



THE MINDS EYE

Understanding Theory of Mind Development in Deaf Children

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WHAT IS
THEORY
OF MIND?

TOM

MissLunaRose

HERE'S WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY:

The theory of mind is a concept in psychology that refers how someone ascribes mental states - such as beliefs, intentions, desires, and emotions - to both oneself and others. This is not limited to only understanding what someone might believe or desire, but it extends to surmising their emotional state and thoughts as well. As we cannot directly see (only experience through their facial expressions or spoken words) what people are thinking, the concept has been aptly labeled as the 'theory' of mind.

IT IS . . .

- The ability to attribute mental states to oneself
- The ability to attribute mental states to others
- The ability to understand that others have beliefs, desires and intentions that are different from one's own





IN OTHER WORDS

- ToM is the ability to understand that others may not know what I know, may not think what I think, and may not feel what I feel, and vice versa.
- ToM helps in understanding and predicting other's behavior.

CHALLENGES —

BEHAVIORS YOU MAY SEE

- Insensitivity to other's feelings
- Inability to take into account what others know
- Inability to negotiate friendships



CHALLENGES

— BEHAVIORS YOU MAY SEE

- Inability to deceive/understand deception
- Inability to understand reasons for others' actions
- Inability to understand "unwritten rules"





COMPONENTS OF

TOM

1. PERCEPTION

The ability to perceive and recognize emotional and mental states is necessary in order to have a theory of mind. People with strong theory of mind are perceptive.

Perceptiveness can include the ability to identify facial expressions, body language, and other social cues that signal a person's emotional state.





