

All About Deafness



TINA A. COWSERT, MSED, NBCT
DEAF & HARD OF HEARING/BLIND & LOW VISION DISABILITY SPECIALIST
DISABILITY RESOURCES AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICES (DRES)

Today's Agenda:

- ▶ Introduction—Tina Cowsert
- ▶ Brief description of Deafness and degrees of hearing loss
- ▶ American Sign Language (ASL) and other Sign Systems
- ▶ Common Accommodations
- ▶ How to use an interpreter
- ▶ How to communicate with Deaf peers
- ▶ Deaf Culture
- ▶ Open Discussion for questions



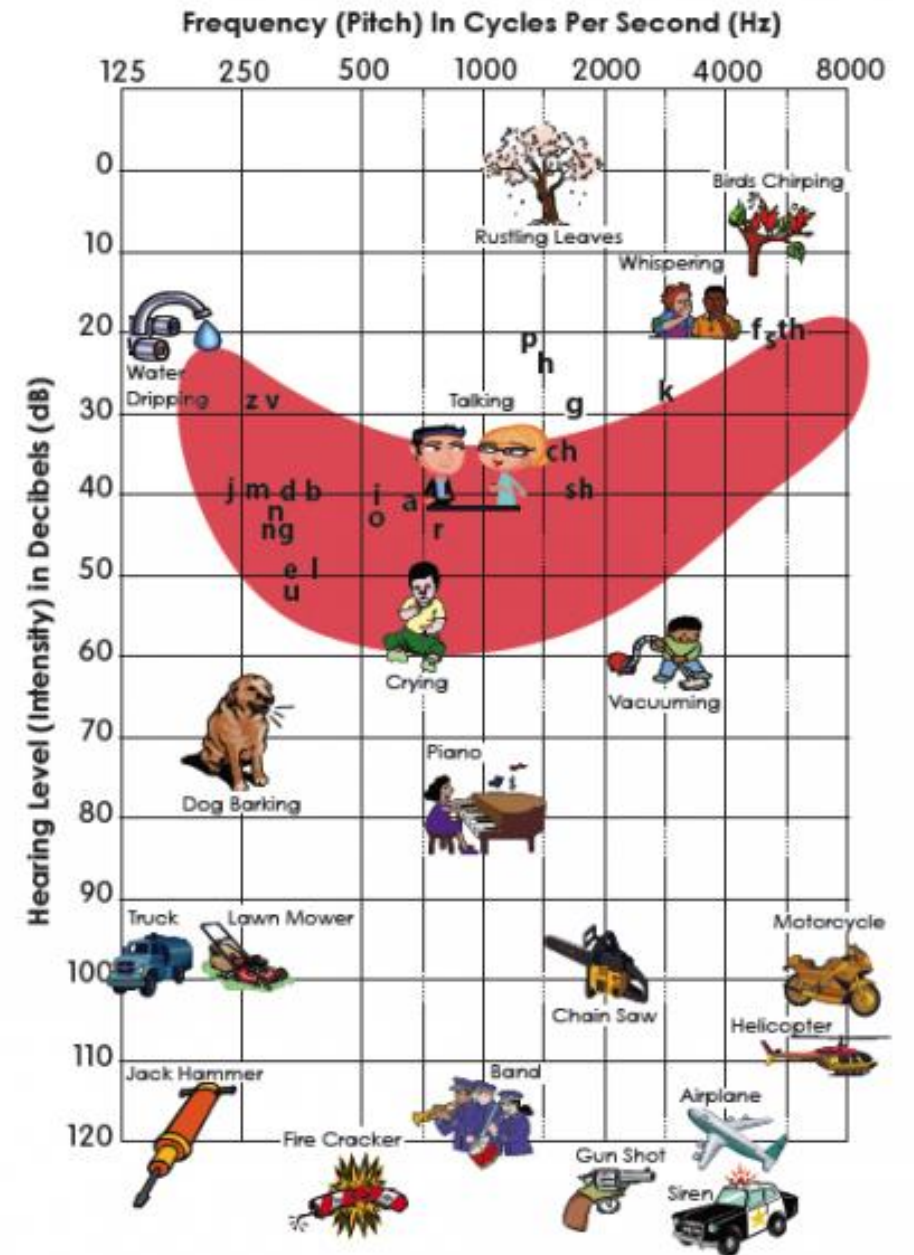
Introduction--Tina Cowsert

- *Over 30 years experience using sign language
- *Bachelor's Degree in Deaf Education
- *Taught Deaf/Hard of Hearing students ages 3-21 for 20 years
- *Master's Degree in Educational Administration
- *Certification in General Education Language Arts & Social Studies (K-9th)
- *National Board Certified Teacher
- *Involved at U of I with DHH students since Dec. 2014
- *Working on my 2nd Master's Degree in Library Information Sciences
- *ASL I and ASL II Instructor



