

Factors and Implications Related to Self-Esteem in Adolescents Who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing

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Abstract

This presentation will describe why self-esteem has a major impact on a student's personal well-being. Students who are Deaf/ hard of hearing (D/HH) often face greater challenges with self-esteem than their hearing peers. The purpose of this literature review is to explore the many factors that impact self-esteem in adolescents and college students who are D/HH. This will provide professionals who work with these populations a better understanding of what these individuals are facing, so they can provide more holistic treatment.

Introduction

- Our intent with this poster is to educate our audience on what self-esteem is, how it impacts adolescents and college students who are D/HH, and how treatment practices with this population can be improved to support self-esteem
- Self-esteem refers to the positive feelings toward one's self, and it is an essential component of self-concept (Nemček, 2017)
- Self-esteem has a direct impact on an individual's mental health, intrinsic value, and sense of well-being (Nemček, 2017)
- In this review, the adolescents and college students studied ranged from 13 to 25 years old, and had mild to profound sensorineural hearing loss



Self-esteem Challenges

- Self-esteem challenges include feelings of negativity about impairments, loneliness, and frustration that can occur in social interactions
- "Approximately 38.9% of children with hearing loss have other disabilities or disorders" (Gallaudet Research Institute, 2010 p. 12)
- Researchers found that students who are D/HH felt most dissatisfied, isolated, and lonely when transitioning from high school to college (Cheng, 2018; Fellingner et al., 2007)
- For individuals with a profound hearing loss, lower self-esteem may result from repeated breakdowns in communication during social interactions (Jambor, 2005)

Factors That Impact Self-esteem

- Many factors can impact self-esteem in adolescents and college students, including degree of hearing loss, community identification, parent involvement, spirituality and language skills.
- Researchers have concluded that individuals with a profound hearing loss tend to have higher self-esteem since they are more likely to have acceptance of living with their limited hearing (Jambor, 2005; Bat-Chava, 2000)
- Individuals who are Deaf and identify with the Deaf community experience significantly higher levels of self-esteem (Jambor, 2005)
- Expectations from the parents of children who are D/HH can impact the adjustment that these children have when transitioning from high school to college and beyond (Cuevas et al., 2019)
- Relying on religion and spirituality provides support and improved self-esteem for students coping with hearing loss (Cuevas et al., 2019; Ahlert & Greeff, 2012)
- Students who are D/HH who have social awareness and strong language and reasoning skills are most likely to have positive self-esteem (Beck, 1988)

Clinical Implications

Knowing that behavior modifications can improve self-concept and self-esteem should prompt clinicians to use student self-assessments to explore self-concept and empower students to have a more realistic view of their abilities. This will help students to better accept themselves, disregard others' opinions of their abilities, and ultimately improve self-esteem (Beck, 1988). Furthermore, these individuals should be counseled on the potential negative effects that their disability can have on their self-esteem and strategies to avoid these difficulties (Beck, 1988; Muncy et al., 2019). Clinicians can also search for curriculums that support self-esteem, watch for signs of withdrawal, practice advocacy, and encourage clients to join support groups

Conclusion

Based on our research, self-esteem in students who are D/HH is an important consideration for clinicians. It is essential to understand the challenges that this population faces such as negative feelings towards their impairments, isolation, and frustration with communication. Additionally, degree of hearing loss, community involvement, parent expectations, religion, and language competency can impact self-esteem. Knowing this, clinicians should use counseling techniques and consider incorporating self-assessments that explore self-concept.

References

