

## Lesson 05

# Oppression & the Deaf Community

Toby Fitch

- External Oppression (Hearing on Deaf)
  - Audism
    - Medicalization
    - Oralism
- Internal Oppression (Deaf on Deaf)

## Audism

- In deaf culture, calling someone an audist is equivalent to calling someone as a racist
- Audism has existed for many centuries, no matter what definition is being used
  - Oralism – Education of deaf people primarily through lip-reading, speech,
    - Milan Conference of 1880
- Audism is:
  - the notion that one is superior based on one's ability to hear
  - to behave in the manner of one who hears
  - the misconception that life without hearing is miserable
  - an attitude based on pathological thinking which results in negative vibes toward anyone who does not hear
- Audism is a form of ableism, which is the discrimination on the basis of disability
- Audism can occur with anybody, even with Deaf people, but it is most predominant in hearing people
  - Deaf people = internal oppression but how?

## Audism (examples)

- Interpreters can experience audist attitudes, even though they are not deaf themselves
  - Using the interpreter to “tell him” or “tell her”
  - Ask questions about the Deaf person
    - “Why didn't you pick up the Deaf person?” .... we can drive
- Denial of jobs or promotion to higher positions of authority
  - But... isn't the American Disabilities Act enough?
- Barriers to accessibility
  - Denial of interpreters or other resources
    - Using unqualified interpreters (including family members and children!)
  - Any video or music track with voiceovers that does not captions (including commercials)
  - Public transportation with no visual displays
  - Landlords that refuse to provide visual flashing alarm/signalers
  - Forcing Deaf individuals to get medical notes and have multiple meetings to prove the need for accommodation

## Audism (even more examples!)

- Laziness/unwillingness to accommodate or adjust to the situation
  - Dinner table syndrome
  - “Nevermind” or “I’ll tell you later”
- Inappropriate, negative, or lower expectations of success held by parents as well as uneducated professionals including but not limited to audiologists, medical professionals, educators, etc.
- Intentional (or unintentional) behaviors
  - Covering your mouth with hands while speaking
- Interpreters are a great resource but they also hold a lot of power in interpreted situations
  - Not signing their interactions with other hearing people
  - Choosing which conversations the deaf people can be a part of, based on what the interpreter thinks is important
- On your own time, watch “Audism Unveiled” (57 mins) – highly recommended!

## Medicalization

- Switched At Birth, brief explanation of medicalization and changing that perspective – [watch video](#)
- Deafness is a medical deficiency, or a “problem” (disability)
- Deafness needs to be 'fixed' in order to restore the person to his/her “rightful place” in hearing society
  - Mainly supported by oralists, medical professionals, and etc.
- Deafness is often misdiagnosed by health professionals
  - Intellectual disability; Behavioral disability (ADD / ADHD)
- Hearing aids, cochlear implants and other hearing devices
  - Alexander Graham Bell Association, Starkey Hearing Foundation
- Viewed as a threat to Deaf culture
  - Why? How?
    - Is Deaf culture really that important? See video for a sense of belonging - [watch video](#)

## Internal Oppression

- Occurs often in the Deaf community, but not as much as it used to
  - Older Deaf generation bias vs new Deaf generation
- Examples:
  - Hard of hearing / oral deaf individuals not involving a profoundly deaf person (eg. talking on the phone or talking in front of a deaf person without signing)
  - “Not Deaf enough”
  - You look hearing, so you don't belong
  - Signing abilities
  - Use of cochlear implants / hearing aids
  - Deaf Blind – [watch video](#)

## Deaf people as a disability group

- Instead of listing all the 'disability' reasons, I'll give you 4 reasons to NOT to construct Deaf people as a disability group
  - Deaf people themselves do not believe they have a disability
  - The disability stigma brings unnecessary medical and surgical risk for the Deaf child (cochlear implants)
  - It endangers the future of the Deaf world (preservation of Deaf culture)
  - Disability stigma brings bad solutions to real problems because it's predicated on misunderstandings

## Deaf people as an ethnic group

- Collective name
  - Feeling of community
  - Norms for behavior
  - Distinct values
  - Knowledge
  - Customs
  - Social structure
  - Language (ASL)
  - Arts
  - History
  - Kinship
- \* Many of these described are “internal properties” of a minority group, but we must also think about external properties such as an imaginary boundary that people recognize that separates Deaf and hearing communities.