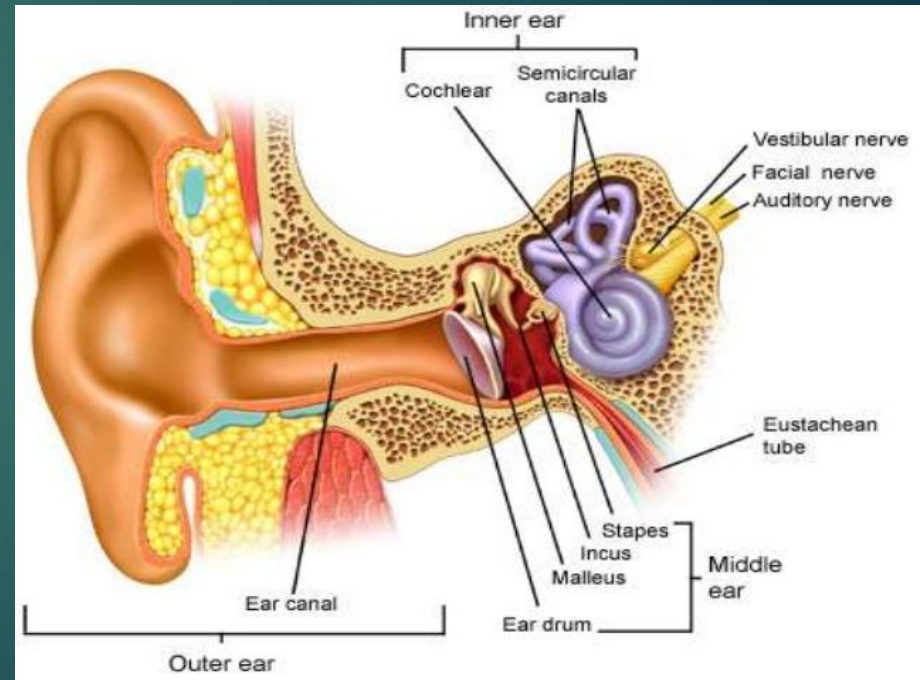
Degrees of Hearing Loss

- ▶ Audiogram—a graph which gives a detailed description of hearing ability based on intensity (dB) and frequency (Hz)
- ▶ **Normal:** 0-25 dB
- ▶ **Mild:** 30 dB- 55 dB
- ▶ **Moderate:** 55 dB-80 dB
- ▶ **Severe:** 80 dB-100 dB
- ▶ **Profound:** 100 dB and higher



Deaf/Hard of Hearing Definitions

- ▶ Persons are considered to be **Deaf** when they have a **severe to profound hearing loss**.
- ▶ Persons are considered to be **Hard of Hearing** when they have a **mild to severe hearing loss**.
- ▶ **Conductive** hearing loss occurs in the middle ear.
- ▶ **Sensorineural** hearing loss occurs in the inner ear.



Options for DHH individuals with hearing & communicating:

- ▶ Hearing Aids
- ▶ Cochlear Implants
- ▶ FM Systems
- ▶ Sign language Interpreters



American Sign Language & Other Sign Systems

- ▶ **American Sign Language (ASL)**—is recognized by linguists as a language.
- ▶ Sign Systems (not languages) or Manually Coded English Systems include:
 - ▶ Signed Exact English (SEE)
 - ▶ Total Communication (TC)
 - ▶ Rochester Method
 - ▶ Cued Speech (sight/sound recognition)
 - ▶ Visual Phonics

ASL, a living, breathing, ever evolving language

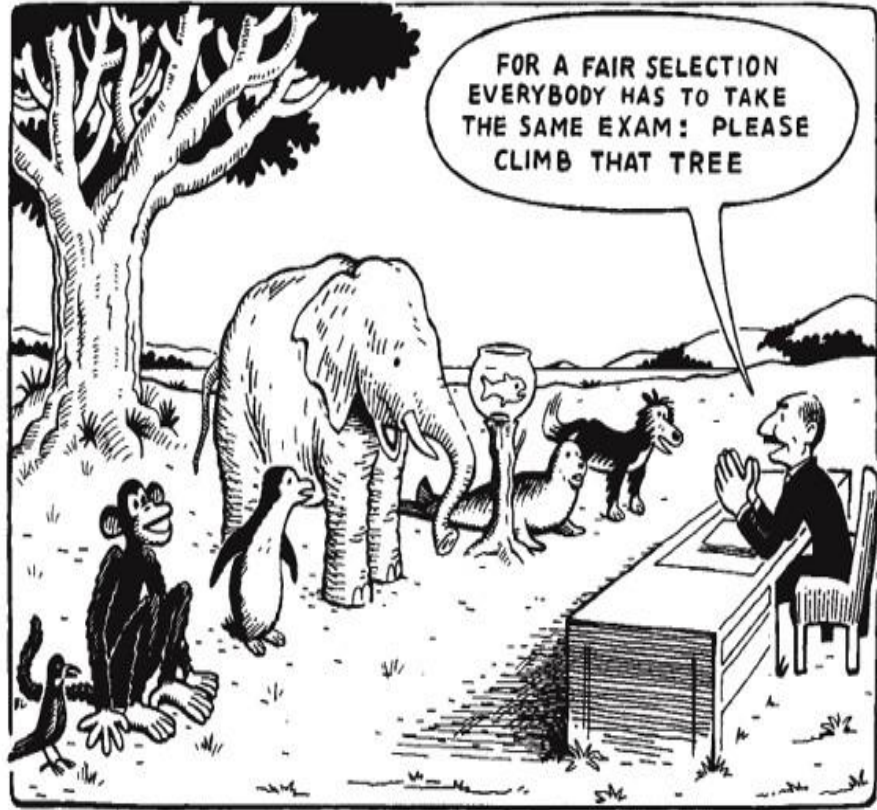
- ▶ While ASL is the nationally accepted language for Deaf individuals, it is generally the same across the US
- ▶ Different regions do sign some signs differently
- ▶ “When in Rome...do as the Romans do!”
- ▶ Understand that signs may differ and still be considered “right.”
- ▶ Deaf Culture directly impacts ASL—constantly adding new signs, slang words, etc.



