

Coulda, Woulda,
Shoulda: Presenting
Effective D/HH Panels for
Systems and Families

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A great panel is one where
everyone learns!

Everyone comes together
with compassion,
empathy, and support for
the family journey

Diversity considerations

- Diversity of:
- Gender
- .Communication and Language
- Occupations
- Life Experiences
- Continuum of School Placement
- Diversity of Hearing

And the secret ingredient to a collaborative, supportive panel:

Panelists who are open minded, respectful and

Accessibility:

Don't assume

Alert the planner
to your needs

Arrive early

Make sure the
set up is optimal
(in person or
online)

Request questions
ahead of time and
think about how
you will respond.

What Panelists need to know:

Find out who will be on
the panel with you.

Do you need to respond
to every question or take
turns?

Jot down some notes on
what you want to share.

Confirm date, time,
location or zoom link.



For the Panelists —how to open

Introduce yourself and share a little about yourself outside of your hearing; work, school, family, what you enjoy doing. Who are you as a person?

Briefly share about your hearing/communication as that is typically why you are on the panel.

Why? This will help teach families that their child is more than their newly identified hearing difference.

**Try not to tell your whole life story
in the introduction.**

Think about how you can tell more about
your journey as you answer questions
throughout the panel.

Questions and
responses should lead
to optimism and hope

Know your audience

Positive = Support

Positive:

- What is the **best** part about being d/hh?
- What was it like growing up d/hh in your family or community?
- How do you prefer to communicate?

Could be Challenging:

- What did you struggle with growing up?
- Were you teased or bullied?
- Why don't you sign or get a cochlear implant?

Quick Tips for Panelists:

- **Tips:**

- Use “I” or “in my experience” or “for me...” statements. Why? Because this panel is about your story -your journey. Families will have their own story/journey.
- You do not need to answer every question and you are welcomed to add on to others as it relates to the question.
- Pause and allow time for interpreters/transliterators to find the speaker in the zoom box.
- Consider answering questions that may support all families regardless of the language and communication path they have¹⁰

Positive Panel Questions:

- What encouragement would you give a parent who is just starting out on their journey?
- What was the best thing someone said, helped or did for you in school, work or in life?
- Did you meet other deaf/hard of hearing people growing up?
- How did your parent/s support you while growing ¹¹

When you feel stuck...

- **Answering difficult or challenging questions:**
- “This is my story. Yours will be different.”
- “This has been my experience”.
- “That has worked well for me.”
- “Does another person want to answer that question”?
- **Debating or defending yourself :**
- Think about your message
- Don’t monopolize –it’s a panel and not your presentation
- Let the audience know that you are happy to discuss the topic afterwards or by email.
- Share a resource or place

Young People Panels

- Young people are still learning and their answers may change as they grow.
- Remind the audience the panel will reflect their story, their journey, their truth and where they are in this moment.
- We are more than our “hearing” ask...

“What is your favorite activity or thing to do?”

Ask about:

- School
- Jobs/job interviews
- Independence
- Do they prefer a lot of friends or a few?
- Favorite Apps, technology outside of hearing technology.
- Favorite movie, book, tv show, games?

Fun Question for kids/teens

When it comes to your hearing-
who knows best about what you
need to do well? You or your
parents?

Who is the coolest
person you know?

Make it fun for everyone!

Ending on a good note:

This will help the audience get
ready to ask questions

If you could tell everyone
one thing what would it
be?

It can be about hearing or life, something you want
people to know. It can be serious or fun.

Share your wisdom!

Taking Questions From the Audience

- **In person:**
- Captioning and interpreters are visible to the panelists and the audience
- Use a microphone in a central location rather than a roving microphone
- Moderator should repeat back the question
- **Online, Video/Zoom**
- Assign someone to moderate questions in the chat.
- Combine similar questions.
- Pause, wait for the interpreters to find the speaker.
- Pin interpreters

Panel Planners and Moderators: A Checklist:

- Watch the time. Save time for questions from the audience.
- Be ready with back up questions if the audience doesn't have questions.
- Give the panel members time to respond.
- Watch for panel members that monopolize and others that may need encouragement to respond.
- Let the panel flow rather than control it.
- Prepare and plan questions
- Test technology and all moving parts
- Review and set up accessibility needs
- Ensure diversity of panelists
- Communicate expectations and questions to panelists prior to panel

A Checklist for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Panelists:

- Practice “Sharing Your Story” (in a brief way!)
- Request accessibility accommodations
- Arrive early! This helps with preparations and ensures accessibility needs are working
- Be mindful of the time you use to respond to questions
- Refrain from debates
- Be aware of experiences that may no longer apply to families today

More to explore:

Parent
Event
Additional
Guide:
DHH
Resources:

<https://www.handsandvoices.org/fl3/fl3-docs/EventGuide-final-7-2.pdf>

<https://www.handsandvoices.org/fl3/topics/dhh-involvement/resources.html>



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Have FUN!

Your experiences could impact
a family in a positive way

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