## How you can help defeat audism

- Speak up, be an advocate when a d/Deaf person is clearly being discriminated
- Be inclusive and proactive, go the extra mile!
  - Keep the deaf individual(s) in the loop, (don't say “nevermind” or “I'll tell you later”)
  - Invite your Deaf peers to any activities
  - Learn sign language
  - Awareness and sensitivity is key to be effective in any situation
    - Room lighting
    - Spatial awareness
    - Acknowledge and respect communication preferences
      - Group settings vs individual
    - Least amount of background noise
    - Not covering your mouth
    - etc

## How you can help defeat audism

- Be an advocate of Deaf Gain
  - Deaf Gain – “reframing of 'deaf' as a form of sensory and cognitive diversity that has the potential to contribute to the greater good of humanity” (H-Dirksen L. Baumann and Joseph J. Murray)
    - Examples:
      - Meetings – Only one person talks at once; Creating visual presentations / meeting notes; Slightly slowing down the speed of meetings so the interpreter can keep up
      - DeafSpace – [link to article](#) and [watch video](#)
      - Encourage captioning of videos since it benefits not only the hearing-disadvantaged, but many other non-English speakers and blind individuals

## No Voice Zone | **Rules**

You may not use your voice (and this includes whispering!)

If you need to get someone's attention, wave, stomp the floor, pound the table, etc.

You can ask any questions about ASL/Deaf culture or even about my personal experiences. Do ask the most random/craziest questions, this is a judgement-free zone. The more you know, the better it is for all parties involved!

If you don't understand, don't hesitate to stop me, get my attention!

Have fun!

# REVIEW | **LESSONS 00 - 03**

## Quick Activity – Guess the Phrase

- The instructor will sign a phrase several times at different speeds at each pass.
- If you understand the phrase, stand up and repeat the phrase to others who may not have guessed correctly yet
- If you'd like the instructor to repeat or clarify a sign, please ask!

**LESSON 03 WORDS**

- ALL  
 - #ALL  
 - ASK  
 - ASK-to  
 - BETTER  
 - BEST  
 - BIG  
 - COME  
 - GO  
 - ATTEND  
 - GROW-up  
 - FAMILY  
 - CLASS  
 - GROUP  
 - TEAM  
 - CATEGORY

- FAVORITE  
 - FINE  
 - FROM  
 - HERE  
 - HOUSE  
 - CITY  
 - LIKE  
 - MORE  
 - NEED  
 - NOT  
 - SCHOOL  
 - SO-SO  
 - SMALL  
 - THINK  
 - THINK-about

**LESSON 02 WORDS**

- CHILD  
 - CHILDREN  
 - GIRL  
 - SISTER  
 - MOM  
 - GRANDMA  
 - WOMAN / LADY  
 - BOY  
 - BROTHER  
 - DAD  
 - GRANDPA  
 - MALE  
 - SINGLE  
 - MARRIAGE  
 - DIVORCE  
 - HAVE

- HIS / HER / it's  
 - HOW  
 - HOW-MANY  
 - MANY  
 - FAST  
 - SLOW  
 - SPELL  
 - FINGERSPELL  
 - WORK  
 - MY  
 - OUR  
 - THEIR  
 - YOUR

