



 Panel Discussion

# Cochlear Implant Adults All Grown Up!

Educational, Medical, and Social Journeys Across the Lifespan



Facilitator

**Tawny Holmes Hlibok, Esq.**

Faculty Lead, Strategic Engagement and Policy



# Meet the Panelists

Panelist

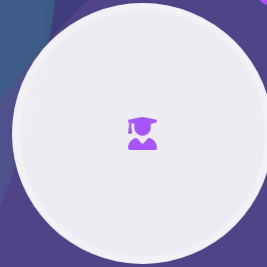


**Katrina Duncan**

**CI User, Poet, Health Advocate**

Sharing her personal journey of resilience and reclaiming health after cochlear implant removal.

Panelist

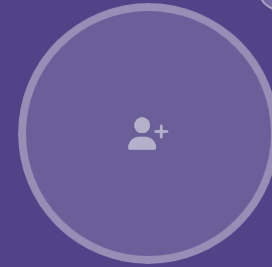


**Caroline Yuk**

**Deaf Studies Incubator Fellow**

Lifelong cochlear implant user sharing educational journey and research on deaf identity development.

Panelist



**TBD Panelist**

**Additional CI User Perspective**

*Additional perspective from the deaf/hard of hearing adult community to be announced.*

# OVERVIEW

 Why Adult Perspectives Matter

 Panel Stories: Education, Medical & Social

 Video: Katrina Duncan (CI Removal)

 Latest Research & Technology

 Resources for Families

 Policy Trends (2026+)

 Health Across the Lifespan

 Q&A Discussion

 **FEATURED PANEL**

**DEAF PERSPECTIVES**

**Lived Experience First**

This session centers the voices of deaf and hard of hearing adults who have grown up with cochlear implants, offering invaluable insights for early intervention professionals and families.

# VIDEO: Katrina's Journey — Choosing Healing



 Facebook Watch  26K Views  100+ Shares

"After over 15 years of struggling with chronic migraines... I've made the decision to have my cochlear implant removed. This choice isn't about giving up. It's about choosing relief."

 Health & Wellness Priority

*"Dear Migraine, we need to talk...  
You've invaded my life like an uninvited guest.*

