



Navigating Dual Currents:

Straddling Identities and Connecting to Community

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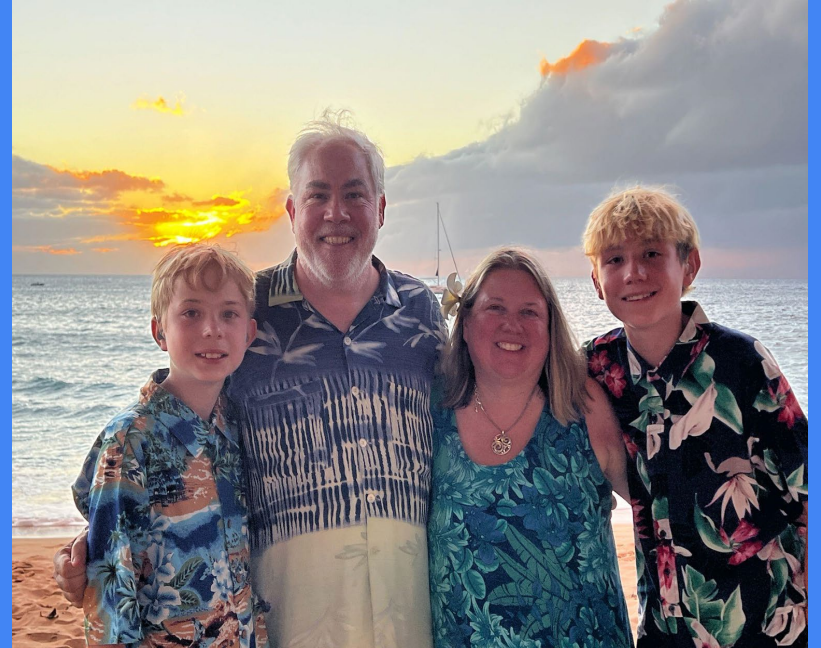
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Objectives:

Objective 1: Understand the significance of DHH identity in shaping a child's sense of self

Objective 2: Recognize 2-3 factors that can positively or negatively influence your child's self-identification as a DHH individual

Objective 3: Explore conflict resolution strategies that can be discussed with your child(ren), empowering them to navigate challenges

Here when we reference "DHH", we represent the diversity of children who are deaf and hard of hearing across all modalities, languages, values, religions, cultures, identities, disabilities, geographic locations, lived experiences

Dad's experience with another dad- DHH kids



DHH Sense of Self / Identity

Understanding Identity Development in Deaf/Hard of Hearing children

Deaf identity: traditionally, a distinct cultural identity rooted in ASL and Deaf values

Dual identity: the possibility of identifying with **both** Deaf culture and the hearing culture

- May or may not have hearing devices or use spoken language
- Acknowledges our diverse experiences & perspectives, no “black & white” way to be deaf

Navigating the Journey

- Calm waters, some ripples
 - Hitting strong currents
 - Riptides
 - Anchor down

Calm water, some ripples



- Access to language & information
 - Accommodations
 - Meeting other DHH individuals
 - Representations in books/media
 - Social gathering
 - School
 - Camps
 - Belonging
 - Sports / Hobbies
 - Extracurricular events
 - Attending events that provide accommodations
 - Being loved by people who accepted them as a whole
- * These are our lived experiences

Hitting strong currents: Understanding context & Conflict Resolution strategies

- No accommodation or lack thereof
 - Rejection
 - Bullying
 - Shame / Embarrassment
 - Religion *
- **Conflict Resolution Strategies**
 - Use visual aids
 - Optimal seating arrangements
 - Request interpreters - even if not fluent
 - Set up playdates with other DHH kids
 - Give space to process
 - Words of affirmation
 - Have a family meeting
 - Find authentic DHH stories and characters
 - Collaborate with teachers/counselors to include DHH-friendly games and activities

Riptides



- **Social Challenges**

- Communication barriers
- Social isolation and marginalization
- Negative social attitudes and prejudice
- Lack of support and understanding

- **Emotional Challenges:**

- Anxiety and depression
- Low self-esteem
- Identity confusion
- Emotional distress



- **Cultural Challenges:**

- Communication styles
- Cultural norms
- Language differences
- Access to resources

Tip for professionals: encourage family to get in touch with their Hands & Voices chapter. Peer groups. DHH activities

Riptides - Find Resources



- Gallaudet's Deaf and Hard of Hearing Child Resilience Center
 - Mental Health resources
- Strategies to support self-determination in Deaf teens (also in Spanish):

<https://nationaldeafcenter.org/resource-items/family-support-deaf-teens/>

- Clerc Center's Resource Hub (create your free login)

<https://clerccenteronline.com/resources>

- Expanded Core Curriculum for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students

How Do I Navigate This Raft?



- Early Exposure and Support - *playdates, events*
- Family Dynamics - *acceptance*
- Educational Settings - *prioritize inclusivity*
- Peer Groups - *connection, social network*
- Technology (*if applicable*)
 - *Tips: call hearing devices “tools”.*
 - *Remind children they just help them hear, not “their actual ears”*
 - *Practice conversing with & without them.*
- Self-Advocacy - *participate in decision making*
- Celebrate Diversity - *recognize not a “one size fits all”*

What else can I do?

- Learn how to support child's identity after identification.
- Find closest Deaf community/role models
- Social/support group
- Talk to your child
- Make accommodations available/part of the norm
- Read children books with representation
- Watch movies with representation
- Follow Deaf social media influencers
- Include Deaf culture in your home
- Learn visual language alongside your child - fluency not required

*Disclaimer - neither one of us are counselors. These are some tools that we know from our lived Deaf experiences, our children, and from talks with other parents, DHH adults, and professionals in casual conversations.

*Reach out to your pediatrician, school counselors, psychologists, other D/HH families

Anchor Down: Importance of Community & Connection

Foster supportive environments.

Encourage each other to
advocate for systems that
supports Deaf children.

Share resources with each
other.



Thank you for riding
the waves with us...

Follow-up

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