

FORUM

Editor, JRD:

I have received a number of comments from professionals in the field regarding the article I authored which appeared in the JRD for April 1974. Or, more specifically, I should say I have been taking a beating over the head and on the shins from those who resent my statement, ". . . I believe strongly that the counselor should have a deaf parent, preferably both parents being deaf. Only thus can he develop a deep understanding of the impact of deafness on the psychology, personality and lifestyle of the deaf person." Etc.

I meant what I said at the very end of the article, and must make reference thereto: "The brevity of the presentation precludes exhaustive detail and qualifications."

Hopefully you will permit me to amplify on this bone of contention, because it was certainly not my *intention*—although my use of words left much to be desired—to suggest that counselors who are not fortunate enough to have deaf parents cannot be excellent counselors with plenty of understanding. In my view, I would expect the counselor with deaf parents to be well trained; that he not be fixed in his perceptions of deafness—that is, he should understand that his particular parents probably are not models from which he could measure all other deaf people. For example, a counselor whose parents were orally educated, and well educated at that (or perhaps not well educated), should understand that they are merely one point in a spectrum that includes the full range of human aptitude, capabilities, innate intelligence, degree of hearing loss, time at onset, and the many other factors that make deafness one of the most complex of all disabilities. Given also an understanding of himself (and I pray that all counselors possess this trait!), and assuming that all other factors are equal, I believe that the counselor who has deaf parents would bring an added meaningful dimension to the client-counselor relationship.

Thanks and a tip of the hat to all those who commented. I value the feedback even when it leaves me ruefully wondering how I could goof so badly. (And I did try to correct some goofs, but they reached the editor too late!)

Sincerely,

ROBERT G. SANDERSON, Ed.D.