

THE IMPORTANCE OF ADDRESSING THE SOCIO- EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN WHO ARE DEAF

Shannon Reese, MA, NCC
Deaf Services Coordinator
Office of Deaf Services
Alabama Department of Mental Health

Howard & Penny Reese, Parents

- Paternal great-aunt was deaf (due to very premature birth in the early 1900's)
- Two out of three siblings deaf (middle brother and me)
 - Oldest sibling—
 - JD—lawyer who represents doctors, hospitals, etc. in malpractice suits
 - Middle sibling—
 - MA in deaf education - teacher of deaf/hard of hearing in mainstreamed program
 - Me —
 - MA in Mental Health Counseling, Nationally Certified Counselor, Deaf Services Coordinator for Alabama Department of Mental Health/Office of Deaf Services
- Father—
 - Sr. database system analyst for Verizon
- Mother—
 - math/computer teacher
 - retired after 32 years of teaching

MY PERSONAL BACKGROUND

Objectives

- To explore the psychological development of children who are deaf /hard of hearing
- To discuss the implications of parental role in the life of a child who is deaf
- To gain insight into the life journeys of a deaf adult and parents of deaf adult

Identity

- Essential to healthy development of child
- Language proficiency correlated to identity development
 - Hearing
 - Deaf
 - Bicultural

Hearing Cultural Norms

“Hearing” Attitude, Behavior, Communication Style

Stereotypes deaf as isolated & less intelligent

Relies primarily on spoken language, residual hearing, speech training & lipreading

Biculturalism

Knowledge of both medical & social models of deafness

Clear cultural pride as a Deaf person

Comfortable in both hearing and deaf settings (might have a preference)

A deep personal sense of what it means to be Deaf

Deaf Cultural Norms

Deafness seen as a social or cultural difference

Socialization primarily with Deaf

ASL seen as superior to English

Some bitterness directed at hearing people

www.nctsn.org

Two Views of Deafness

Pathological

Cultural

• Deafness is abnormal	• Deafness as a difference
• Denial of deafness	• Open acknowledgment of deafness
• Seeks a cure	• Emphasizes abilities
• Attention to devices and technology	• Attention to communication
• Emphasis on speech and speechreading	• Encourage all modes of communication
• Sees sign language as inferior	• Views sign language as equal to spoken language
• Discourages interaction with other Deaf	• Supports socialization within the Deaf community
• “Hearing people” as role models	• Successful Deaf people as role models
• Working <u>for</u> the Deaf	• Working <u>with</u> the Deaf

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Adopted from:

Shannon Reese

Chris Wixtrom, The Betty and Leonard Phillips Deaf Action Center of Louisiana

Language and Identity

- Need to be aware of two models of deafness: *cultural and medical*
 - Important to know which belief system the child's family is coming from
 - Child's view of his hearing loss is directly related to his psychological well-being
 - Ability to identify with either model has impact on language

Infancy to Toddler-Hood

0 to 2 years

- Changes in body and brain—develops
 - motor, perceptual, intellectual capacities
- Very significant years of one's life
 - Good medical care?
 - Environmental (nature vs. nurture)
 - Attachment?
 - Baby communicated to by parents?

Early/Middle Childhood

- *2-6 years*
 - Motor skills develop
 - Thoughts and language expands
 - Establishes relationship with peers
- *6 to 11 years old*
 - School years
 - Develops athletic skills, logical thought processes, basic literacy skills, understanding of self, morality, friendships, peer-group membership

Language and Cognition

- Through language, children learn:
 - Cause and effect
 - Moral reasoning
 - Problem solving involving multiple possible right answers
 - Insight and judgment
 - Social etiquette
 - particularly exhibited through play behaviors

Implication #1:

