

**Governor's Office of the Deaf
and Hard of Hearing**

**Federal Executive Board's Equal Employment Opportunity
Conference**

**Working with Individuals Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing
June 6, 2012**




Welcome!

- Introduction
- What is your position?
- Have you met any deaf/hard of hearing and/or deafblind people?
- What do you hope to learn today?



Learning Objectives:



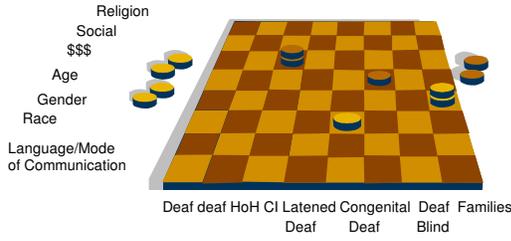
- Describe continuum and types of hearing loss
- State the impact of hearing loss on communication
- List strategies for effective communication
- Summarize the roles and limitations of interpreters

We are all snowflakes

People with hearing loss are unique individuals - no two people have the same hearing loss or need the same accommodations



Marylanders with hearing loss



Deaf deaf HoH CI Latened Congenital Deaf Families
Deaf Deaf Blind

How many people with hearing loss live in Maryland?

Approximately 9.25% of Maryland's population are deaf and hard of hearing (5,372,472 total residents of Maryland as of 2003 census = 490,000 deaf or hard of hearing)



Source: Prepared by: Maryland Department of Budget and Management, 2003



The National Institute of Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD) website reports that approximately **17 percent, or 36 million, of American adults** say that they have some degree of hearing loss.

Based on a 2008 Census Estimate in Maryland of 5,633,597 – (23.8% are children) **729,776 adults in Maryland** would have identified as having some type of hearing loss.

Source: <http://nihseniorhealth.gov/hearingloss/hearinglossdefined/01.html>



Teenagers



- Nearly 1 in 5 U.S. teenagers has some hearing loss, a sharp increase from just 15 years ago, according to a new study.
- The majority of hearing loss was slight, but the prevalence of mild or worse hearing loss increased 77 percent.
- Most of the time the loss was in one ear. Girls were much less likely than boys to have lost some hearing.

Source: Washington Post, August 18, 2010



Trends in Hearing Loss Among Older Americans

- Hearing loss is the third most prevalent chronic condition in older Americans, and it is the number one communicative disorder of the aged.
- Between 25% and 40% of the population aged 65 years or older is hearing impaired.
- The prevalence of presbycusis rises with age, ranging from 40% to 60% in patients older than 75 years and more than 80% in patients older than 85 years.

Source: American Speech-Language and Hearing Association at <http://www.asha.org/members/research/reports/hearing.htm>

Veterans



- Tinnitus and hearing loss were among the most prevalent service-connected disabilities for Veterans receiving compensation at the end of FY 2009.
- Currently, there are more than 570,966 veterans receiving compensation for hearing loss associated with military service, and 639,029 receiving compensation for service-related tinnitus.
- Exposure to more than 85 decibels continuously or 140 decibels for any length of time can damage hearing. A rifle can produce 160 decibels of sound.

Source: Veterans Benefits Administration

Labels, labels, labels!

- **Deaf** - refers to a particular group of deaf people who share a language - American Sign Language (ASL) -- and a culture (Padden & Humphries)
- **deaf** - refers to the auditory condition of not hearing, and a different group of people who are not culturally involved (Padden & Humphries)
- **Hard of Hearing** - refers to a group of deaf people who have mild to moderate hearing loss

More labels!



- **Late deafened** – refers to a group of deaf people who lost their hearing any time after the development of speech and language; it usually means after the age of adolescence.
- **Oral deaf** - a person with hearing loss who relies on speech reading and use of their own voice for communication
- **DeafBlind** – refers to a group of deaf people who have concomitant hearing and vision loss

Appropriate label?