*So let me be clear:*

***I'm choosing me.***

***I'm choosing healing.***

*I'm choosing silence when I want it, sound when I need it, and peace always.*

*You don't get another minute.  
You. Are. Done."*



**Katrina — Free, fierce, and finally taking her life back.**

# Educational Journeys



Early Years & K-12

Access & Equity

IEP / 504 Plans

Language Support



Postsecondary &  
Workforce

Accommodations

Assistive Tech

Self-Advocacy



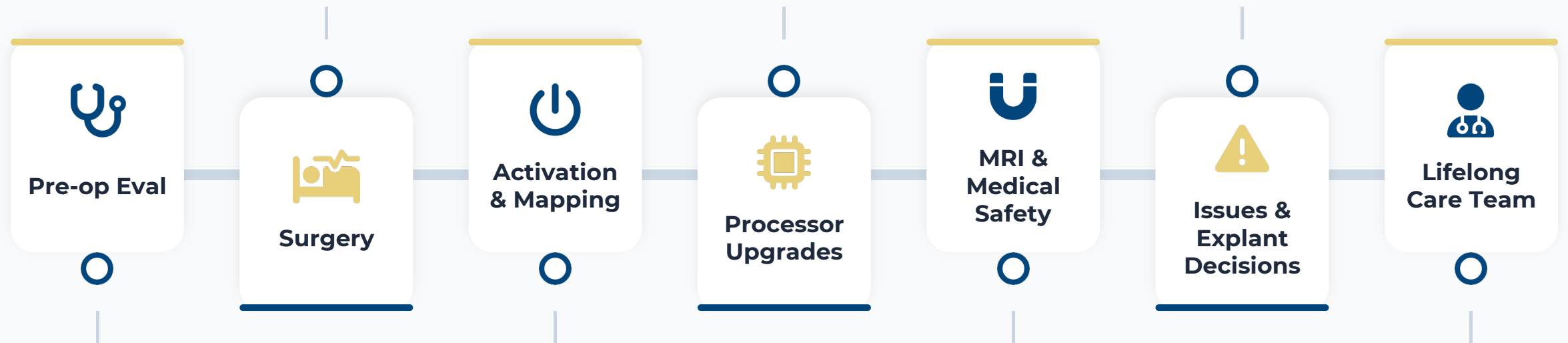
Lifelong Learning

Adaptive Strategies

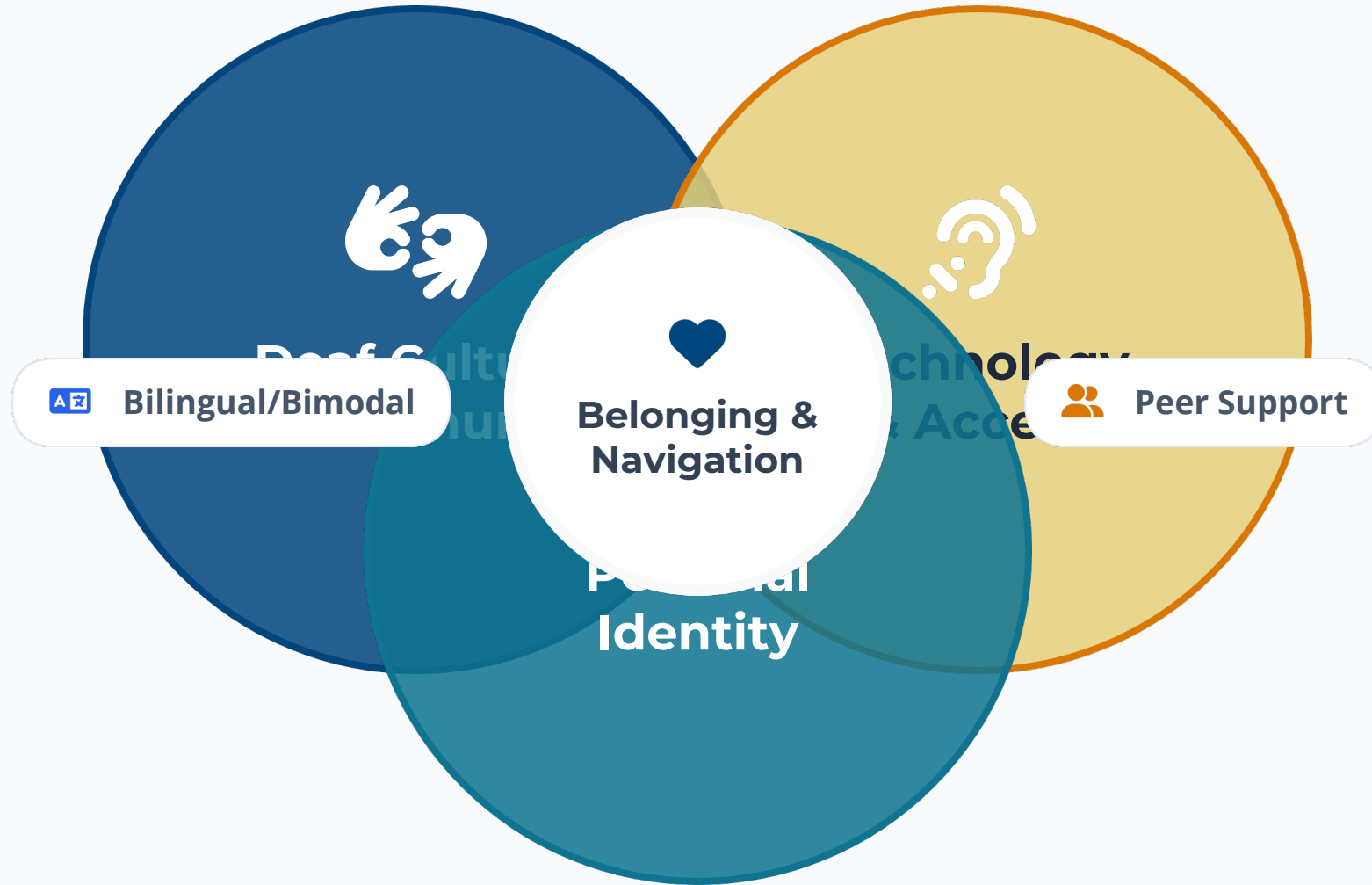
Mentorship

Community

# Medical Experiences Across the Lifespan



# Social Experiences and Identity



# Latest CI Research and Technology



## Varied Outcomes

Dependent on history, access to language, and consistent rehabilitation.



