WHAT IS HEARING LOSS/IMPAIRMENT?

Hearing loss, also known as hearing impairment, is a partial or total inability to hear. A deaf person has little to no hearing. Hearing loss may occur in one or both ears. In children hearing problems can affect the ability to learn language and in adults it can cause work related difficulties. In some people, particularly older people, hearing loss can result in loneliness. Hearing loss can be temporary or permanent.

As of 2013 hearing loss affects about 1.1 billion people to some degree. Of those with hearing loss it began in 65 million during childhood.

- Hearing loss exists when there is diminished sensitivity to the sounds normally heard. The terms hearing impaired or hard of hearing are usually reserved for people who have relative insensitivity to sound in the speech frequencies. The severity of a hearing loss is categorized according to the increase in volume above the usual level necessary before the listener can detect it.
- Deafness is defined as a degree of loss such that a person is unable to understand speech even in the presence of amplification. In profound deafness, even the loudest sounds produced by an audiometer (an instrument used to measure hearing by producing pure tone sounds through a range of frequencies) may not be detected. In total deafness, no sounds at all, regardless of amplification or method of production, are heard.
- Speech perception - Another aspect of hearing involves the perceived clarity of a word rather than the amplitude of sound made by the word. In humans, that aspect is usually measured by tests of speech perception. These tests measure one’s ability to understand speech, not to merely detect sound. There are very rare types of hearing loss which affect speech perception alone.

Those who use sign language and are members of Deaf culture see themselves as having a difference rather than an illness. The term hearing impairment is often viewed negatively as it emphasizes what people cannot do. Use of the terms “hearing impaired,” “deaf-mute,” or “deaf and dumb” to describe deaf and hard of hearing people is discouraged by advocacy organizations as they are offensive to many deaf and hard of hearing people. When in doubt, ask the individual how they identify themselves.
FACTS

What causes Hearing Impairments?
Hearing loss may be caused by a number of factors, including: genetics, ageing, exposure to noise, pregnancy/delivery complications, trauma to the ear, some infections, and certain medications or toxins, while some causes remain unknown. Hearing loss is diagnosed when doing testing for poor hearing is recommended for all newborns.
The World Health Organization recommends that young people limit the use of personal audio players to an hour a day in an effort to limit exposure to noise. Early identification and support are particularly important in children. A common condition that results in hearing loss is chronic ear infections.

What are the different types of Hearing Impairments?
Hearing loss can be categorized as mild, moderate, severe, or profound. The severity of a hearing loss is categorized according to the increase in volume above the usual level necessary before the listener can detect it.
There are two primary categories of hearing loss in children;
- congenital (present at birth) and
- acquired (occurring after birth).

What treatment is available for Hearing Impairments?
For many Speech Therapy, Hearing aids, Sign Language, Hearing Assistive technology (HAT), surgical procedures, cochlear implants, subtitles, lip reading, other classroom accommodations are useful. Unfortunately not all of the treatments are available in every part of the world.

RESOURCES
- Speech Therapy, Hearing aids, Sign Language, Hearing Assistive technology (HAT), surgical procedures, cochlear implants, subtitles, lip reading, other classroom accommodations, Basic Communication Tips, Emergency Preparedness for People with Hearing Loss, Join the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA)
REFLECTIONS

Hands on activity: put on noise blocking headphones or use your hands to block out most sound while your partner reads a short story to you. After that answer questions your are asked about the story.

1.) How did you feel during this activity?

2.) What was the most frustrating part of this activity for you?

3.) How do you think you would feel if you had this challenge to face every day?

4.) Based on your experience in this activity, how would you interact differently when communication with someone who has a Hearing/Impairment?

FAMOUS PEOPLE
- Lance Allred
Born with over 75% hearing loss, Lance Allred was the first legally deaf basketball player in NBA history. He competed in the 2002 World Deaf Basketball Championship in Athens Greece, where he led Team USA to second place. He later played basketball at the college level in his home state of Utah and moved on to play for the Cleveland Cavaliers in 2008. He has since written a memoir called Longshot: The Adventures of a Deaf Fundamentalist Mormon Kid and His Journey to the NBA.

