



**CONNECTING THE DOTS:  
DEAF COMMUNITY  
PARTICIPATION IN EHDI  
PROGRAMS**

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# AUTHENTIC INCLUSION

- Deaf community members – small in number, unique orientation
- Decision-making intentions are good – but
- Often exclusion has led to ineffective decisions leading to unacceptable outcomes
- Authentic inclusion
  - organized system of referral and access to the deaf community for all families
  - monetary compensation for the deaf community member who is providing a professional level of "care" to families
  - equal representation of deaf and hearing individuals



# AUTHENTIC INCLUSION

- Members of each states infant hearing program through representation on state advisory councils - same voting rights and responsibilities as other members
- Deaf community members as service providers in local early intervention systems - certified teachers, social workers, nurses, other health care professionals, mentors
- Organized system of deaf community members trained as family mentors and supported with professional pay scales – managed through state hearing screening program or state office for deaf and hard of hearing citizens
- Early intervention systems (state and local) to have a strong collaborative relationships (endorsed by and mandated by state Part C) with state schools for the deaf as a vital link to the deaf community in each state



# DEAF AND HEARING PARTNERSHIPS

A close look on History...

Research findings

Personal Experiences

Do Deaf People Need Hearing?

Do Hearing People Need Deaf?

History

- Gallaudet – Clerc
- ASDC
  - Family networking



# DEAF AND HEARING PARTNERSHIPS

- Families who have regular contact with deaf adults obtain significant benefits including Social Support, Improved Communication, Acceptance and Understanding (Meadow-Orlans, Mertens & Sass-Lehrer, 2003; Hintermair, 2000)
- English language performance better with experiences with Deaf Mentors (Watkins, Pittman, Walden, 1998)
- Social-emotional development supported by opportunities for interactions with Deaf adults/children (Calderon & Greenberg, 2003)
- Children/families in “Shared Reading Program” more frequent book sharing (Delk & Weidekamp, 2001)



# DEAF AND HEARING PARTNERSHIPS

- Typical experience: my mom's life
- We need each other because...
  - Parenting
  - Literacy
  - Social and Political connections
  - Modeling
  - Networking

And look at us.....



# PARENT TRANSITIONS

- The Importance of First Contacts
- Making Emotionally Healthy Decisions About Language and Communication
- Making Lasting Connections that Benefit Your Child and Your Family
- Being Involved in Your Child's Life



# TWO GENERAL TYPES OF DEFINITION FOR “DEAF COMMUNITY”

## 1. Clinical/pathological

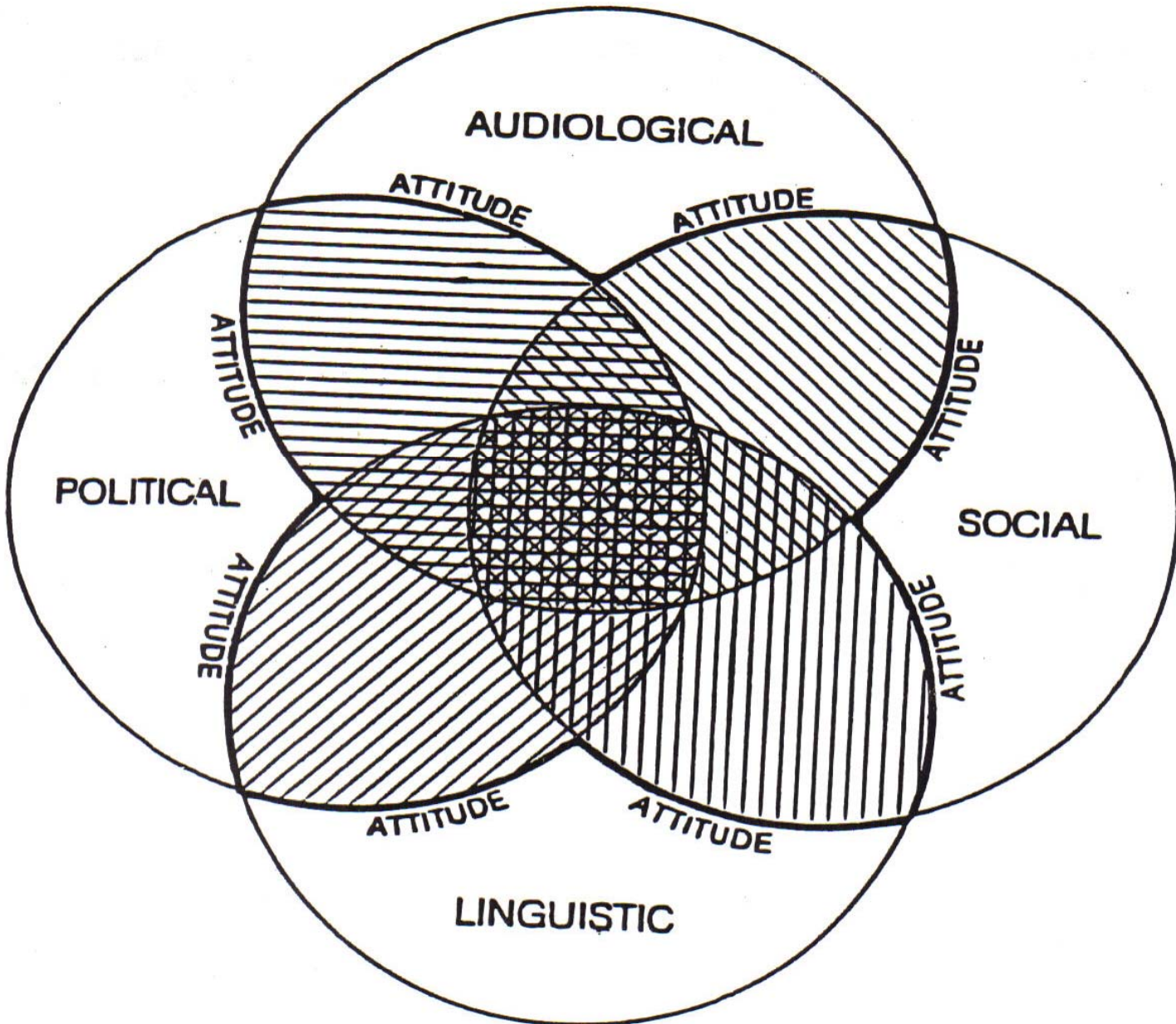
Takes the behaviors and values of the hearing majority as the “standard” or the “norm” and then see how Deaf people deviate from it.