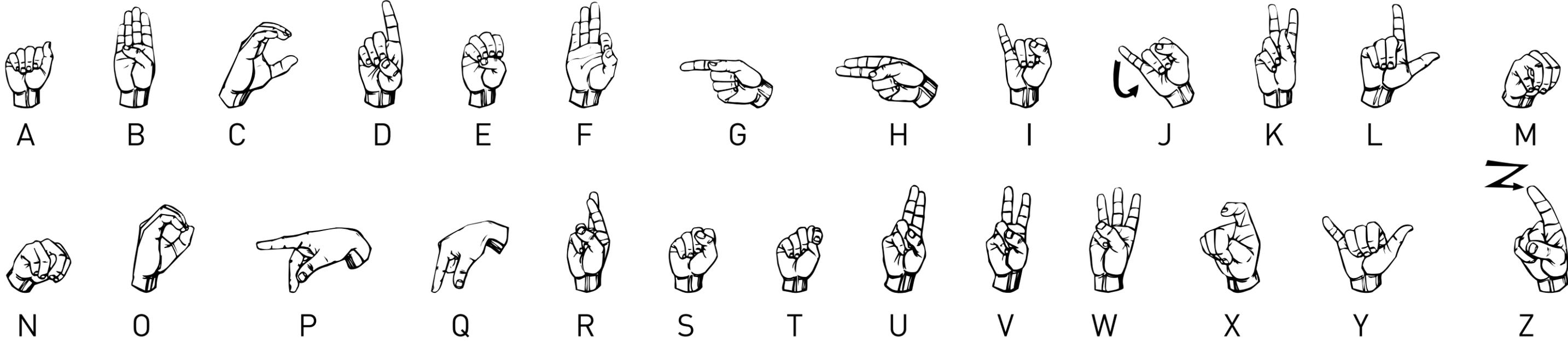
**LESSON 01 WORDS**

- AGAIN  
 - BAD/GOOD  
 - DEAF  
 - HE / SHE / IT  
 - HEARING  
 - HELP  
 - HELP-me  
 - HELP-you  
 - LEARN  
 - LIKE  
 - ME / I  
 - MEANING  
 - MEET  
 - NAME  
 - NICE  
 - NO

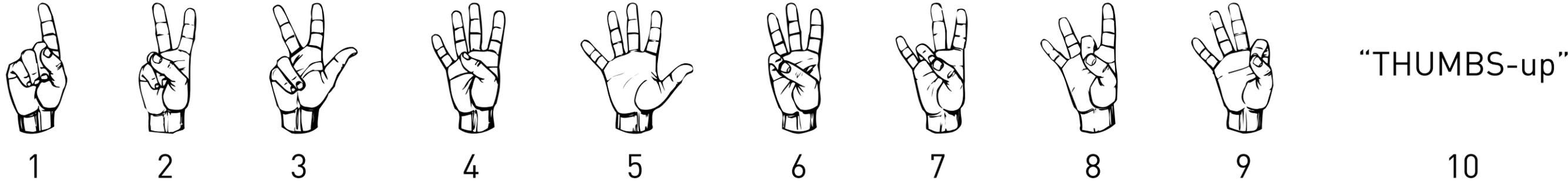
- NUMBER  
 - REVIEW  
 - SAME  
 - SIGN  
 - STUDENT  
 - TEACH  
 - TEACHER  
 - THANK-you  
 - THEY / them / those  
 - THIS / THERE  
 - UNDERSTAND  
 - WANT  
 - DON'T WANT  
 - WELCOME  
 - WE / us

- WHAT  
 - WHERE  
 - WHO  
 - WHY  
 - WORD  
 - YES  
 - YOU  
 - YOU-all

Alphabet



Numbers



# REVIEW | **LESSON 04**

ANGRY

AUNT

UNCLE

**BABY**

prefix to SON / DAUGHTER

SON

DAUGHTER

BEDROOM

[box / room]

# BRUSH-TEETH

CRY

# EXCUSE

also means FORGIVE, LAY-off, PARDON

FEEL

FRIEND

HAPPY

# HURT

also means PAIN, INJURY

IDEA

LOVE

SAD

SORRY

also means APOLOGIZE, REGRET

STOP

# WASH

(wash-car or wall vs LAUNDRY)

NEW WORDS | **LESSON 05**

CAN

**CAR**

#BUS

TRAIN

DRIVE

DRIVE-to

DRIVE-back-here

# CHURCH

# COMPUTER

DOCTOR

NURSE

# EMAIL

FRIEND

**GIVE**

HOME

# INTERNET

**IN**

OUT

OUTSIDE

MOVIE

**PLAY**

PUT

**MOVE**

SIT

STAND

STAY

STORE

WALK

WATCH

**WITH**

# VIDEO

REVIEW / ACTIVITY | **HOT POTATO**

## DIRECTIONS

- Take consecutive turns around the room and sign the words in the list
- If a sign is forgotten, no big deal. Anyone in the room can help the person remember the missing sign
- If nobody in the room remembers, the person who forgot the sign will start a new turn from the very beginning
- Try and get through the entire word list!
- **Pro Tip: It's completely okay to mess up, remember, this is a team effort, it's part of the learning process!**
  
