



Attachment and Vertical Identity:

Supporting Strong Attachment for
Deaf & Hard of Hearing Children with
their Families

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Agenda

- Vertical and Horizontal Identity
- Encouraging attachment between the deaf child and their parents
- What we as Service Providers can do to support the deaf child and families

Honouring Two Cultures: Story #1



Power of Parental Love: Story #2



Vertical Identity



- *Vertical Identity* is passed down to children from parents via genetics and familial norms.
- “directly inherited” identity

Horizontal Identity

- *What Solomon calls a “horizontal” identity is one that separates you from your parents.*
- includes traits that are foreign to the family and unique to the child, and often propels identification with a community outside the family.
- *“Independently divergent” identity*

Close to the Tree

A child who reflects sameness with the parent at one end of the spectrum and all the possibilities and varieties of difference at the other end.

The Parent's Experience

- Keeping "the deaf child" at home
- Not ready, not ready, not ready...
- Gap becomes wider
- Making the "big" decision
- Dealing with emotions

Keeping the Relationship

- Some Deaf clients struggle to accept themselves as Deaf with their parent's reluctance.
- Some Deaf clients "need" Deaf Culture in order to access their vertical identity.
- Parents need to access their child's horizontal identity.



Welcome to Holland

A child can change a parent, just as awkwardly and with just as much of a mess, through the power of love.

What Can You Do?

- Encourage relationship between Deaf children, youth and families.
- Set up opportunities for cross-cultural conversations and workshops.
- Set up Family Days
- Provide access to interpreters (including English as Second Language interpreters) for family meetings.
- Utilize/Consult with Service Providers that specialize in Deaf & Hard of Hearing as well as the family's culture.



*We blossom into who we are
under the warming light of the
love that surrounds us.*

Maria Popova



Questions?

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