

Building Trusting Relationships with Individuals who are DeafBlind



Adapted from the NCDB OHOA
Intervener Training Module

Trusting Relationships

- Trusting relationships are at the core of what it means to be human.
- Trusting relationships are based on *reciprocal interactions*. These are interactions in which:
 - two people take turns,
 - communicate about the same subject,
 - do not misunderstand each other, and
 - share their emotions.

Importance of Reciprocal Interactions

- Reciprocal interactions form the foundation of our well-being and quality of life.
- During childhood, particularly during infancy, reciprocal interactions with primary caregivers are the basis for healthy social, emotional, and communication development.
- Children need these experiences to feel safe and gain confidence to try new things and explore the world.

Relationship Challenges

- In students who are congenitally deaf-blind, the ability to interact in a reciprocal way is not as well developed as in hearing-sighted students.
- Because they live in a world of proximity and touch, reciprocal interactions can be challenging.
- Adult partners often have difficulty recognizing that a student's behavior is meant to express a thought or feeling.
- And even once they do recognize that the student is expressing something, they may have difficulty understanding the meaning of the student's expression.

Encouraging Reciprocal Interactions

The skills needed to engage in reciprocal interactions with students who are deaf-blind do not come naturally to most people, but they are the essence of ***everything*** that interveners do. These strategies are important:

- Observation: Sometimes a student's response is hard to recognize. You must stay focused on the student to notice a communicative attempt.
- Affirmation: How can you affirm a student with deaf-blindness who does not communicate in conventional ways and is unable to have eye contact with you? How do you acknowledge that you've "heard" him, that you know that he just communicated or did something?

Encouraging Reciprocal Interactions

In this presentation, you will have a chance to watch video examples of interactions with children and their adult communication partners. Notice how closely the adult partner looks for, affirms, and responds to the communicative behaviors of the individual.



Michael



Max



Autumn



Ray

Reciprocal Interaction: Video Example



This video shows an interaction in which Tina greets a student (Michael) who has cortical vision impairment, auditory neuropathy, and cerebral palsy.

What did you see? - Turn #2

- Michael took the next turn.
- He looked at Tina and then at the place where the bell had been.



Photo: looks at Tina



Photo: looks at place where bell was

What did you see? - Turn #3

- Tina then affirmed that she understood Michael's eye movements by ringing the bell again.
- Did you see Michael's response?
- Because the interaction is part of a familiar greeting ritual, he was able to respond more quickly than he would if it were unfamiliar to him.



Photo

Max and the Wipe



Autumn



[Audio Description](#)

Video 2: Chris and Ray



OHOA Deaf-Blind Intervener Learning Modules

A national resource designed to increase awareness, knowledge, and skills related to the process of intervention for students who are deaf-blind. Developed by National Consortium on Deaf-Blindness.

For more information, contact NCDB at info@nationaldb.org.



The contents of this presentation were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education #H326T130013. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the The Research Institute, nor the US Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government. Project Officer, Jo Ann McCann.