

Abstract No. 4.4 Wednesday 6th September 2017 at 12:00-12:45

Title: The art of sight

Presenter: Sylvia van Doorn, Royal Dutch Kentalis, Unit Deafblindness, The Netherlands

Co-presenters: Ans van Gulick, Annet Eikelboom and NN

Main focus: Mainly practice/Both congenital and acquired deafblindness

Abstract: At first, the exhibition 'The art of sight' was intended to bring deafblindness to the attention of municipalities, health insurance companies and citizens in a creative way. Pictures of flowers, made by a colleague, inspired us to find a way of making these pictures tangible. Flowers are part of our lives and obvious in terms of shape, smell and colour. We see them everywhere and at specific occasions. For people with deafblindness this isn't as obvious as for us.

The works of art in this exhibition are the result of an action-oriented and experiential form of therapy. This way of working is a specialized form of guiding which aims to support processes of change, development and/or acceptance within people with deafblindness. The experiences create awareness and new insights into their own potential and the development of skills, which are practical applicable in everyday life.

Not only in the area of tactility do people with deafblindness experience difficulties. They often have insufficient understanding of their personal abilities and skills. And besides this, they often also experience energetic problems which put a heavy break on participation.

Reflecting this we started to look for a way how creative activities and resources could be used to develop a training which takes into account the energy problems and in which one learns to consciously use tactility to get insight into ones personal capabilities and limitations and wherein one learns skills to develop themselves.

An example of the outcome of this way of working is a travelling exhibition 'The art of sight'. 15 Works of art, in which 15 people, 10-65 years of age with congenital and acquired deafblindness tell their story. Each work of art was inspired by a floral photo and is complemented by fragrances, text and braille and video clips that can be activated by scanning a QR code. By using the glasses that go with the diptych, visitors can see how the artist perceives the world. Workshops accomplish the exhibition in which creative therapy is explained and in which one can experience the world of deafblindness on a creative level.

6 Pieces of art out of 15 will be shown during the conference.