



# Foundations and Implications of Working with People Who Are Deaf, DeafBlind, or Hard of Hearing

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# Training Objectives

- Learn about hearing loss and vision loss
- Understand how hearing loss can impact people in daily life and at work
- Identify at least three communication modalities that people with hearing and/or vision loss utilize
- Understand the services and supports available and provided by VRS and SSB staff

# Demographics

- 1 in 5 Minnesotans experience some type of hearing loss.
- CDC says 34 million Americans have a hearing loss.
- 1.3 million Blind and 1 million Deaf nationally.
- 50,000-60,000 DeafBlind estimates nationally.
- Males more likely than Females to have hearing loss.
- WHO predicts by 2050, 2.5 billion worldwide will have a hearing loss.

**Deaf**

**Deafblind**

**Hard of Hearing**

# Types of Hearing Loss

Conductive: sound is quieter

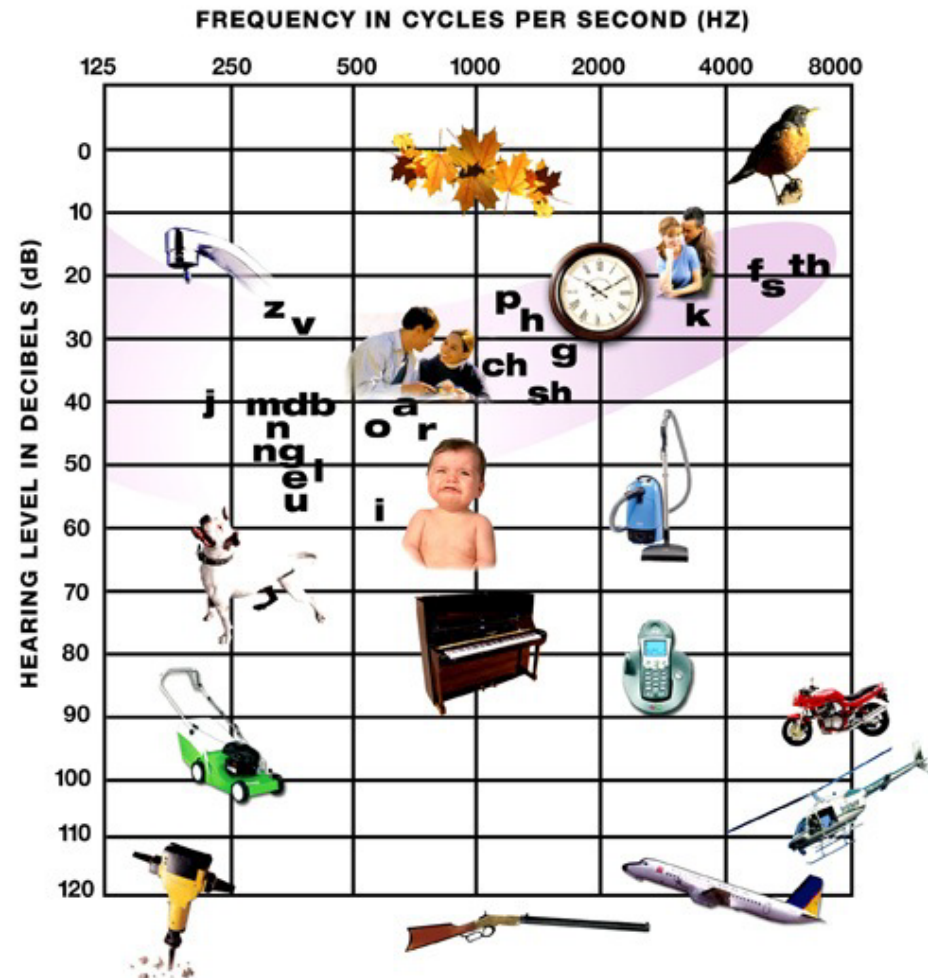
Sensorineural (nerve): perceived sounds can be garbled

Mixed

Auditory Neuropathy Spectrum Disorder

<https://www.cdc.gov/hearing-loss-children/about/types-of-hearing-loss.html>

# Audiogram Sample



- Starkey Hearing Loss Simulation (starkey.com):

<https://www.starkey.com/hearing-loss-simulator>

- Hearing Like Me (hearinglikeme.com):

<https://www.hearinglikeme.com/hearing-loss-simulator/>

- Can You Read My Lips (vimeo):
- <https://vimeo.com/148127830>

Only about 30% of English is visible when spoken.

Of that 30%, many words look alike-can you think of some?

