

ADJUSTING TO HEARING LOSS DURING HIGH SCHOOL: PREPARING STUDENTS FOR SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION TO POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION OR TRAINING

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SUMMARY

Completion of postsecondary education frequently builds upon a student's successful academic and personal experience during high school. For students with hearing loss, healthy adjustment to hearing loss is a key lifelong developmental process. The vast majority (94%) of approximately 1.1 million K-12 students with hearing loss are educated in regular schools and do not receive any educational support services. Many of these students have a mild hearing loss or hearing loss in only one ear. Yet, even a mild or unilateral hearing loss can be significant for a student. Approximately 37% of children with minimal hearing loss fail at least one grade and many have significantly more problems with their behavior, self-esteem, and social skills compared to children with normal hearing. Further, these students are often not aware of their hearing loss, possible educational accommodations available to them, and their legal rights to these accommodations. Intervening professionals should become knowledgeable and well-informed about issues involved in living with hearing loss. This tipsheet offers suggestions for identifying students who do not know that their hearing loss can affect them academically, socially, and emotionally. A four-stage framework is described for understanding a student's readiness for accepting help. Also included are suggested interventions that facilitate the student's adaptation to their hearing loss. These interventions also offer a broad perspective beyond high school that can be extrapolated to postsecondary students by college service personnel.

KEY TERMINOLOGY

Universal Newborn Hearing Screening (UNHS)

Routine hearing screening of all newborn children before they go home for the first time. Most states require UNHS for early identification of hearing loss in children.

Pre-lingual onset of hearing loss

Hearing loss that occurs prior to age 3. This group of students includes those with mild or moderate, and unilateral hearing loss (hearing loss in only one ear).

Progressive hearing loss

Hearing loss that gradually deteriorates over time, or which drops suddenly. The gradual decline in hearing may not be immediately noticed.

Late-deafened

Comprises several sub-groups. Causes of hearing loss may result from side effects of toxic medications administered for a life-threatening health condition, or hearing loss resulting from various life-altering health disabilities or accidents.

Pediatric cochlear implants

Cochlear implantations that take place before the child reaches the age of 2, or during late adolescence

At risk students

Students demonstrating any of the following behaviors:

- Inconsistent response to sound
- Delayed language and speech
- Speech that is unclear
- Does not follow verbal instructions well
- Often says "Huh?"
- Does not respond when called
- Parents, school personnel and other service professionals express concerns about hearing, speech, language, or learning abilities
- Evidence of any type of hereditary hearing loss
- Ear infection or fluid in the middle ear persisting for at least three months

KEY CONCEPTS

It is essential to understand states of "help-seeking" readiness and "help acceptance" through which most people progress in adapting to their hearing loss. It is also important to understand and determine the

“help-readiness” stages of the significant others in the student’s life, such as parents, family, teachers, educational support staff, coaches and peers since they can either facilitate or hinder the student’s adjustment to their hearing loss.

SUGGESTION FOR ACTION

The four stage framework and associated interventions:

Stage 1

Unaware of the need for help or behavior change

The student is typically unaware of significant factors such as knowing he has a hearing loss, or does not realize that the hearing loss contributes to difficulties in school, at home, with friends, or their personal emotional state.

Intervention strategies:

- Identify hearing loss during routine in-school screenings, or refer to private audiologist for evaluation
- Utilize self-reporting assessments
- Screen/interview at risk students
- Disseminate risk factor information to key school personnel annually and online
- Support the student and parents’ follow-up with audiological evaluation

Stage 2

Aware that a problem exists, but unaware that help is available.

The student is aware that she has difficulty hearing, but is unaware that assistive technology, environmental improvements, and specific communication strategies exist that can significantly augment communication skills, improve academic achievement, and enhance social-emotional well-being.

Intervention strategies:

- Explore the student’s academic and career interests, goals, plans for the future through interviews, structured conversations.
- Support the student and parents’ follow-up with audiological recommendations
- Inform the student, parents, teachers and other key people about hearing loss and available resources on a regular basis

Stage 3

Aware that a problem exists and help is available, but not interested in or ready to accept help

Students at this stage often have had their hearing loss diagnosed previously, and are experiencing

complicated grief over their lack of normal hearing. Parents are also often grieving at this stage over the permanency of their child’s hearing loss.

Intervention strategies:

- Acknowledge the parents’ and student’s preference to have normal hearing
- Encourage parents, family members, teachers, other significant adults and peers to act consistently in making changes for an accessible, effective communication environment for the student with a hearing loss. Healthy acceptance of hearing loss is achieved when the student and family view communication accommodations, including wearing hearing aids, as just another “normal” everyday life activity
- Provide training to school teachers and other core staff regarding communicating and teaching students with hearing loss
- Collaborate with the audiologist in maintaining ongoing contact with the student and parents with respect to challenges imposed by the student’s hearing loss
- Use Communication assessment tools to focus discussions about the impact of hearing loss
- Engage the assistance of a qualified mental health professional where appropriate
- Engage other student and adult role-models living effectively with their hearing loss
- Explore summer camp opportunities for the student to meet others with hearing loss.

