**The following is a transcript of a virtual Roundtable Discussion with DHH Adults that took place on June 22, 2021 in Virginia. The transcript was provided to Virginia Hands & Voices by Virginia Relay. Call moderator was Jill Young, Communications Chair of Virginia Hands & Voices. The panelists included Emilie Mulholland, Erik Nordlof, Reba Poole and Eric Raff.**

>> JILL: All right. You know what, it's 8:35. So I think I'm going to go ahead and take the lead and get this started. So we have enough time to talk this evening. So thank you, everyone, for joining us this evening. Thank you for coming to the roundtable discussion with deaf and hard of hearing adults. For this presentation, we ask that you turn off your videos. And mute your microphones. And the only people that you should see on your screen are going to be the five panelists that we have this evening. And also the interpreters. For those of you that are using remote conference captioning, we have a captioner with Hamilton Relay. I believe her name is Abbi. And all you have to do is at the bottom of your screen is click on the CC button. And you should be able to see the captions. We also have two interpreters with us this evening. Paulina and Rachel will be interpreting. They are with Civic Access. And we hope to see Paulina again. Is she still here? Maybe she turned her video off. Yeah. Okay. Perfect. All right. Let me introduce myself. My name is Jill Young. And I am on the board of Virginia Hands and Voices. I am the Communication Chair so I run the Facebook page. And I will be your moderator this evening. And I will also be one of the panelists. Let me see. We see that we have a lot of names here tonight. And I know some of you are new. And I just wanted to tell you a little bit about Virginia Hands and Voices. Hands and Voices is a national organization. It's a non-profit organization that is run by parents. Of children with hearing loss. And we support parents who make decisions about what communication methods they need to pick for their child and we say that whatever choice you make for your child is the right one for you. So having said that, there are basically four different types of communication methods that we're talking about this evening. One of them is listening and spoken language. It's often seen as LSL. LSL is used when only the auditory hearing is used to learn how to speak. So the residual hearing is what is used when you learn how to speak. In Cued Speech, you will see handshapes and cues that surround the face that help you distinguish between words or even sounds that can look alike or sound alike. So it is both a visual and auditory method of communicating. American Sign Language is also known as ASL. It can be used exclusively as a visual language. Usually, you do not use any residual hearing to be able to hear and understand ASL. And the fourth one is total communication. Which is a sign language and a spoken language that are used simultaneously. So that's generally when we talk about the method, that's generally what we're kind of leaning toward. Our goal this evening is to introduce you to a variety of deaf and hard of hearing adults who have used one or more of those communication methods. We have this evening Reba Poole, Emilie Muholland, Eric Raff, and Eric Nordlof. I'll see if I can get this started. At the end, if we have some time, I'll see if I can open it up to any questions that can come from you all. And if you want to, you're more than welcome to use the chat box at the bottom of your gene to type in any questions that come up and if any panelists see these questions, we can try to answer them while we're talking. And if we don't see them, we will try to address it at the end. Okay? All right. So the first thing that I'm going to do is I'm going to have each of us introduce ourselves. And I want you to whatever you're comfortable with tell us how you lost your hearing. And, you know, when you were identified with hearing loss. And what method you used when you were growing up. And then also what method you used today, whether that is the same or different as the one that you grew up with. And I don't mind starting. I'll start and then I'll just pick somebody. I'm going to tell you, I am Jill. And I used LSL growing up. I was listening and spoken language. I developed hearing loss when I was 1. Due to meningitis. And I was 2 before my parents realized that I had hearing loss. So today I am a pediatric audiologist. And I use a cochlear implant in one ear. And I have a cross hearing aid in the other ear. And I consider myself more of a total communication user today. And I'll just go to Reba because you're the first person on my screen. >> Okay. Go ahead. >> REBA: Okay. So I'm Reba Poole. I have a deaf family. We're generationally deaf for many years. My parents are deaf. My grandparents are deaf. My mom's side and my grandmother married a hearing man. And, but his parents were deaf. So we just have always used the same language growing