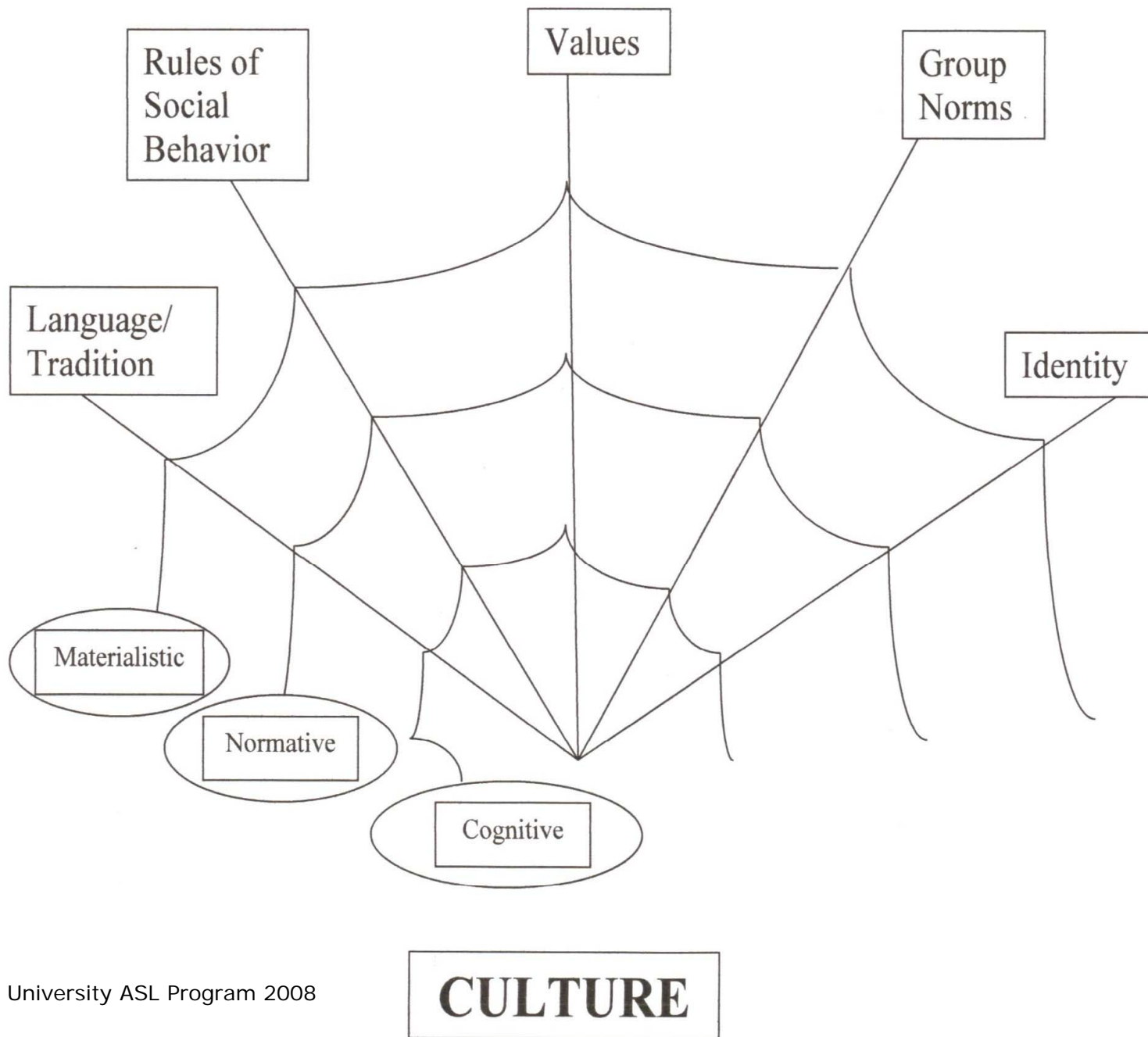
## 2. Cultural

Focuses on the language, experiences, and values of a particular group of people who happens to be Deaf.









# THE FITTING IN

*Where a person fits on the continuum depends on the coming together of many factors, such as:*

- Family and Community Support and Motivation
- Positive and empowerment image
- Opportunities to develop and use communication is abundant, valued, and natural.



# BUILDING BRIDGES

- Why did the deaf child cross the bridge?
  - To learn and develop into a well-rounded person
  - Connect family, education, identity
- Bridges take time and engineering to construct
- Need foundation, materials, tools
  
- Build in both directions
- Trust, dialogue, participation
- Common goal = child development



## ENCOURAGING DEAF COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO BE INVOLVED AND NEXT STEPS

- Welcome deaf community to EHDI meetings (provide ASL interpreters)
- Appoint ASL deaf member(s) to advisory committee
- Identify, develop, and advertise ASL resources for families
- Recruit, train, and retain deaf mentors for new families
- Recruit and train ASL families for family support system



CONNECTING Qs TO As

QUESTIONS?

