

THE DEAF BULLETIN



Restoring Dignity to the Deaf and Hard of hearing!

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Global Week of Action for Education 2017



By Barbra Nyangairi

Zimbabwe joins the rest of the world in celebrating the global week of action for education from the 23rd to the 29th of April under two themes. I will focus on one theme the SDG 4 which seeks to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. I will borrow VVOB's (Flemish Association for Development Cooperation and Technical Assistance) definition of quality education which states that “a good quality education is one that provides all learners with capabilities they require to become economically productive, develop sustainable livelihoods, contribute to peaceful and democratic societies and enhance individual well-being.” Currently our education system is a far cry from being inclusive and providing quality for learners with disabilities. The majority find themselves doing petty vending on the streets or begging. I have had an opportunity to interact with Deaf learners as we meet for positive parenting programmes with parents. It is sad to note that many who are supposed to be in grade 7 are not able to read, write and are functionally illiterate. Asked to explain how they feel, they do not know how to express their feelings i.e. sad, happy, joy or unhappy. They seem like a blank slate on which something has to be written. What quality is there if someone has been in the school system and remains functionally illiterate? Has the investment in the education of children with disabilities had any positive returns and how can we redeem this situation. This requires a lot of reflection and collaborative work on the part of all stakeholders. We need to join hands and find sustainable solutions that will provide quality education to children with disabilities. The first port of call could be the development of an inclusive education policy that provides guidelines on how to provide support to vulnerable children in the education system. Currently efforts to support children with disabilities in the education system are not guided by any force of policy. In addition, how do we attain quality education when Deaf learners do not have a sign language syllabus to use? As we celebrate the global week of education, at Deaf Zimbabwe Trust we do this with much sadness at the state of education for children who are Deaf and those with disabilities broadly, who need the most care but are the most neglected and forgotten... Think deeply about this as you celebrate this event.

Positive parenting: Things “not to do” when you have a Deaf child

By Precious Nkomo



According to research done by Deaf Zimbabwe Trust through psycho-social support workshops, parents who give birth to children with disabilities go through a lot of emotions ranging from anger, shame, pain and helplessness. Many other issues like stress related illnesses, divorce and accusations of witchcraft often arise when a child is born with a disability. Unfortunately a deaf child has to grow up in that family with parents going through all these emotions and witness it all. This will have an effect on the child growing up. The child is aware of all the sadness that parents go through. The parents' reaction upon having a deaf child will determine how the child will be treated. If the parents fail to accept that their child is deaf the child will go through rejection and discrimination within his own home. During our positive parenting workshops we encourage parents to accept their child's disability and make interventions that will help their child live a better life. Below are some of the **Don'ts** which will guide parents to be more positive when raising their Deaf child.

- Don't pay attention to the neighbors and relatives when they say insensitive things about your child
- Don't feel you must apologise for your child
- Don't keep him/her away from other children because he/she has no speech and doesn't hear as well as they do. They may be the best teachers.
- Don't let the disability worry you too much. He/she will sense your anxiety and worry too.
- Don't be ashamed of your child. Let him/her know you think he/she is a fine and important person.
- Don't compare him/her with his siblings or with other children
- Don't blame yourself, but start now to try and help your child
- Don't let any member of the family baby him/her
- Don't be afraid to let him/her grow up and develop in other ways like any child.
- Don't give him/her single words he/she probably understands more than you give credit for.
- Don't exaggerate your lip movements this makes speech harder to understand
- Don't correct every word he/she uses : accept and encourage speech
- Don't dream of treatments or “cures”
- Don't be pessimistic. try to build the thing he/she achieves
- Don't waste time and energy bewailing the fact of the hearing loss.

Please note: DZT will be hosting a Positive Parenting workshop in Mbare at Chirodzo Primary School on Saturday the 22nd of April 2017 starting at 9am.



DZT trained 25 in school Sexual and Reproductive Health Deaf Peer Educators



Paida our Program Officer for Education assisting participants with group work during the Peer Educators' training



Blessing Makirimira performing Deaf theatre with a parent at the psychosocial support workshop in Chitungwiza



Precious Nkomo Program Officer Sign Language facilitating a group discussion during the positive parenting TOT conducted by DZT

World Health Day – 7 April
By Rosemary Mundhluli

The 7th of April is World Health Day and this year in 2017, World Health Organisation (WHO) is running a year campaign on Depression. Depression is a common illness worldwide, with more than 300 million people affected. Depression is different from usual mood swings and short-lived emotional responses to challenges in everyday life. Especially when long-lasting and with moderate or severe intensity, depression may become a serious health condition. It can cause the affected person to suffer greatly and function poorly at work, at school and in the family. At its worst, depression can lead to suicide. Close to 800 000 people die due to suicide every year. Suicide is the second leading cause of death in 15-29-year-olds.

How do you know you are depressed? (Symptoms)

Depending on the number and severity of symptoms, a depressive episode can be categorized as mild, moderate, or severe. Both types of depression can be chronic over an extended period of time with relapses, especially if they go untreated. A depressed person keeps experiencing the following symptoms for at least two weeks:

- ✚ anxiety symptoms Loss of interest and enjoyment in almost all activities
- ✚ Insomnia (an inability to sleep) or hypersomnia (excessive sleeping) almost every day.
- ✚ Fatigue or loss of energy almost every day.
- ✚ Recurring thoughts of death or suicide
- ✚ Uncontrollable eating resulting in weight gain
- ✚ Depressed mood particularly in the morning
- ✚ Feelings of worthlessness and guilt
- ✚ poor concentration and even medically unexplained symptoms
- ✚ A sense of restlessness

Treatment


- ❖ Different psychological treatment formats for consideration include individual and/or group face-to-face psychological treatments delivered by professionals and supervised lay therapists.
- ❖ Psychosocial treatments are also effective for mild depression. DZT conducts psychosocial support sessions monthly for parents with Deaf children to help them in easing the burden of taking care of their Deaf children. People should find friends or relatives to talk to if they face difficult situations.
- ❖ Antidepressants can be an effective form of treatment for moderate-severe depression but are not the first line of treatment for cases of mild depression. They should not be used for treating depression in children and are not the first line of treatment in adolescents, among whom they should be used with caution.

Key facts about Depression

- Depression is a common mental disorder. Globally, more than 300 million people of all ages suffer from depression.
- Depression is the leading cause of disability worldwide, and is a major contributor to the overall global burden of disease.
- More women are affected by depression than men.
- At its worst, depression can lead to suicide.
- There are effective treatments for depression.

Source: WHO Fact Sheet

The Deaf Bulletin is an initiative by Deaf Zimbabwe Trust to raise awareness about Deaf issues and to disseminate information to the Deaf Community in Zimbabwe. For more information contact: Editor: Paidamoyo Chimhini
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