

Abstract No. 6.6

Thursday 7th September 2017 at 14:15-15:00

Title: Trapped In Deafblindness – The Story of A Man with Acquired Deafblindness

Presenter: Anette Kjær, CFD Councelling, Denmark

Co-presenters: Jette Mistegård Jørgensen

Main focus: Mainly practice/Acquired deafblindness

Abstract:

“I wish I could communicate with my surroundings and that my surroundings know how to communicate with me.”

We would like to tell you a story of a man who was born with Usher type 1. He was born profoundly deaf and he lost his sight when he was in his fifties. Now at 79 years of age, he is both deaf and blind and with a longing for interactive communication and social engagement.

His isolation is almost complete as people around him do not know how to communicate with him. His caretakers do not know how to sign and his lack of information of what is going on in the world, makes it difficult for him to understand, should somebody know how to communicate with him.

He experiences multiple psycho social consequences of living, such as frustration, depression and powerlessness.

In Denmark people are considered equal and are to be offered equal opportunities to realize their full potential.

This is proclaimed in the United Nations Convention on Rights of People with Disabilities and is also an important aspect of the social legislation and the overall healthcare system in Denmark.

That is what we like to think, but is it the truth?

It is both in the interest of society and the individual to live up to these values and it is expected that we all do our best to search for and use these possibilities.

Communication is a key word regarding individual welfare and identity. Persons, with severe progressive loss of sight and hearing who wish to be active citizens on equal term with every other citizen may not be able to be so due to serious communicational barriers. Dependence on others limits any chance of spontaneity and decreases the opportunity of living an ordinary life. We all want to control our own lives regardless of deaf blindness or other disabilities.

With a loss of sight and hearing it is not unusual for a person to feel isolated and alone.

Therefore it is of vital importance to be able to communicate with your surroundings.

However this is often difficult for people with severe progressive loss of sight and hearing because of lack of able communicators in their lives.

We want to discuss how we can give information to the environment in order for others to want to and to be able to communicate with a person with acquired deaf blindness.