

Poster

Title: Implementing Social Haptic Communication in the Netherlands. Partnership in development and training

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Main focus: Mainly practice/Acquired deafblindness, Both congenital and acquired deafblindness

Abstract: In the past few years Social Haptic Communication (R. Lahtinen, 2008) was introduced in the Netherlands by its developers Riitta Lahtinen and Russ Palmer. The participants who followed the workshops on Social Haptic Communication (SHC) were enthusiastic about the benefits of this holistic way of communication. But it is sad that Dutch potential users are still not acquainted with SHC and it is therefore not broadly used among them.

Striving to a more common use of SHC between people with deafblindness and their communication partners, professionals from four Dutch organizations started a shared project on SHC. The aim of the project was twofold, a) incorporating touch and environmental information during daily communication with people who are deafblind, for people with acquired deafblindness and for people with congenital deafblindness and b) using the expertise of people who are deafblind. To reach the project's aim, in a first phase a basic course in SHC was developed focusing on people with acquired deafblindness. The course includes the theoretical background and the training principles of SHC. Also a team of trainers was composed in which the trainers work in pairs including a person with deafblindness and a hearing-seeing partner. In a second phase of the project, the project group wants to investigate how people with congenital deafblindness may profit from (parts of) SHC.

In this presentation we will have a closer look at the shared project. We will

- illustrate the steps made during the process, in particular the cooperation between the experts with deafblindness and seeing-hearing professionals;
- share the issues discussed such as determining Dutch signs for the term SHC and the accessory terms Haptices and Haptemes;
- explaining concepts and principles for training;
- show the developed study material for lectures and participants.

We will invite participants to share tips and tops about working effectively and efficiently in own shared projects between people with deafblindness and seeing-hearing professionals. We are also curious if the principles of SHC are used with people with congenital deafblindness before. And if so, how? If not, why not?