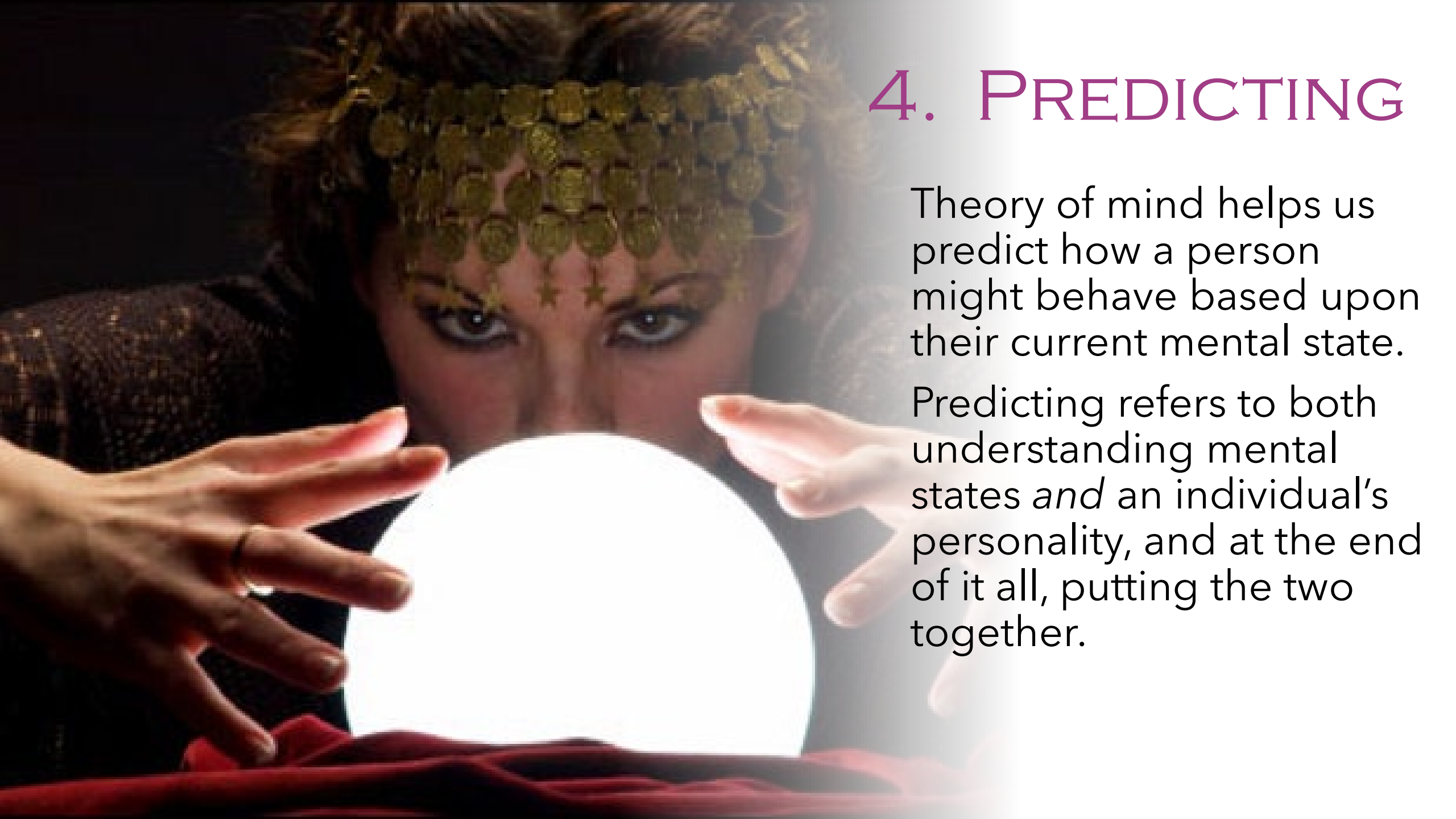
2. CONTEXTUALIZATION

Effectively attribute perceived behaviors to mental state requires contextualization. This requires us to use situational information, past experiences, cultural beliefs, and social norms. This allows us to understand the most likely mental state that a person has based upon a given situation.

3. PERSPECTIVE TAKING

The ability to put yourself in someone else's shoes. It involves suspending your own perspective and looking at a situation from another person's point of view. This skill helps us understand and predict how others might feel or react in certain situations.





4. PREDICTING

Theory of mind helps us predict how a person might behave based upon their current mental state.

Predicting refers to both understanding mental states *and* an individual's personality, and at the end of it all, putting the two together.



5. SOCIAL LEARNING

The process of acquiring knowledge through social interactions. In part, we develop a theory of mind socializing or playing together. Through sustained engagement with others, we develop an understanding of the connection between their behaviors and mental states.



DEVELOPMENT OF TOM REQUIRES:

- The ability to use/understand language involved in discussing mental states
- The ability to reason and infer
- The ability for effective social interaction