Person-first language: A person who is Deaf, or a person with a hearing loss

Avoid using the term *hearing impaired*, regardless of a person's hearing status

Also avoid using *deaf and dumb*; *deaf mute*; *stone deaf*

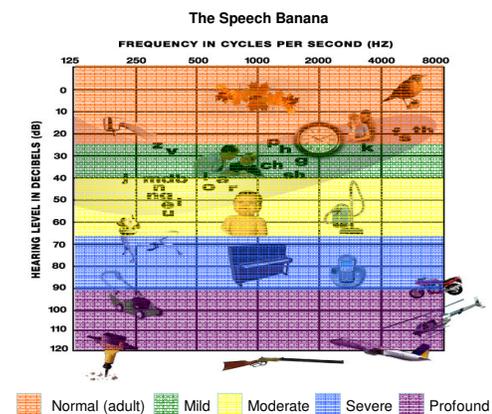
hearing loss = loss of communication access

Implications of Hearing Loss

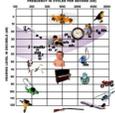
- **0 – 15 dB (decibel loss)** Normal hearing, no significant difficulty communicating
- **16-25 dB (slight hearing loss)** May or may not be noticed; little difficulty hearing faint or distant speech; conversation and instructions presented too rapidly, particularly in noisy classrooms, are likely to result in missed information.
- **25-40 dB (slightly hard of hearing)** Generally understands conversational speech, however, may miss up to 50% of discussions especially if voices are soft or the environment is noisy; might need the use of a hearing aid or personal FM system.

Implications of Hearing Loss (cont.)

- **40-55 dB (mild loss)** Generally understands conversational speech if less than 5 feet away/unable to catch a conversational tidbit in the waiting room; might need the use of amplified telephone; may be unable to listen to the radio announcement
- **55-70 dB (moderate hearing loss)** Speech discrimination is a challenge at best
- **70-90 dB (severe loss)** May or may not hear loud sounds; no speech discrimination
- **90+ dB (profound loss)** Sounds perceived as vibrations through the body



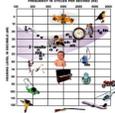
The Hearing Experience



What might the student with a hearing loss hear? The above image graphs out speech sounds across its two dimensions, frequency (from low to high across the top) and loudness (from soft to loud down the side). Some speech sounds are soft and high pitched (top and right: /s/, /f/, /th/), others are louder and lower pitched (/n/, /g/). These sounds represent an 'average.'

Morrison, M. & Leonard, A. The Audiogram Doesn't Tell the Whole Story: When Documentation Isn't Enough. http://www.wvu.edu/education/sped/wrocc/audiogramintake_files/frame.htm

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What does it mean to be culturally Deaf?



“Big D” Deaf

- American Sign Language is the primary mode of communication
- Social norms and values are passed down from one generation to another
- Considered a linguistic and cultural minority, not a disability
- Degree of hearing loss is not the issue
- Strong heritage



American Sign Language

- Is a natural language containing all of the features that make a language a unique communication system
- Is an autonomous linguistic system independent from English
- Is not Iconic



American Sign Language (cont.)

- Meaning is conveyed through the hands, facial expression, and body shifts
- Not a universal language
- A living language
- New signs are being added with the development of new technologies

Social Norms

- Getting someone’s attention
- Walking between two deaf or hard of hearing people conversing
- Eye contact
- Pointing
- Time
- “Telling it like it is.”



Diversity among deaf people

- Some grow up deaf
 - Not all have a “full” language system because some did not receive language input during critical language-acquisition years
- Some raised as hearing who then experience hearing loss at later in life
 - Fluent in English
- Written language
 - Not everyone has access to written language
 - Not an indication either of lack of intelligence or of mental health problems

What does it mean to be deafblind?