***REPHRASE, DO NOT REPEAT***

- Make Eye Contact
- Adjust Your Speed
- Avoid Environmental Distractions
- Add gestures, body language and facial expressions with caution
- Rephrase and/or expand your message
- Supplement with demonstrations and writing
- Use clarification techniques

# Accommodations

Interpreters

Captioning

Speech-to-Text

Writing/Typing/Texting

Assistive Listening Devices (for Hard of Hearing)

Flashing Lights or vibrating devices

Buddy System-emergency notifications or evacuations

Occupational Communication Specialists (through VR counselor approval)

- Assistive Listening Devices
- Alerting Devices
- Captioning
- Applications
- Telecommunication Devices

# Virtual Meetings

- Provide or Request notetaker
- Use Captioning and save transcript at meeting conclusion
- Use of video
- Chat feature
- Limit or eliminate cross-talk (one person at a time)
- Speaker identification

# Deaf Culture



- **deaf:** The term *deaf* refers to individuals with severe to profound hearing loss. The use of the lowercase "d" reflects a physical, audiological, or pathological view of a deaf person.
- **Deaf:** The use of the capital "D" in *Deaf* denotes a person who identifies as part of a cultural minority group, rather than as a person with a disability.

# Deaf Culture Components

- Language
- Behavior Norms
- Values
- Traditions

- Identities and preferences
- Work Tolerance
- Trauma and previous school/work history
- Unemployment/Underemployment
- Isolation
- Availability of accommodations

Types of Deafblindness:

## **Hearing Loss**

Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Late-deafened

## **Vision Loss**

Cataracts, Retinitis Pigmentosa, Diabetic Retinopathy, Macular Degeneration, Glaucoma, Homonymous Hemianopia

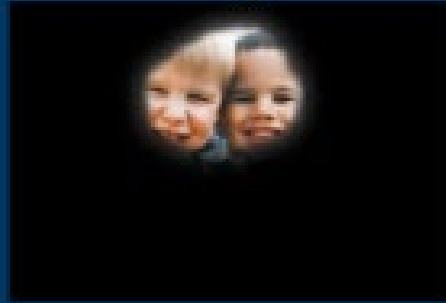
<https://www.facebook.com/ClarisaVollmar/videos/565179653672116/>

# A few vision loss examples

Normal Vision



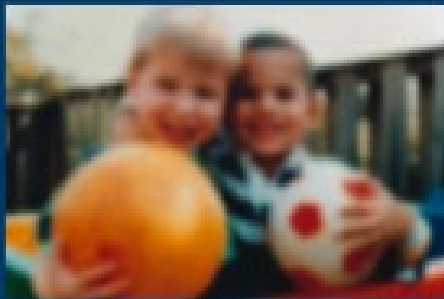
Retinitis Pigmentosa  
/ Usher Syndrome



Macular Degeneration



Cataracts



Glaucoma



Diabetic Retinopathy



Rubella

CHARGE  
Syndrome

# DeafBlind Communication Options

- ProTactile Communication
- Close vision signing or small signing space
- Tracking
- Tactile Sign Language and/or Fingerspelling
- Print-on-Palm
- Writing
- Aira ASL interpreting (aira.io) app

- [www.aadb.org](http://www.aadb.org)

# Considerations DeafBlind

- Absences of cues
  - Limited information available
  - Must depend upon others' good will and sensitivity
  - Limited participation in daily activities
  - Unemployed or under employed
  - Isolation
- National Center on Deaf-Blindness [www.nationaldb.org](http://www.nationaldb.org)

# Meeting Communication Strategies (applies to DHHDB)

- Meet with the interpreter beforehand
- Reserve seats
- Be aware of sight line
- Be aware of lighting
- Talk directly to the person
- Speak naturally
- Avoid private conversations
- One person should speak at a time
- Avoid asking the interpreter for opinions or comments regarding the content of the meeting
- Provide a short break every hour

Taken from <https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-7916-ENG>

- Only 10% of the world's visually impaired-blind population knows Braille
- National Federation of Blind calls this a “Braille Literacy Crisis”
- Where to learn?

## Ways to produce Braille

- A slate and stylus (punching with a blunt needle backwards)
- Perkins brailler (functions just like a typewriter)
- Embosser (computer printout)

# Braille Devices

- Braille Sense
- Smart Beetle



# Software and Alerting Systems

- Zoom Text
- JAWS and Fusion
- Dragon Speaking
- Aira (Be My Eyes) app
- Clarity AlertMaster
- VibraCall (wearable pager with specific colored lights to indicate doorbell, phone, etc.)
- ShakeAwake (vibrator put under pillow or mattress that shakes when the alarm goes off)

# Available and Free Online trainings

- <https://mn.gov/deaf-hard-of-hearing/learning-center/trainings/videos.jsp>
- Deaf Awareness Micro-certificate through [www.nationaldeafcenter.org](http://www.nationaldeafcenter.org)
- “DeafBlind 101: An Introduction to Combined Hearing and Vision Loss” at [http://pathlore.dhs.mn.gov/courseware/DisabilityServices/DeafBlind\\_101/index.html](http://pathlore.dhs.mn.gov/courseware/DisabilityServices/DeafBlind_101/index.html)

# Other Resources

- <https://mn.gov/deaf-commission/>
- <https://mn.gov/deaf-hard-of-hearing/>

# Questions



# THANK YOU!!



[mn.gov/deed/vrs](https://mn.gov/deed/vrs)

# Contact Information

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