



## Getting Started: Impacts of Etiology of Deafness on work in Mental Health Settings

**Target audience:** *Mental Health professionals working with Deaf individuals who wish to learn more about the implications of the etiology of deafness. This is not a comprehensive summary.*

- It is important to assess how a person became deaf. Each etiology impacts the developmental milestones differently. Cause and timing of how and when a person became deaf impacts their language acquisition and cognitive development. Some delays in language and cognitive development can mimic mental and behavioral symptoms. It's important to assess whether presenting problem is derived from deaf etiology and/or mental health issue.
- Etiology of Deafness can have concurrent neurological sequelae that can impact cognitive development, developmental milestones, language acquisition, language use, physical comorbidities, etc. that then also subsequently impact fund of information, family dynamics, and understanding of the world.
- Each etiology of deafness may present with some co-occurring difficulties, which can mimic some mental and behavioral health symptoms.
- Some common etiologies of deafness include:
  - Genetic
  - Complication of RH factor
  - Congenital Rubella Syndrome
  - Prematurity
  - Cytomegalovirus
  - Toxoplasmosis
  - Syphilis
  - Herpes
  - Meningitis

### For more information:

Crump, C. & Hamerdinger, S. (2017). Understanding etiology of hearing loss as a contributor to language dysfluency and its impact on assessment and treatment of people who are deaf in mental health settings. *Community Mental Health Journal*. 53(3). Springer.