- Expert mode: If a mistake is made, start over and try again
- Superhero mode: No mistakes and must be done within 3 minutes and 15 seconds

**LESSON 03 WORDS**

- ALL  
 - #ALL  
 - ASK  
 - ASK-to  
 - BETTER  
 - BEST  
 - BIG  
 - COME  
 - GO  
 - ATTEND  
 - GROW-up  
 - FAMILY  
 - CLASS  
 - GROUP  
 - TEAM  
 - CATEGORY

- FAVORITE  
 - FINE  
 - FROM  
 - HERE  
 - HOUSE  
 - CITY  
 - LIKE  
 - MORE  
 - NEED  
 - NOT  
 - SCHOOL  
 - SO-SO  
 - SMALL  
 - THINK  
 - THINK-about

**LESSON 02 WORDS**

- CHILD  
 - CHILDREN  
 - GIRL  
 - SISTER  
 - MOM  
 - GRANDMA  
 - WOMAN / LADY  
 - BOY  
 - BROTHER  
 - DAD  
 - GRANDPA  
 - MALE  
 - SINGLE  
 - MARRIAGE  
 - DIVORCE  
 - HAVE

- HIS / HER / it's  
 - HOW  
 - HOW-MANY  
 - MANY  
 - FAST  
 - SLOW  
 - SPELL  
 - FINGERSPELL  
 - WORK  
 - MY  
 - OUR  
 - THEIR  
 - YOUR

**LESSON 01 WORDS**

- AGAIN  
 - BAD/GOOD  
 - DEAF  
 - HE / SHE / IT  
 - HEARING  
 - HELP  
 - HELP-me  
 - HELP-you  
 - LEARN  
 - LIKE  
 - ME / I  
 - MEANING  
 - MEET  
 - NAME  
 - NICE  
 - NO

- NUMBER  
 - REVIEW  
 - SAME  
 - SIGN  
 - STUDENT  
 - TEACH  
 - TEACHER  
 - THANK-you  
 - THEY / them / those  
 - THIS / THERE  
 - UNDERSTAND  
 - WANT  
 - DON'T WANT  
 - WELCOME  
 - WE / us

- WHAT  
 - WHERE  
 - WHO  
 - WHY  
 - WORD  
 - YES  
 - YOU  
 - YOU-all

**LESSON 04 WORDS**

- ANGRY
- AUNT
- UNCLE
- BABY
- SON
- DAUGHTER
- BEDROOM
- BRUSH-TEETH
- CRY
- EXCUSE
- FEEL
- FRIEND
- HAPPY
- HURT
- IDEA
- LOVE
- SAD
- SORRY
- STOP
- WASH

**LESSON 05 WORDS**

- CAN
- CAR
- #BUS
- TRAIN
- DRIVE
- DRIVE-to
- DRIVE-back-here
- CHURCH
- COMPUTER
- DOCTOR
- NURSE
- EMAIL
- FRIEND
- GIVE
- HOME
- INTERNET
- IN
- OUT
- OUTSIDE
- MOVIE
- PLAY
- PUT
- MOVE
- SIT
- STAND
- STAY
- STORE
- WALK
- WATCH
- WITH
- VIDEO

CHALLENGE | **EARPLUGS FOR A DAY**

## DIRECTIONS

- Wear ear plugs for an entire day
- Write down anything related to deafness in a journal
- Bring back your findings for next class and share with your peers!
- Go the extra mile: share your findings via social media with the hashtag **#earplugsForADay**
  - Tag **@Learn\_ASL** and **@tobyfitch** on Twitter and **Visually Speaking** on Facebook
    - We'd love to share your stories!
- End goal: Experience what it is like to go through a hearing-dominant society as a deaf individual
- Quick resource: Actor John Barrowman goes deaf for a day for hearing dogs
  - [Read article](#)
  - [Watch video](#)

# RESOURCES

[www.tobyfitch.com/asl](http://www.tobyfitch.com/asl)