

Deaf, Hard of Hearing

(may be included with communication disorder DSM-5)

Definition

There are three basic types of hearing loss. These are:

- *Conductive Hearing Loss* occurs through the outer and middle ear and can usually be medically or surgically corrected.
- *Sensorineural Hearing Loss* occurs when there is damage to the inner ear and is a permanent hearing loss.
- *Mixed Hearing Loss* occurs when the damage is in both the outer or middle ear, and the inner ear.

The degree of hearing loss is measured in decibels (dB).

- Mild Loss (difficulty hearing ordinary conversation)..... 20 dB to 40 dB
- Moderate Loss (voices need to be raised to be heard).....40 dB to 60 dB
- Severe Loss (must shout to be heard)60 dB to 80 dB
- Profound Loss80 dB or more

Hearing aids do not clarify sounds, they simply amplify sounds. Hearing loss may be congenital or acquired. The age of onset will affect the acquisition of language and the development of speech.

Hard of Hearing

A person who is hard of hearing has a partial hearing loss and may have no difficulty communicating in a one-on-one situation in quiet surroundings. However, in a typical classroom environment with moderate background noise, students with hearing impairments may still experience significant communication difficulty.

Deaf

Persons who are deaf have severe to profound hearing loss. They must rely on a visual mode of communication though they may be able to hear some sounds with hearing aids.

A person with a hearing impairment may be able to communicate orally (by speech-reading and speaking or by using sign language or a combination of both).

Interpreter

Hearing person who interprets all of what is said into visual language (e.g. American Sign Language)

The interpreter does not take part in the class – they are there only to interpret. When speaking, do so to the student, not to the interpreter.

Documentation

Documentation of a hearing disability needs to be completed by a Certified Audiologist within the last five years. This documentation should include an audiological evaluation and/or audiogram stating the level of hearing loss. With this documentation clients may be eligible to access appropriate support services and possibly adaptive technology to reduce barriers to learning.

Student Strategies and Accommodation

- Meet with Accessibility Coordinator several months before starting your course. They can help you plan, provide support and possibly assist in accessing adaptive technology. It is your responsibility to provide appropriate documentation. If you will require special assistance such as an interpreter, special equipment, or special classroom seating options, it is especially important to contact Accessibility Services **at least 4 months prior** to the start of the semester.
- Consider taking a reduced course load.
- Meet with interpreter (if using one) and instructor ahead of time to discuss any special needs.
- Get a class outline as soon as possible to assess any problem areas.
- Sit at front of class where instructor & interpreter are clearly visible.
- Be sure all instructions are fully understood, especially if they were given orally. Ask for clarification.
- If an assignment is an oral presentation and this is not feasible, ask for a reasonable alternative well ahead of time.
- Appropriate accommodations may include any of the following:
 - Tape record lectures and/or use a note taker.
 - Extra time and a quiet room to write exams.
- If there are any difficulties with the interpreter or others regarding communication or accommodations, try to resolve the difficulties with the person involved – if this is not possible, make an appointment with your Accessibility Coordinator.

*These are suggestions only – you will find what works best for you.

Instructor Strategies and Accommodations

- Introduce interpreter to class – do not ask interpreter to introduce themselves.
- If there is no interpreter, make sure the student knows who is talking and is able to see the person's face.
- Speak clearly and naturally, facing the class.
- Move as little as possible when speaking.
- Present important information visually, especially new vocabulary (provide a sheet in advance for both student and interpreter).
- Encourage more frequent breaks during classes with long lectures. Interpreting is tiring, as is the concentration needed to follow interpreter (see guidelines by Association of Visual Language Interpreters of Canada).
- During group discussions, encourage one person to speak at a time.
- Promote videos/films to be viewed/interpreted outside of class time (look for closed caption videos).
- Be sure all assignments are explained clearly in the course outline and on exams.
- If oral assignments are expected, be flexible with reasonable alternatives.
- Appropriate accommodations may include any of the following:
 - An interpreter to be present throughout class and exam.
 - Extra time and/or a quiet room to write exam.
- Remember, the student may be dealing with two languages (ASL and English) to obtain information.

Links

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association

<https://www.asha.org/public/hearing/disorders/types.htm>

Galen Carol Audio

<http://www.gcaudio.com/resources/howtos/loudness.html>

Association of Visual Language Interpreters of Canada

<http://www.avlic.ca/>

Island Deaf and Hard of Hearing Resources

<http://idhhc.ca/resources/>

BC Government resources

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/managing-your-health/child-behaviour-development/special-needs/deaf-hard-of-hearing-blind-partially-sighted/deaf-hard-of-hearing>