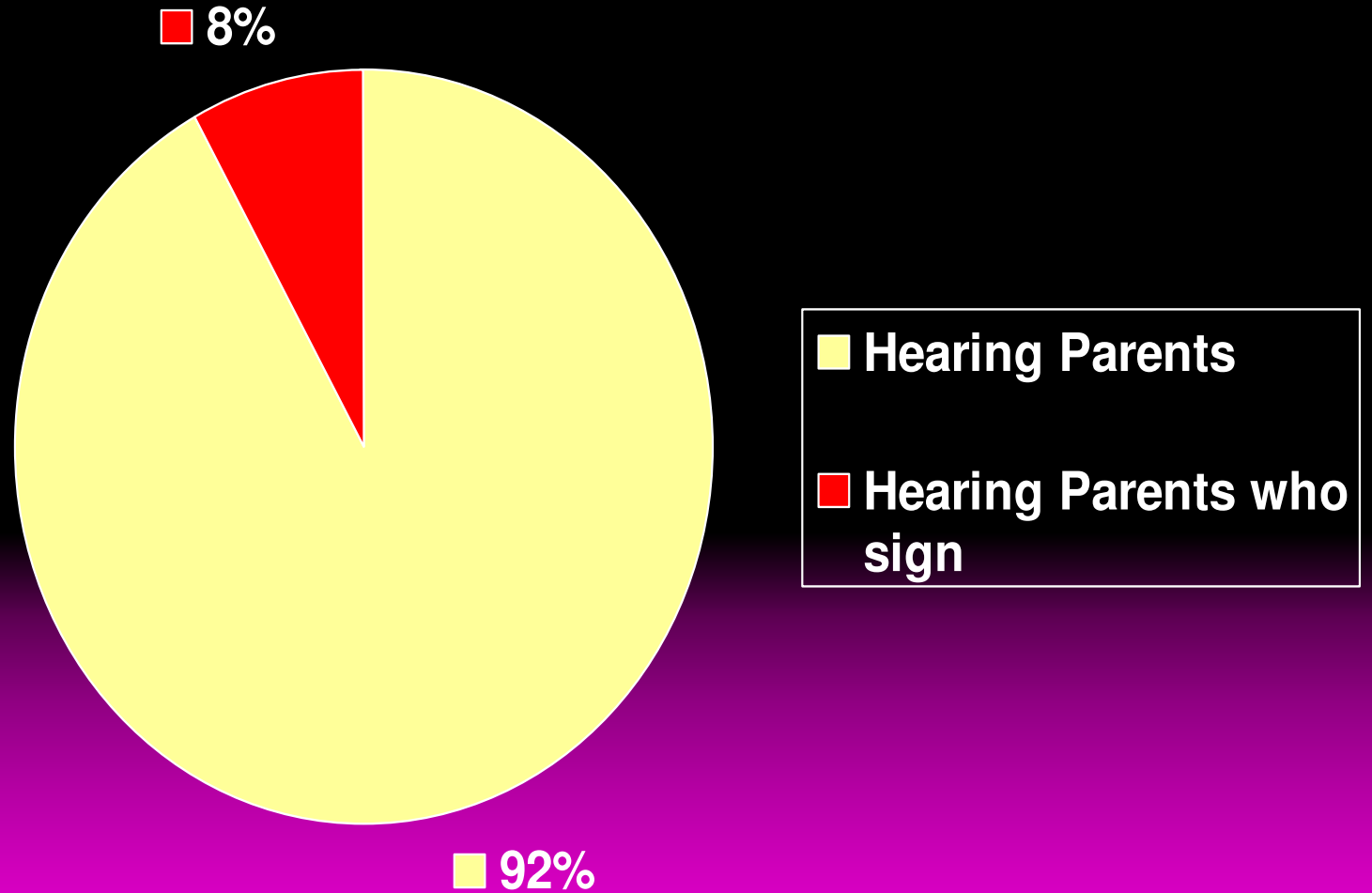
- *Language Development neglected*
 - Delay in communication techniques
 - Delay in intellectual development
 - Delay in emotional expression

Implication # 2

- Avoidance in communicating with your deaf child
 - Communication choices
 - “Dinner table syndromes”
 - “Tell you later/not important/never mind”
 - Bilingualism as an option



Statistic of Parents' Communication Style



Implication # 3

- Avoiding Deaf adults/deaf community
 - Self-esteem and acceptance
 - Deaf activities/events
 - Hearing parents entering deaf community

Implication # 4

- Following doctor's orders-no need to do your research
 - No perfect answers
 - Being overwhelmed with educational options and communication options plus technology
 - Seeking advice

Implication # 5

- Grief process taking too long
 - Anger
 - Sadness
 - Guilt
 - Blaming
 - Denial
 - Acceptance
 - Celebration

Parents' Perspective

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Any questions?

Contact Information

Shannon Reese, MA, NCC

334-239-3780

100 N. Union Street

PO Box 301410

Montgomery, AL 36130

Shannon.reese@mh.alabama.gov

Howard & Penny Reese

404-636-3328

pennycreese@aol.com

Howard.reese@verizonwireless.com