

# IMPACT PROFILE

## Deaf & Hard-of-Hearing (DHoH) Mental Health Topics in Medical Education

Including DHoH mental health education in medical school curriculum will prepare future physicians to provide accessible, equitable mental healthcare for patients with hearing losses.

### The Challenge

Although nearly one-quarter of Americans live with hearing loss, clinicians receive little training in how hearing loss shapes psychiatric care. As a result, Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing (DHoH) patients are often underserved, and hearing loss is treated as an accessibility issue rather than a clinical competency. This medical knowledge gap can contribute to misinterpretation of the mental status exam, leading to misattributed symptoms, diagnostic errors, and patient mistrust.

### The Approach

#### Pilot Intervention:

- 90-minute lecture designed and delivered by a deaf psychiatrist who leads a DHoH-focused clinic
- Delivered to WashU Medicine Phase 2 students in the Psychiatry clerkship in 2026 academic year (n=125)

#### Content

- How hearing loss affects mental health from a biopsychosocial perspective
- Adapting the mental status exam and collaborating with a sign language interpreter

#### Evaluation:

- Identical pre- and post-lecture surveys
- Assess knowledge, attitudes, and self-perceived preparedness in providing care for DHoH patients

#### Dissemination:

- Design evidence-based, validated interactive module to share with other medical schools

### The Impact

This curriculum addresses a key gap in medical training by improving competencies in DHoH psychiatric care. Enhancing medical trainees' knowledge, preparedness, and attitudes may reduce communication barriers, improve diagnostic accuracy, and strengthen care quality for DHoH patients. Scaled dissemination could support broader curricular integration and inform future clinical guidelines.

## RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

In early implementation (n=30):

- **Knowledge scores**, regarding epidemiology & best practices, **increased by 22 percentage points**
- Self-perceived **preparedness increased by 25%**
- **More favorable attitudes** toward DHoH patient care

### Key Benefits

This **DHoH Mental Health Education** project will result in **Community** and **Clinical** benefits.



Community

**Health care accessibility:** Increased clinician competency in adapting communication and the mental status exam for DHoH patients. *Demonstrated.*



Community

**Health care quality:** Enhance diagnostic accuracy and patient-clinician communication by addressing training gaps in DHoH mental health care. *Potential.*



Community

**Health care delivery:** Increase access to culturally and linguistically appropriate psychiatric care for DHoH patients through a better-prepared workforce. *Potential.*



Clinical

**Guidelines:** Inform future clinical guidelines and standards for adapting psychiatric evaluation (e.g., mental status exam) for DHoH patients. *Potential.*

#### The team:

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