Supporting Parents of Children With Hearing Loss

Joni Alberg, Ph. D.
Executive Director

BEGINNINGS For Parents of Children Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, Inc.
Family Support
NCHAM Model of Family Support
“The key to a successful integration of hearing loss into a family is the degree to which parents are able to integrate hearing loss into their lives.”

(D. Luterman, 2006)
• Information
• Explanation of hearing tests and hearing loss
• Communication options
• Resources
• Consoling
• Instruction
“Spend at least as much time listening as you spend talking.”

(J. L. Yanz, 2006)
Emotional Support
The emotional response to the child’s hearing loss is independent of the degree of loss.

(D. Luterman, 2006)
A child’s success is independent of the degree of hearing loss….parental attitude and involvement are the determining factors in how well a child will do.
Stages of Grief

Shock
Denial
Guilt
Anger
Anxiety
Acceptance
Constructive Action
Shock

Initial reaction to learning of child’s hearing loss.
Shock “Checklist”

• Do you remember what the audiologist told you?

• Have you taken constructive action to get help?

• Are you spending your time in meaningful activity?

• Have you begun to express normal emotions such as anger, fear or grief?
“I don’t mean to be rude, but why are you here and who sent you?”
• Do you believe your child is deaf or hard of hearing?
• Are you able to discuss this?
• Are you angry with the audiologist, your child or others who may be trying to help?
• Are you seeking another opinion/diagnosis?
• Are you uncomfortable in public with your child and his/her hearing aids?
Guilt

“I know this happened because I sanded the floors while my wife was pregnant.”
Guilt Checklist

- Do you feel responsible?
- Do you linger on something that you may have done which resulted in your child being deaf or hard of hearing?
- Are you making unreasonable sacrifices to attend to your child?
- Are you pampering or overprotecting?
- Do you feel you are being punished for doing something wrong or being a bad person?
Desire to blame someone, anyone else.

Anger at what we must do to overcome the “loss.”
Anger “Checklist”

- Have you been losing your temper with your child, spouse, professionals or anyone who tries to help?
- Do you often find yourself in conflict with others?
- Are you punishing your child more than you think is normal?
- Do you experience more problems with your relationships since you learned that your child is deaf or hard of hearing?
Overwhelmed by anguish, pain and hurt of loss.

Anxiety
Anxiety “Checklist”

• Are you losing sleep worrying about the future for you and your child?

• Are you usually dissatisfied with the performance of your child’s teachers or therapists?

• Do you set goals for your child that put unusual pressure on both of you?

• Are you unable to enjoy activities that have nothing to do with your child?
Depression “Checklist”

• Are you experiencing a feeling of hopelessness?
• Have you been avoiding simple duties?
• Do you find yourself withdrawing?
• Do you feel alone even with family and friends?
• Do you catch yourself daydreaming when you are supposed to be working on a task?
Rational Thinking
Appropriate Emotional Responses
Patience
Self Confidence
Acceptance
Acceptance “Checklist”

- Have you stopped blaming yourself?
- Have you worked through the stages of grief?
- Are you ready to work with professionals who want to help your child?
- Are you ready to be the manager of the team?
- Do you feel a sense of hope for the future?
Constructive Action
Constructive Action

• Allows you to put things into perspective.
• Allows you to identify what is most important for you and your family.
• Allows you to form new relationships with professionals who serve your family, other families of children who are deaf or hard of hearing.
• Allows you to move forward with purpose!
Men and Women ARE Different!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>He</th>
<th>She</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visible evidence</td>
<td>unlikely.</td>
<td>Tears likely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No expression of</td>
<td><strong>No expression of feelings.</strong></td>
<td>Need to communicate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feelings.</td>
<td>Will engage in intellectual problem solving.</td>
<td>Ongoing need for social support.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Need for privacy &amp; solitude.</td>
<td>Focus &amp; investment in the past.</td>
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Never-ending process
The lack of follow through on the part of a patient/client does not necessarily mean they don’t care.
Communication Options
Primary Language of the Home
Spoken Language vs. Visual Language
Listening and Speaking
Gestures and Signs
Parents need to be aware of ALL communication options...even if their child has a mild hearing loss.
Communication choice may change over time
Language role models are critical.
Parents must establish their goals for their child.
Tips in Decision Making
(for Parents)

• Know what your options are for communication.

• Be certain you understand each option.

• Examine each option in person.

• Be sure you understand all test results.

• Decide how much time you have to devote to learning the methodology.
A Few Resources...


*Pathways to Language and Communication—DVD* (2009) BEGINNINGS for Parents of Children Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, Inc.

BEGINNINGS for Parents of Children Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, Inc. **www.ncbegin.org**