- Luis Miguel
At 46, Mexican superstar singer Luis Miguel has tinnitus, which he blames on 30 years of performing live music. The ringing in his ears led him to put his career on hold in late 2015 to undergo treatment. As he told a reporter in November, “It is a condition that I can overcome and I think I’m controlling it to my best ability with the support of my dear people, doctors and the public.”

- Lou Ferrigno
Best known as TV’s Incredible Hulk, actor and former bodybuilder Ferrigno, 64, lost 75 percent of his hearing at the age of 3 due to an ear infection. He’s worn hearing aids since he was 4. “I think my hearing loss helped create a determination within me to be all I can be, and gave me a certain strength of character, too,” Ferrigno told an interviewer in 2005.

- Rob Lowe
Undiagnosed mumps when he was a baby left Lowe totally deaf in his right ear. “Really loud restaurants drive me ballistic,” Lowe told the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. “I live in a mono world. I wish I could [hear in] stereo. But other than that, I don’t think about my hearing loss.’’

- Tamika Catchings
WNBA MVP and nine-time WNBA All-Star Tamika Catchings. As a child, she threw her hearing aids into a field after being teased at school. Her parents understandably upset, refused to buy her another pair. She developed an extreme work ethic in order to succeed in school without them and found her specialty on the basketball court. While playing for the University of Tennessee, coach encouraged her to begin wearing hearing aids again. Today, she plays for the Indiana Fever in the WNBA and the U.S. Women’s Olympic Team. She also started the Catch the Stars Foundation, Inc., which helps disadvantaged youth achieve their dreams.

- Bill Clinton
Like many boomers, Clinton ignored his hearing difficulties for years until doctors diagnosed him with high-frequency hearing deficiency, the most common form of hearing loss. Described as an inability to distinguish sounds in noisy, crowded situations with a lot of background chatter (such as restaurants, theaters or political rallies), it’s linked to aging and exposure to loud noise. Clinton now wears two in-canal hearing aids.

- Halle Berry
A victim of domestic violence some 20 years ago, Oscar winner Halle Berry lost 80 percent of her hearing in her left ear when an abusive boyfriend struck her repeatedly. She often speaks about her hearing loss to raise awareness and help other women break the cycle of violence.
- **Helen Keller**
  When she was nearly 2 years old Helen contracted an illness that left her with complete blindness and hearing loss. At age 7 Helen started her Education with Anne Sullivan, which greatly helped her broaden her understanding of the world (previously, she did not know that every object had its own name) Keller learned to speak and later became known for her speeches and lectures. She also became the first deaf-blind person to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree (1904).

- **Ludwig van Beethoven**
  One of the most famous composers of all time, Beethoven started to lose his hearing around age 26, not many years past before he nearly completely lost his hearing. At the end of his Ninth Symphony premiere, he was unable to hear the audience’s applause until someone turned him around to witness the overwhelming cheering (1824).

- **Michael Lizarraga**
  Born completely deaf did not stop him from making the basketball team as a walk-on at Cal State Northridge in 2007. It didn't even stop him from working his way up to starter for both his junior and senior years. He became one of the only deaf Division 1 NCAA basketball players in history. Lizarraga’s journey at Northridge even led him to his wife, who was a deaf studies student at the time. (Northridge’s National Center on Deafness serves about 200 students who are deaf or hard of hearing among an enrollment of more than 35,000 students at the university total.) Lizarraga is quoted to have said, “For me, my biggest dream was always to play for a Division I team. There were people who said I would never be able to do it. That made me more determined... I would say my favorite quote is, ‘Don’t tell me I can’t because I will.’”

Complete list of sources for this presentation:
- http://www.hearingloss.org/content/living-hearing-loss

- celebrities:
  http://www.aarp.org/health/conditions-treatments/info-2014/celebrities-with-hearing-loss-photo.html#slide1
  http://satoshitajiritribute.weebly.com/biography.html
  https://www.earq.com/blog/basketball-players-with-hearing-loss

- parent support:
  http://www.hearingloss.org/content/parents-children-hearing-loss-parent