## Unilateral vs. Bilateral

Bilateral benefits: localization & speech in noise. SSD efficacy confirmed.



## Music & Effort

Reduced listening effort reported; music perception remains a challenge.

NEW



## Device Longevity

Implants designed for lifespan; external processors upgrade every 5-7 years.



## Tele-Health

Remote programming (tele-mapping) expands access to specialized care.



## Key Resources

ACI Alliance reviews, peer-reviewed studies, FDA safety data.

# Resources for Families Considering CIs



## ACI Alliance

Family guides, webinars, and pediatric habilitation resources.

[acialliance.org](https://acialliance.org) 



## Gallaudet Perspectives

Deaf CI users share lived experiences and advice.

[gallaudet.edu/ci-center](https://gallaudet.edu/ci-center) 



## Hands & Voices

Parent-to-parent support and unbiased CI information.

[handsandvoices.org](https://handsandvoices.org) 



## FDA Benefits & Risks

Official safety data, candidacy criteria, and device info.

[fda.gov/medical-devices](https://fda.gov/medical-devices) 



## State EHDI / Part C

Early intervention contacts and local CI center directories.

[infanthearing.org](https://infanthearing.org) 



## Peer Support Groups

Connect with families and adults with CIs in your area.

**Various local chapters** 

# Emerging Policy Trends (2026+)



## Coverage & Candidacy Expansion

Broadening criteria for adults and Single-Sided Deafness (SSD). Expanded insurer coverage for unilateral/bilateral implantation.



## Informed Consent & Options

Mandating comprehensive, unbiased info with full language access (ASL/English) before surgery decision-making.



## School Accommodations

Beyond devices: acoustically treated classrooms, remote mic tech, and interpreting support in IEPs/504s.



## Maintenance & Repairs

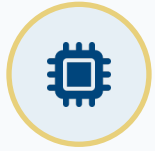
Ensuring coverage for long-term maintenance, processor upgrades, and essential repairs to prevent gaps.



## Data & Outcomes Transparency

Push for public reporting of long-term outcomes across diverse populations to better inform candidate expectations and clinical practice.

# HEALTH QUESTIONS ACROSS THE LIFESPAN



## Device Longevity

Lifespan, failure rates, and replacement/upgrade cycles



## MRI & Procedures

Safety protocols, magnet removal, and imaging compatibility



## Infection Risks

Otitis media management, meningitis prevention, and skin care



## Balance & Tinnitus

Vestibular impacts, dizziness management, and tinnitus changes



## Pregnancy & Surgery

Anesthesia considerations, childbirth, and hormonal effects



## Aging & Cognition

Cognitive load, listening fatigue, and long-term neural health

# Q&A — Discussion Prompts

 Let's Discuss!



1

**What helped most in school and work?**



2

**Biggest medical surprise or lesson?**



3

**How did CIs shape identity & community?**



4

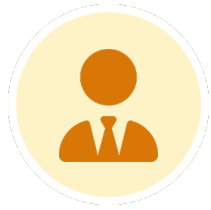
**What do you wish providers told your family?**



5

**One tip for parents deciding today.**

# Thank You!



**Tawny Holmes Hlibok, Esq.**

Faculty Lead, Strategic Engagement and  
Policy

✉ [tawny.holmes.hlibok@gallaudet.edu](mailto:tawny.holmes.hlibok@gallaudet.edu)

## Connect with our Panelists



**Caroline Yuk**

Deaf Studies Incubator Fellow

Connect



***Panelist TBD***

Additional perspectives to come

Soon

**Gallaudet University**

Cochlear Implant Adults All Grown Up! — EHDl Panel Presentation