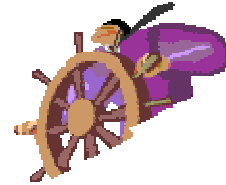


THE HELM



Myths About Deafness...

Like all minority groups, Deaf people suffer from stereotyping by many who do not know and understand them. A number of myths about Deaf people circulate widely in our society and get in the way of understanding between hearing and Deaf people.

MYTH: *All hearing losses are the same.*

FACT: The term “deafness” or “hearing impaired” covers a wide range of hearing losses that have very different effects on a person's ability to process sound and understand speech.

MYTH: *Hearing aids restore hearing.*

FACT: Hearing aids simply amplify sound. They have no effect on a person's ability to process that sound. In cases where a hearing loss distorts incoming sounds, a hearing aid can do nothing to correct this and may even make the distortion worse.

MYTH: *All deaf people can read lips.*

FACT: While some deaf people are very skilled lipreaders, 90% of deaf people do not read lips proficiently. This is because many speech sounds have identical mouth movements and are difficult to discern. On the average, lipreaders are catching approximately 25-30% accurately.

MYTH: *“Deaf & Dumb,” “Deaf Mute” are current terms to describe a person with a hearing loss.*

FACT: These terms are outdated and project a negative connotation of a person with a hearing loss. “Deaf” is the most common term used to describe a person with a severe to profound hearing loss; “hard of hearing” is used to describe a person with a mild to moderate hearing loss.

MYTH: *Deaf people do not drive.*

FACT: Deaf people drive, shop, work, raise families, pursue hobbies, educational opportunities, and political ideals like any other member of American society.