Onset of Deafblindness

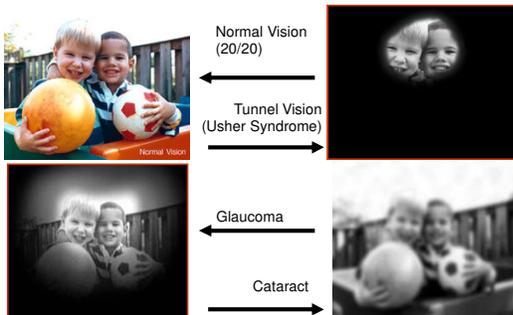
- Low vision
- Congenital
- Adventitious



- Vision loss that is 20/200 with best correction or visual field restricted to 20 degrees, coupled with hearing loss so severe that speech can not be clearly heard even with best amplification.
- Vision and hearing loss that, even if, corrected causes obstacles to basic daily functions (e.g. school, work, cooking, accessing the community, etc.)

Ingram, C. & Suggs, Jr. W. (2006) p.8

Deafblind Different Visions



http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Retinitis_pigmentosa

Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind People are Protected by Federal Laws



- Section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Programs and Services Need to be Accessible for:

- People who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deafblind and are:
 - Constituents
 - Parents/Guardians if constituent is a minor
 - Those employed by government agencies
 - Anyone who interacts with government agency staff in other capacities of the job



Rehabilitation Act of 1973

- The Rehabilitation Act is Federal legislation that supports vocational rehabilitation, supported employment, independent living, and client assistance programs.



Section 501

- Prohibits employment discrimination against individuals with disabilities in the federal sector.
- Requires agencies to take affirmative action to employ and advance in employment qualified individuals with disabilities



Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act - Nondiscrimination Under Federal Grants and Programs



- No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States, solely by reason of her or his disability, can be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance or under any program or activity conducted by any Executive agency or by the United States Postal Service.

For the purposes of this section, the term "program or activity" may mean all of the operations of -

- a department, agency, special purpose district, or other instrumentality of a State or of a local government; or
- the entity of such a State or local government that distributes such assistance and each such department or agency (and each other State or local government entity) to which the assistance is extended, in the case of assistance to a State or local government;
- a college, university, or other postsecondary institution, or a public system of higher education; or
- a local educational agency (as defined in section 14101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965), system of vocational education, or other school system;
- an entire corporation, partnership, or other private organization, or an entire sole proprietorship-

What is Discrimination?

- Not hiring someone because of his or her disability
- Using qualification standards, employment tests, or other selection criteria that screen out individuals with disabilities
- Not making reasonable accommodations for an applicant or employee
- Limiting, segregating, or classifying a job applicant or employee in a way that adversely affects the opportunities because of a disability

Examples of Reasonable Accommodations



- TTYs, amplified telephones, captioned telephones, and videophones;
- instant messaging and e-mail systems;
- assistive listening systems and devices;
- visual alerts for audible alarms and messages;
- modifications to reduce ambient noise levels;
- captioned audiovisual information;
- permission to bring service animals into the workplace;
- modification of intercom entry systems for secured areas or buildings; and
- policies and procedures for procuring necessary qualified interpreter services and real-time captioning or CART services.



National Association of the Deaf Website: <http://naad.org/issues/employment/discrimination-and-reasonable-accommodations>

Section 508

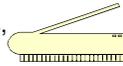
- Requires federal agencies to procure Electronic and Information Technology (EIT) that is accessible to persons with disabilities.
- All EIT equipment and systems procured on or after June 21, 2001 must comply with standards written by the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (Access Board).
- These standards are intended to make these technology products more accessible to individuals with disabilities.



What technology is covered?

- EIT includes technology such as:

- web pages,
- software applications,
- computers,
- self-contained kiosks,
- copiers,
- multimedia, and
- telecommunications systems.



Best Practices



- Make sure any video or audio content (even YouTube) is captioned or has a transcript posted that is easy to find.
- When possible, offer videos in American Sign Language.
- For employees, ensure that an accessible phone (TTY, videophone, captioned telephone) is available for their use

Remember: If you SAY it, SEE it.

