

CRISIS: Lack of Accessible Mental Health Services for People with Hearing Loss

REFERENCES

1. There is a great deal of confusion regarding the terms “deaf” and “hard-of-hearing” because of a frequent failure to specify whether the identity/culture definition is being used or the medical/audiological definition is being used. There is no one-to-one correlation between degree of hearing loss and preferred identity/culture; some people who identify themselves as Hard-of-Hearing are actually deaf and some people who identify with the Deaf culture are not audiologically deaf.

Deaf-Blind individuals comprise a relatively small complex group of individuals who have both vision loss and hearing loss. These individuals also vary according to the degree of hearing loss, the degree of vision loss, and whether the initial loss was vision or hearing, or no vision and hearing at all. As with the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing populations, age of onset is a significant developmental factor.

With respect to numbers, the size of the Deaf population nationwide is estimated at 1 million whereas the size of the Hard-of-Hearing population is estimated as anywhere from 25 to 45 million. Deaf-Blind population is much smaller; the National Consortium on Deaf-Blindness estimated in 2008 that there are approximately 10,000 children (ages birth to 22 years) and approximately 40,000 adults who are deaf-blind in the United States.

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