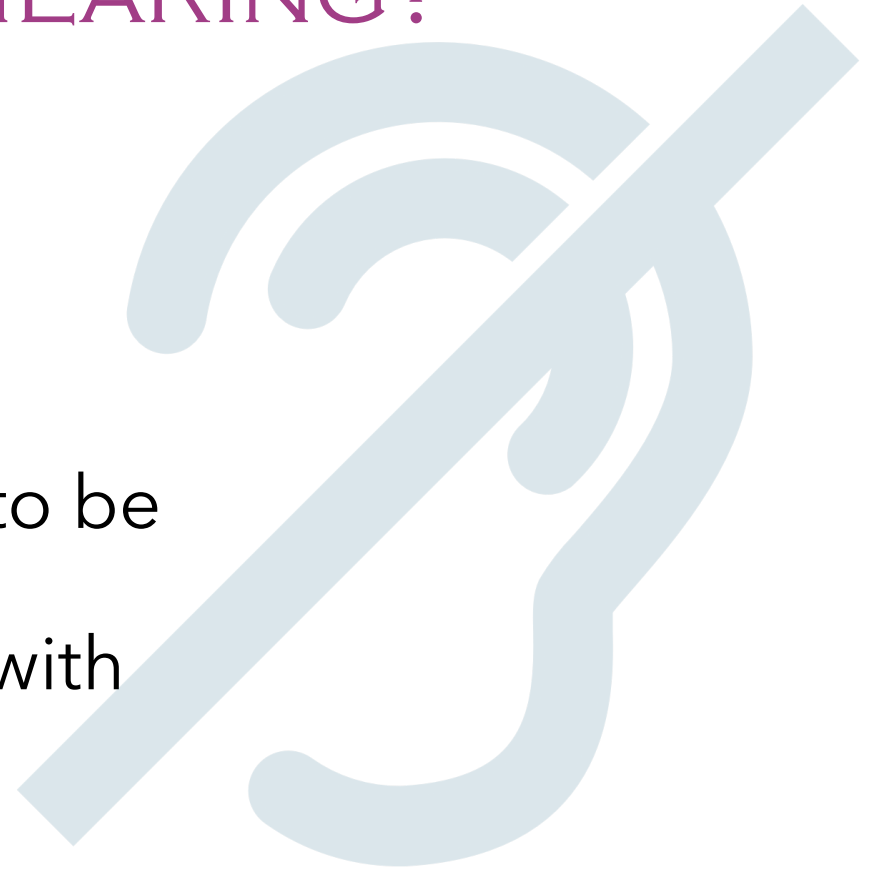


HEARING LOSS & IMPACT ON

TOM

WHAT ABOUT CHILDREN WHO ARE DEAF/HARD OF HEARING?

- At risk for delays in developing ToM
- Delays in ToM can affect other areas of development
- Many children with hearing loss appear to be very egocentric, and this can cause misunderstandings, i.e., young children with hearing loss who do not share may be considered selfish
- There are ways to help develop ToM



WHAT CAUSES DELAYS IN TOM?



- Lack of Incidental Learning
- Brain Injury and/or Cognitive Delay
- Brenda Schick "Social Cognition and Theory of Mind" says, "The content of our minds is not a visible thing. We can only figure out what others know and believe from their... behavior, ...facial expressions, ...what they do and from ...what they say."



HOW CAN YOU HELP WITH

TOM

- Assume nothing; explain everything!!
- explain the Culture
- teach emotion words
- Use vocabulary associated with mental states





ed

Embarrassed

Sad

H

TALK ABOUT FEELINGS

- ❖ Teach emotion words
- ❖ Use emotion in your: Communication, Facial Expressions, Body language
- ❖ Express how you feel
- ❖ Think about/say how the other person feels.

TALK ABOUT PERSPECTIVES

TALK ABOUT SOCIAL PICTURES

- What's happening in this situation?
- What are they feeling, thinking, wanting?
- What are they communicating, saying?

