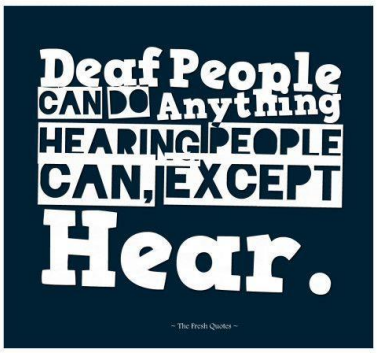
Do the Deaf view their deafness as a disability???



Disability according to a Legal Dictionary
Main Entry: dis•able
Function: transitive verb
Inflected Forms: dis•abled ; dis•abl•ing
1 : to deprive of legal right, qualification, or capacity
2 : to make incapable or ineffective; specifically :
to cause to have a disability — dis•able•ment noun

Disability is not located within the individual, but within society...it is a social construct...when the social environment and factors differ, then who the 'disabled' person is, also differs. In Martha's Vineyard, most of you would be disabled and wouldn't be able to shop, etc. At Gallaudet University – most of you would fail all your classes and have no idea what was going on and wouldn't be able to interact with your peers etc...who is the disabled one? A disability results when society is unable to or refuses to cater for diversity and difference.

A biomedical model would locate the problem/the disability within the individual, perceiving it as directly caused by disease, trauma, or other health conditions and therefore seeks to either eliminate the problem, or alleviate it as best as they can.

Medical intervention therefore is 'necessary' to ensure the deaf engage in the auditory world (rather than the auditory world learning more skills and knowledge about engaging with the deaf community)

This results in cochlear implants, speech and oral training, refusing to let Deaf children sign, and dislocation from the Deaf community, resulting in young Deaf people who are confused about their identity and struggle to truly fit-in both within the Deaf and Hearing community. In education, it is often the case that the majority of time is spent teaching kids to hear and speak, thereby missing out on the foundations of education...they are learning how to say 'butterfly' rather than learning about the lifecycle of a butterfly etc.

The Deaf community reject the biomedical model and see themselves as a linguistically and culturally diverse community.

The social model of disability sees the issue of "disability" as a socially created problem and a matter of the full integration of individuals into society. In this model, disability is not an attribute of an individual, but rather a complex collection of conditions, many of which are created by the social environment. Hence, the management of the problem requires social action and it is the collective responsibility of society at large to make the environmental modifications necessary for the full participation of people with disabilities in all areas of social life. The issue is both cultural and ideological, requiring individual, community, and large-scale social change. From this perspective, equal access for someone with an impairment/disability is a human rights issue of major concern.

This often requires engagement at a macro level to intervene at an organisational, community, societal, or global level and transpires most effectively when done in collaboration with clients, that they themselves have opportunity to redefine and transform the system, thereby achieving greater control over their lives. Deaf advocacy organisations such as Deaf Australia and the Victorian Council of Deaf People, are fully run by Deaf people, and have been established purely for advocacy at a political and societal level.