Transcript of webinar Question and Answer session

Introduction – Deaf, deaf, Hard of Hearing

10th March 2021

Emily (reading out question from webinar chat): Are there many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders with hearing loss in Australia?

Melanie: Okay, thank you, Emily.

Let's go back to the question.

There absolutely are.

Every few years the Australian institute and health of health and welfare publish a report called Australia's hearing health.

And they include statistics on Australia's hearing and vision on the population.

What we know from that report is we know Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander are twice as likely to have otitis media which was one of the conditions described in the presentation and incidentally twice as likely to have partial or complete blindness as their non-indigenous peers.

As mentioned otitis media is a treatable condition.

And only becomes permanent, however, if left untreated.

And this can often happen in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population, otitis media left untreated, leading to permanent hearing loss.

I do have some stats here for children.

So just bear with me.

Okay.

The 2018 report, the rate of long term ear and hearing problems in indigenous children aged 0 to 14 was estimated to be almost three times the rate for non-indigenous children

8.4 per cent of the population of that age grouped compared to 2.9 in the non-indigenous and that's the Australia's health 2018 report statistic.

Okay.

Next question.

Emily (reading out question from webinar chat): What is functional hearing?

Melanie: Okay. I did mention that.

And that will be, the functional hearing will be quite an important concept in the congenital Deafblindness modules.

So functional hearing doesn't measure a person's ability to hear pure tones. And that's something that an audiologist would assess. So an audiologist will play a series of sounds at different frequencies and different loudnesses.

There will be kind of a series of beeps.

You might have a low beep and a high beep.

And different ranges will be played.

And response will be measured to determine hearing levels.

However, functional hearing measures in day to day life what kinds of sounds, what kind of auditory experiences does this person respond to.

And what of those sounds makes sense to them.

So the Texas School of the Visually Impaired have actually produced an informal functional hearing evaluation which they abbreviate to IFHE.

And I am going to copy a URL for that assessment if anybody is interested into the chat.\*

Give me all panelists and attendees.

Here we go.

I have copied that URL there now if you're interested in having a look.

It's about an 18 page document with a whole lot of questions to help you think about how someone experiences and responds to sound.

Okay.

Emily (reading out question from webinar chat): Another question, how does someone begin to learn sign language?

Melanie: Do we have anyone in our audience who have got experience of learning their child learning sign language or themselves learning sign language? I would like to open that up to our participants.

Via chat and see how it happened for you.

And then I will talk to that question.

If you happen to be typing an answer, could you perhaps use the emojis and reactions in chat to give us ahoy that you're composing an answer?

Okay

I will give that a go.

There's no one answer to that.

And I think it will depend on what category of deafness you sit in.

So if you are capital D Deaf person.

So a person with deafness born into a deaf family, then the most likely way you're going to learn sign language is from your family who are all signers.

If you are a child with a degree of hearing loss in a hearing family, it might be the degree of hearing loss.

Someone might say, "Okay, your hearing devices aren't assisting you well enough to acquire speech." Or, "This is something that you can acquire but it might always be a struggle and there will be some situations where you won't be able to rely on speech to communicate.

And might encourage you to think or the person or the family to think about exploring learning sign language and introducing sign language to their child.

They might attend a school where they're taught in sign language.

In Australia they would be taught in Auslan.

So it might happen through school and through signing peers.

If a child has deafness and additional disability, the process might be a little bit different, if we're not sure about how quickly they're going to sort of acquire skills.

So we might start something particularly if they are in a hearing family maybe with something called key word signs simplified signing system that supports spoken language

And I guess for the key to that answer is that child or that person needs exposure.

And they need exposure on a regular and consistent level from as many people around them as possible.

And that's potentially, again, where maybe a deaf mentor might come into the picture as well if there aren't many signing people in that person's life.

So I hope that kind of helps you consider the broad range of answers about how can someone learn sign language.

Okay. All right.

Any more questions?

Emily (reading out question from webinar chat): We've just got one more. Where can you get children story books with deaf characters in them?

Melanie: Well, there are a few sites in Australia that have deaf resources, that sell deaf resources, being capital D Deaf.

And bilby.net, the Australian Deaf Children site sometimes have some.

There's a great list on Wikipedia.

If you Google or go to Wikipedia and Google list of children's book with deaf characters, it will bring you up a lovely list.

Also the same for film if you want to see film for deaf characters, do the same in Wikipedia, it will bring up a lovely list.

I believe there's going to be a Marvel film with a deaf super hero released shortly if not already. So that will be exciting to see.

If you're interested you can also go to publishers' websites.

So if you went to Penguin Australia, you can search their books by theme and key words.

So that could help you, but you have to go to each individual publisher and do that.

But there's definitely some lovely, lovely story books on the market that explore and make deafness part of our society.

Emily (reading out question from webinar chat): How will this video resource be circulated and used for education and training?

Okay.

So this… I didn't hit record.

Emily: I hit record.

Melanie:Yes, I love her. Emily, my saviour pressing all the right buttons has recorded.

This whole webinar has been recorded.

So the Q&A section will be taken out of it and put up on the Deafblind Information Australia website.

I'm kind of I'm not feeling brave enough to bring it up and screen share for you.

But it was at the end of the www.deafblindinformation.org.au.

There you go in captions.

If you go about Deafblindness and then sensory impairment, you will see a section on deaf and hard of hearing.

And the video that was played in the first part of the webinar is there.

Along with the PowerPoint slides and the reference list.

And then our sometime shortly after this webinar the question and answer section will also be loaded on to that.

Give us a little bit of time because we will need to have the question and answer section video captioned because our webinar won't record these captions.

I think that's how while I'm here I will mention the other three webinars that are coming up.

So on the 22nd of March at the same time of day, Emily will be conducting the introduction to vision impairment webinar.

And then the following week on the 30th and 31st of March, the same time of day, I will be running the introduction to congenital Deafblindness.

And then the next day the overview of strategies in congenital Deafblindness and we will be distributing the flyers and information and registration details very, very shortly.

Any other questions? No? Okay.

I think we will conclude the webinar now.

And again, if you kind of think of any questions later, you can always access our website.

There might be the answers there.

Or send the project officers a query at info@deafblindinformation.org or join us in future webinars and ask the question there.

Thank you everyone.

I hope you've enjoyed it and goodbye.

End of transcript

Additional note: The URL for the functional hearing assessment was put in the webinar chat, but was not read out. [Open the Informal Functional Hearing Evaluation (IFHE) in a new window](https://www.youtube.com/redirect?event=video_description&redir_token=QUFFLUhqbUdWNEtjZGRJTlB3S29feHViSHFham5xdENCQXxBQ3Jtc0trOUpTWDNFbXpOVVZNVzFzZ0lrdWw1STlCNk5UOHZJRTlUNWpBbzFJbzkyQUFxallvY3UyRVFDTkdXSnNEU2FsczZXcWhGQmV3cVpRc0NBWWNLWnZSZ0poX0VwUndwMk82RURPMG9GM0RTeGZNc194cw&q=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.tsbvi.edu%2Fimages%2Foutreach%2FDocuments%2FIFHEDocument-NCDB.pdf)​