Common Accommodations for DHH

- ▶ Extended time on Quizzes, Exams, Midterms, & Finals
- ▶ Preferential Seating
- ▶ Note-Taking Assistance
- ▶ Closed Captioning for all videos or media shown in class
- ▶ Live Captioning services
- ▶ Hearing Aids, Cochlear Implants, FM Systems, etc.
- ▶ Sign Language Interpreters

What is Fair?



Equality



The assumption is that everyone benefits from the same supports. This is equal treatment.

Equity



Everyone gets the supports they need (this is the concept of "affirmative action"), thus producing equity.

Justice



All 3 can see the game without supports or accommodations because the cause(s) of the inequity was addressed. The systemic barrier has been removed.

Professors/Instructors-- Helpful Suggestions in class:

- ▶ **Have a chair (or 2!) reserved** for the interpreter near the front of the classroom.
- ▶ **During class if a student comments or asks a question, point to the student and repeat any questions or comments students ask in class**
- ▶ Look **directly to the Deaf student when speaking and pretend the interpreter isn't there.**
- ▶ **Face the class when speaking** (don't speak to the board)
- ▶ Try not to **pace and wander** all around the room
- ▶ **Team Interpreting**—interpreters will switch every 20 minutes
- ▶ **Interpreters will sit with the group for group discussions** opposite of Deaf student
- ▶ If you are concerned or overly distracted with interpreters, speak to Deaf peer directly to work out a solution



Helpful suggestions in class

...(continued)

- ▶ **Request an interpreter:** Check with Deaf Student if they need an interpreter, Discuss with Deaf student who will request one, Remember it takes time to secure interpreters, Share prep materials with interpreters ahead of time if possible
- ▶ When signaling to the class that group work time is over, it is acceptable to **flicker the lights to get everyone's attention.**
- ▶ **Closed Caption All Videos:** If you have any videos or media that you show in class, please make sure they are closed captioned. Accessible Media Services (AMS) can do this for you for free
- ▶ Make sure you do not have a **window** behind you
- ▶ **Mustaches and beards** make it harder to lipread.



Understanding and Communicating with Deaf Peers:

- ▶ Look directly at the Deaf person when you speak
- ▶ Don't over enunciate, that makes it more difficult to lipread!
- ▶ If you want to get their attention, gently tap them on the shoulder or back of the arm.
- ▶ Understand there will be a short delay (ASL & English are different languages)
- ▶ In discussions, speak one person at a time
- ▶ Sometimes Deaf student will interrupt a speaker to clarify if they missed something
- ▶ Open Processing—Deaf student and interpreter may need to sign to each other to clarify

CART—Live, real time captioning



- ▶ CART will be used in all classes in addition to a team of interpreters
- ▶ Professor or speaker will wear a wireless lapel microphone (sometimes for group discussions a conference call can be used too)
- ▶ A remote typist listens and types everything real time onto a computer screen
- ▶ Transcriptions of each class are sent to student afterwards

Deaf Culture



- ▶ “**D**eaf” and “**d**eaf”
- ▶ Deaf people generally do not view their Deafness as a disability. Instead, it’s a way of life and they cherish their culture and language. In this sense, Deafness is a unique disability
- ▶ Deaf attitude is best captured by “Deaf people can do anything except hear.” The only significant problem is communication access.
- ▶ Deaf community has slightly different social norms, mostly due to the fact that they communicate visually.
 - ▶ It’s ok to tap people’s shoulders/arm, tap tables, or flicker lights to get attention
 - ▶ It’s ok to walk between two people signing
 - ▶ Hand waving instead of clapping
 - ▶ Name Signs

Suggested Communication Strategies:

- ▶ Learn how to Sign!
- ▶ Use Interpreters
- ▶ Write back and forth on a piece of paper
- ▶ Type on a phone or a computer
- ▶ Dictation (on Android or iOS phones...the technology isn't the best but it's improving!)
- ▶ Common Misconception---All Deaf/Hard of Hearing people lipread. NO! They don't! It's a lot of guesswork and is a skill, but it is still useful for quick and basic things.



Questions/Open Discussion