Communication Options and Strategies

First...

Always ASK a person with hearing loss for his/her preference of communication.



Strategies to communicate with Hard of Hearing people

- Get the person's attention
- **Face the person**
- Speak clearly – do NOT shout!
- **Repeat, then rephrase if necessary**
- Speak slowly, but do not over-articulate

Speech/lip-reading

- Do not assume all people can speech/lip-read
- Different factors play a role in the ability to lip-read effectively
- Successful speech/lip-reading is a skill that requires training
- At best, only 30% of English speech is clearly visible



One-to-one: Do's

- Speak clearly, naturally, and at your normal volume
- Use pantomime, body language, and facial expression
- First repeat, then try to rephrase if necessary
- Point and gesture as needed
- Take time to communicate



One-to-one: Don'ts

- Place anything in or over your mouth when speaking
- Stand in front of a light source
- Shout
- Over-articulate
- Ask close-ended questions



Group session: Do's



- Provide new vocabulary in advance
- Let deaf, hard of hearing and deafblind participants determine the best seating arrangement
- Repeat questions and statements made from the back of the room
- Slow down
- Allow full participation by the deaf, hard of hearing or deafblind person

Group session: Don'ts

- Neglect the layout of the room
- Pace back and forth too much while speaking
- Speak without using visual aids
- Rush through the meeting, thus leaving out vital information for deaf employees



Writing



- First, ASK the deaf, hard of hearing or deafblind person if s/he prefers to write
- Written communication = notes, computer, text messages, TTY, email...
- Establish the topic immediately
- Use open-ended questions
- Use common words
 - Use **warning** instead of **reprimand**
 - Use **exit** or **leave** instead of **evacuate**
- Follow the KISS rule



Communication Services

- Use a Qualified Interpreter
 - American Sign Language (ASL)
 - Pidgin Signed English (PSE)
 - Signed Exact English (SEE)
 - Certified Deaf Interpreter (CDI)
 - Oral
 - Cued Speech
 - Specialized interpreters for DeafBlind



When using a sign language interpreter, oral interpreter, or Cued Speech transliterator:

- Greet the deaf person and speak directly to them – establish rapport as you would with any other person.
- Continue to face the deaf person even though their eye contact might be with the interpreter/transliterator – they will occasionally look at you. Maintain eye contact with the deaf or hard of hearing person.



Using an Interpreter/Transliterater



- Treat the interpreter as a professional
- Provide good lighting for the interpreter
- Permit only one person to speak at a time
- Keep in mind that the interpreter is a few words/phrases behind the speaker
- Don't tell the interpreter not to interpret something you are saying. Interpreter training and ethics require them to interpret what is said in the deaf person's presence.
- Remember the interpreter is not an expert on deafness or on your constituent

Safety and Social Concerns

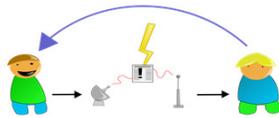
- Flashing light fire alarm in offices, hallways, and bathrooms



- Review safety procedures, including exits and alarms
- Assign someone to alert deaf, hard-of-hearing, or deafblind employees to emergency situations

Different Ways of Communicating

- Gesturing
- Pantomime/ Charade
- Body language
- Facial expression
- Universal signs
- Interpreter
- Signing
- Fingerspelling
- Speech/lip-reading & Speaking
- Writing/Drawing
- Pointing



TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION



- Obtain the appropriate auxiliary aids and services whenever necessary
- Maintain eye contact
- Get the attention of others is done by tapping on the person's shoulder or upper arm. Get the person's attention before starting a conversation
- Speak directly to the person with a hearing loss, not to the interpreter
- Give the person with hearing loss as much information as you would give a hearing person
- Be aware of confusing jargon
- Gesture, point, and demonstrate when possible
- Do not over-articulate words

In conclusion...

We have discussed...



- Appropriate labels
- The differences between people with hearing loss
- Communication options and strategies



GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF THE
DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

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