

Deafhood

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The new word 'Deafhood' was created in 1993 by Paddy Ladd from University of Bristol, UK. This was later written into a book called "Understanding Deaf culture- In Search of Deafhood" which was released in 2003.

Deafhood is a new word explaining a new meaning for Deaf people. It is an opposite from the terminology 'Deafness' the negative aspect.

Deafness defines as medical condition terminology of 'broken ears' and in need for a cure.

Mainly the person is seen as abnormal, the negative view whereas Deafhood focuses on all positive factors. Deafhood consists different positive areas of Culture, Social and Language.

Now focus more into the meaning of 'Deafhood', there is a definition but it is very wide range. It is not possible to be taught the meaning of Deafhood in just one hour, the process of understanding Deafhood takes all life of the person, from birth to death.

The terminology 'Deafhood' cannot be explained or understood in words or immediately today. There are various ways to discover and understand Deafhood; these ways are such as being aware of our Deaf History by reading books about it and our Deaf Culture like art, theatre and poetry. Most vital is to meet Deaf people within your country also international Deaf people, with this many experiences and can be shared between peoples. In this feeling of pride, community and inspiration spread; meaning the increase of Deafhood. Deafhood is the knowledge in the gut instinct feeling of bonding and the link between all Deaf people. Deafhood is actually a search to understand ourselves.

Deafhood also focusing on the positive things of the Deaf Cultures and removing all the negatives.

There are some questions to consider. It's all about understanding many questions and being able to answer them all relating to our past, present and future.

1. Why are we deaf?
2. Why are there deaf people in the world?
3. Is deaf wrong, the mistake of biology?
4. Who is responsible for deafness/deaf?

With these questions, you can think more into it and see if you can answer them individually or discussing within a group.

If you want to know more and to understand 'Deafhood', there are three main areas which are our Deaf History, Colonisation and Oppression. Without them we cannot understand ourselves and the meaning of 'Deafhood', so therefore these three areas are very important to know.

Deaf History has two main situations which are Colonisation and Oppression. Colonisation is with examples from situation that has happened in the history referring to the Maori in New Zealand and Aborigines in Australia. These two native groups were colonised and oppressed by the white people and their native culture and language were removed and replaced with the white people's culture and language which were seen as the better. Now the lives of these two native groups are not good and are hard life because of being controlled and oppression by the white people. Their work employments and school education are not at high standard.

How are these native groups relevant to the Deaf people? They are in fact as going back in time to Milan, Italy in 1880. Before 1880 the lives of the Deaf people were good as many were talented with the jobs of lawyers, writers, artists, teachers and many more. After Milan in 1880, things have started to change where hearing people have decided to reduced the use of Sign Language as they believed that the Oralism method was better for the deaf people to be able to be in the 'hearing world'. The Deaf people were controlled and stopped from using Sign Language and their Deaf Culture was neglected. This has led to Deaf children having difficulties in schools and educations and adult educations also problems in finding jobs and causing psychologist problems.

But we must still be proud of one thing which is the existent of Sign Language as the older people in the past has fought the keep Sign Language alive and around with the support from other people named as 'ally'.

The young generations nowadays must THANK these people in the past for not giving up fighting; we were able to grow up using Sign Language because of their determination to keep Sign Language to survive. With this we must build and maintain the bridge between the older generations and nowadays generations to keep the bonding between us.

Now the future, there are some changes happening now, these changes are decreased number of deaf children attending deaf school, some deaf school have closed down due to lack of deaf pupils. Now more of these pupils are being isolated in mainstream school, being mixed with hearing pupils. The second change is the increase of Cochlear Implants paid by the governments. The increase of CI users is not big problem, but where is Sign Language and our Deaf Culture information? These CI people have not got full access and information about Sign Language and Deaf Culture. CI can be positive if these people have both CI and Sign Language and Deaf Culture. The third change is Genetics - this is related to deaf issue - for example using a situation that have happened; taking a women's egg and men's sperm and making an embryo with four samples. Each of these samples are observed and checked if there is any abnormalities? In one of the samples there was a deaf gene and it was thrown away, then the rest of these three good 'normal' samples were inserted back into the women to carry out the full term of the pregnancy. The baby was born hearing, but where was the deaf gene? Discarded! This can make the Deaf Community to reduce in numbers.

DO YOU WANT THIS?

NO!

ACT NOW!

How? Why? There are many deaf people that are not aware of or don't know Sign Language or Deaf Culture. We must **welcome** them into our Deaf World. Don't think that you don't have the time or can't be bothered to teach and explain to them. This is wrong view, as it is related to our history of Colonisation and Oppression.

These people would like to learn Sign Language as a new language, have the patience of making them feel welcomed. The act of leaving them out or not bothering to teach and welcoming the isolated deaf people is the sign of negative. Must change the negatives into positives and spread the positivity and attracting more people into the Deaf Community increasing in the size.

The gut feeling of Deafhood is increased. 😊