ROLE PLAY SITUATIONS

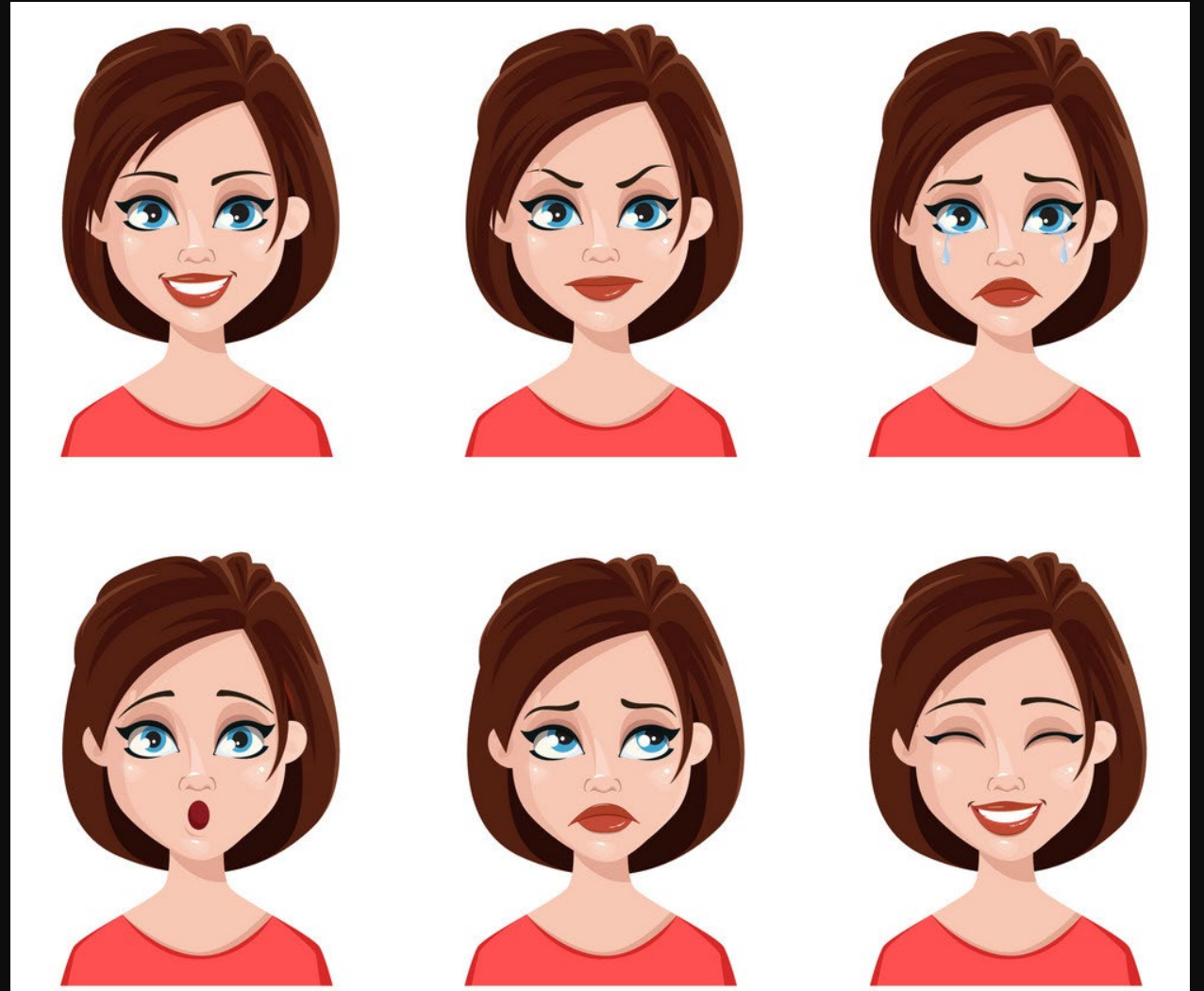
- Freeze to ask about feelings, thoughts

TALK ABOUT BOOKS, TV, MOVIES, VIDEOS

- Hit pause and ask about thoughts, feelings, actions of the characters. What might you do?

USE YOUR FACE!!!

- Use facial expressions and voice inflections to provide information on how you feel!!
 - Ever watched an interpreter interpret for the deaf?
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WHAT DO STUDENTS WHO ARE DHH NEED TO DEVELOP TOM?

—

- NEED PERSPECTIVE-TAKING DISCUSSIONS (in the moment, info about truth vs mistaken belief, how you know)
- TALK ABOUT “STATE OF MIND” (thought that..., feared that..., felt that...)
- VOCABULARY (general & feeling words)
- ENCOURAGEMENT AND PRAISE



- Discuss preferences (how this can change over time)
- Different is not good or bad, its different
- Explain likes/dislikes
- Explain that it's okay to not want the same things as other people.

This is problem solving:

I don't like the way we are doing it.

What way would you like to do it?

We could try this other way-how about that?

We could FORGET the whole thing-

we could try THIS way-how

SHARE HOW PEOPLE PROBLEM SOLVE:



AND . . .

- Discuss the origins of **prejudice/stereotyping thought**
- Demonstrate **respect and acceptance for individual from different social and cultural groups.**
- **Express/model appreciation**
- Many children who are **deaf or hard of hearing do not recognize when to say "Thank You"!**
- Talk about how you express appreciation (verbally and with thank you notes, etc.)
- Talk about and encourage student to **acknowledge other's successes-winning an award, being selected for a team, even if the student is jealous,** etc.



THANK YOU

WHAT ELSE CAN YOU DO?

- Fill them in (what is known/understood by others)
- Identify Feelings and Emotions
- Use "mental state" words to fully indicate feelings you hear, see, and infer



SUPPORT PEER TO PEER INTERACTIONS

- Model friendships
- Teach rules
- Require direct communication



REMEMBER TO

Have **HIGH** Expectations!

- ☑ Behavior
- ☑ Responsibilities
- ☑ Social skills



Require others to have **HIGH** expectations also!



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