow up
- Better medication adherence
- Increased patient satisfaction
- Better healthcare outcomes