Stage 4

Aware that a problem exists and help is available. Interested in and ready to accept professional help

Students, parents, teachers and significant others have resolved grief, and achieved a healthy acceptance of the hearing loss. The focus at this stage is on the student’s future with respect to achieving academic or vocational goals and minimizing any negative effects of the hearing loss across all key components of the student’s life.

Intervention strategies:

- Create regular opportunities to meet peers in support groups
- Provide training to students on strategies to effectively manage auditory, visual, and mental fatigue
- Train the student in developing self-monitoring and self-advocacy skills
- Introduce the student and family to assistive technology and common accommodations
- Introduce the student and family to vocational rehabilitation and PEPNet services
- Seek summer and part-time employment opportunities for hard of hearing students.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Assistive Technology:

<http://www.pepnet.org/SearchRes.asp?cx=013997268836787448173%3A4s8xaitOcos&cof=FORID%3A11&ie=UTF-8&q=Defining+Communication+Access+%231127&sa=go#458>

http://www.wou.edu/education/sped/wrocc/links_adaptive_tech.htm

<http://pdcorder.pepnet.org/media/greglog/>

http://www.wou.edu/education/sped/wrocc/links_adaptive_tech.htm

<http://www.wou.edu/education/sped/wrocc/HA%20Primer%20-%20web2.pdf>

Classroom Acoustics

<http://www.asha.org/members/deskref-journals/deskref/default>

http://www.acoustics.com/ra_education_standard.asp

College Access Guides for Students with Hearing Loss

<http://sunsite.utk.edu/cod/>

http://www.wou.edu/education/sped/wrocc/commaccess_files/frame.htm

pdc.pepnet.org/content/PDFforms/FacultyCatalog.pdf

<http://www.wou.edu/education/sped/wrocc/HT%20Read%20Audiogram%20web.pdf>

Mental Health

http://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu/Clerc_Center/Information_and_Resources/Info_To_Go.html/mentalhealth.html

<http://www.deafhoh-health.org/resources/MHStandards/>

Recommended Readings (autobiographies, counseling/guidance)

On the Fence: the Hidden World of the Hard of Hearing, Drolsbaugh, Mark (Ed). (2007). Springhouse, PA: Handwave Publications

Between Two Worlds.: Resilience to Trauma: An Inspirational Voice from Cyberspace, Chapter from *Odyssey of Hearing Loss: Tales of Triumph*, Harvey, Michael A (1998). San Diego, CA: Dawn Sign Press, pp71-93 & pp.199-219

Dear Mom and Dad, If Only You Had Known. A chapter from *Odyssey of Hearing Loss: Tales of Triumph*, Harvey, Michael A. (1998). San Diego, CA: Dawn Sign Press, pp. 13-48

Counseling Persons with Communication Disorders and their Families, 4th Ed. Luterman, David M. (2001). Austin TX: Pro-Ed.

Hidden Frustrations, Mann, Maureen. (2004). Omaha, NE: Boys Town National Research Hospital.

Alone in the Mainstream: A Deaf Woman Remembers Public School Olivia, G.A. (2004). Washington, DC: Gallaudet University Press

Missed Connections: Hard of Hearing in a Hearing World Stenross, Barbara (1999). Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press

Self Assessments

<http://www.asha.org>

<http://www.trychin.com>

Living with Hearing Loss: At School

Living with Hearing Loss: Workbook

Communication Rules

Getting Along

SPEAK OUT! Tips on public speaking for people who are hard of hearing

Actions speak Louder! Tips for putting on skits related to hearing loss

Self Assessment of Communication–Adolescent and Significant Other Assessment of Communication–Adolescent. Elkayam, J., & English, K. (2003). *Journal of the American Academy of Audiology*, 11(9). 485-499

Student self-administered guides/training modules

<http://www.pepnet.org>

Gates to Adventure

Ready, Set, Go (Module 1)

First Year College Success–Be the One (Module 2)

It's My Life; Essentials for College Living (Module 3)

eFolio–Your Electronic showcase (Module 4)

Student information guides

<http://www.sunsite.utk.edu/cod/pec/products/essentials.pdf>

http://www.pepnetnortheast.rit.edu/publication/financing_your_education/

Summer Camps, Internship Opportunities

<http://www.aaas.org/programs/education/>

<http://www.ntid.rit.edu/ntidweb//prospective/eyf.php>

http://www.agbell.org/DesktopDefault.aspx?p=Leadership_Opportunities_for_Teens

http://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu/Clerc_Center/Information_and_Resources/Info_to_Go/Resources/Summer_Camps_for_Deaf_and_Hard_of_Hearing_Children.html

Training Packages for supporting hard of hearing students

<http://www.pepnet.org/SearchRes.asp?cx=013997268836787448173%3A4s8xait0cos&cof=FORID%3A11&ie=UTF-8&q=item+1022&sa=go#353>

<http://ncrtm.org/>

Self-Advocacy for Students Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, English, K.M. (1997). Austin TX: Pro-Ed

For more information contact:

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