Audism and the Deaf Community: Deaf people’s experiences and Deaf Community Cultural Wealth

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Bridging the Gap:
Creating a Community of Support for Deaf Survivors

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Nancy Rourke, “Deaf Culture”
Oppressions

- Racism
- Sexism
- Heterosexism
- Classism
- Ableism
- Ageism/Adultism
- Audism

Nancy Rourke
“Audism”
Audism is the ideological stance that humanizes based on the ability to hear and speak while simultaneously dehumanizing the inability to hear and speak through the dominance of the social, cultural, political, linguistic, educational, and economic institutions that manifest itself in a complex weave of micro, meso, and macro-aggressions that leads to a system of over-privilege for those that can hear and speak and under-privilege for those who are Deaf.

Garrow. (2011) Personal communication.
Macroaggressions

- Macroaggression is the colonization of the social, cultural, political, linguistic, educational, and economic systems to establish, reflect, and reinforce the dominance of the hearing majority.

- Examples of macroaggression:
  - The Deaf Education system in America
  - Medicalization of Deaf people
Mesoaggressions

- Mesoaggression is the reinforcement through various institutions the dominance of hearing majority of our social, cultural, political, linguistic, educational, and economic systems.

- Examples of mesoaggression:
  - Phonocentric curriculum, pedagogy
  - Hearing-centric approaches for providing support to Deaf clients
Microaggressions

Microaggressions are brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative audist slights and insults toward Deaf people that establish, reflect and reinforce the dominance of the hearing majority.

Examples of microaggression:

- “I am so lucky I am not Deaf”
- “Your English is so good for a Deaf person”
- “A Deaf person cannot lead a university”

Definition adapted from Sue, Capodilupo, Torino, et al., 2007
There are no neutral positions with regards to power.

Hearing people do have power as members of dominant culture and use it all the time for better or for worse.

Hearing people are in positions of power; they are the only ones having access to both languages and cultures.

Hearing people need to recognize their power and use it responsibly.
...and thus we know

- Deaf people are systematically deprived of power by hearing people
- Historically, they have not had power to:
  - Communicate freely
  - Receive quality education in a fully accessible language
  - Gain respect for their language and culture
  - Possess voice in shaping policies and practices of institutions serving them
Possession of power is a required ingredient for people and institutions to be perpetuators of audism.
Internalized Audism
Examples of the Impact of Internalized Audism

• “My good ear”
• Not believing that they are capable
• Not recognizing ASL as beneficial for everyone in the U.S.
• Not having pride in self
• Cochlear implantation is ok as long as signed language is encouraged
Critical features of Internalized Audism

- Disempowers deaf people from becoming liberated
- Disables deaf people from expressing pride
- Intimidates deaf people and limits their promotion of Deaf perspective
- Denies deaf people full acceptance of ASL
- Weakens deaf people in the development of their Deaf identity

Gertz, 2008
Challenging Audism: Community Cultural Wealth

Adapted from Garrow, 2011 & 2012
Based on Yosso, 2005

Audist Framing

Critical Race Theory
DeafCrit

Exposing

Community Cultural Wealth

Social Capital
Familial Capital
Navigational Capital
Aspirational Capital
Resistant Capital
Linguistic Capital

Challenging
Linguistic Capital

- The intellectual and social skills attained through communication experiences in more than one language and/or style

Nancy Rourke “ASL Thrives”

Yosso, 2005
Social Capital

- The networks of people and community resources that provide instrumental and emotional support to navigate through society’s institutions

Nancy Rourke
“The Last Table Waiting”

Yosso, 2005
Familial Capital

- The cultural knowledges nurtured among *familia* (kin) that carry a sense of community history, memory, and cultural intuition that engages a commitment to community well being and expands the concept of family to include a more broad understanding of kinship.
Navigational Capital

- The skills of maneuvering through social institutions, namely the ability to maneuver through spaces not designed for Deaf people

Nancy Rourke
“Deaf Sidewalk”

Yosso, 2005
Aspirational Capital

- The ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, even in the face of real and perceived barriers

Nancy Rourke
Veditz Hope
Resistant Capital

- The knowledges and skills fostered through oppositional behavior that challenges inequality

Nancy Rourke
“We came, we saw, we conquered”
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References