up. We were all completely deaf. We all went to deaf schools. Like, I went to the Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind. I went to Gallaudet for college. I was completely in the deaf world. Immersed in the deaf world. My mom decided that, you know, we would go to a hearing church. And so it was -- that was a challenge for us. I was the only deaf person in this classroom. So I had to accept and learn how to work in that world. I felt kind of isolated in that scenario. I learned to accept what it was like to be in a hearing world. And I got better over time and I grew up and then I got used to being around hearing people. And I thank my mom for teaching me. I am not skilled at using my voice. On account of being deaf. And my family doesn't -- my dad is very, very deaf. Really no one in our family uses spoken English at all. We passed the use of our language down for generations. I went to Gallaudet, as I said. And, but sometimes when I was in a hearing classroom, I would be frustrated because communication would be difficult. And I felt a bit isolated and I would read books and sometimes I didn't understand what, you know, there was miscommunication. Especially when we would go to this church. But when I was at the deaf school, that was a much more empowering situation to be in. As far as being -- having access to communication. And I didn't really mainstream in school. But I went to, like, a special sort of class in order to, like, work on speech. And, but I failed that. That didn't really work for me. So, I learned, you know, I learned well. So I had that stint out of the deaf school but ended up ultimately going back to the deaf school. I did have to learn how to join the hearing community and what that was like. I used to be very passive. Now I'm more assertive in using language. And so I've gotten, yeah, so that's kind of me. I don't know if I answered all the questions. I'm open to any questions that any people -- anyone might have. >> JILL: Thank you. Thank you, Reba. I just basically want to do a quick introduction right now booem get to some questions in a minute. Let's move to Emilie. >> EMILIE: Hi, my name is Emilie. I'm a Cued Speech user. I do know how to sign and use spoken language as well. I am profoundly deaf and have cochlear implants. I got them ten years ago. I was born with a mild to moderate hearing loss. And it was progressive and it is also genetic in my family. So half my family has a hearing loss. And the other half does not. I have cousins, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, that have hearing losses as well. But we are all different levels. And we all progress at different rates. I was the first one who was born with a hearing loss in place already. And I have a son. I have three children. One who is also profoundly deaf. And she was born with a profound hearing loss. As well. So it's a very strong gene in my family. But it's still a 50/50 chance with every person who is born, whether they will have a hearing loss or not. I started off being oral until I was in 7th grade when my hearing loss got worse. And classrooms got bigger. And harder to understand teachers and student discussions. And we happened to learn Cued Speech the summer before because my mom met a family who used it. So we learned that summer and got Cued Speech set up in the school for me and my sister who is also deaf. And I have been using a combination of Cued Speech and spoken language ever since. Even today, I use Cued Speech transliteraters in big in-person meetings. Just so I don't miss any information. And I currently work as an early interventionist for parents who have a child with a hearing loss. >> JILL: Thank you, Emilie. How about Eric Nordloff. >> Eric: Can you hear me? >> JILL: Yes. >> ERIC: Hi, I'm Erik Nordlof. I lost my hearing to bacterial meningitis when I was 2 years old. My parents and I moved to central Missouri where attended oral deaf education. I grew up speaking and I mainstreamed in third grade. In middle school and high school, I attended a deaf teen club in St. Louis. And that's where I learned sign language. So I would say I continued to speak all my life. But I complemented that with sign language. And I've lived in Virginia for the past 11 years. And I've been involved with both the signing and speaking deaf communities. Also, I have one cochlear implant. It's a partial implant. And so I don't have full hearing in that particular implant. >> JILL: Thank you, Erik. If you guys didn't realize, we have two Erics tonight. You're going to hear me say Erik Nordlof and Eric Raff. As weird as it is, it's so they both know who I'm talking about when the interpreter signs their name. All right. Let's ask Eric Raff, what do you want to share with us? >> ERIC RAFF: Thank you. Thank you, good evening. My name is Eric Raff. I was born deaf. I'm not sure when I was diagnosed exactly. Maybe it's neurofibrosis that could be the cause. Either type 1 or type 2. My parents thought I had neurofibrosis. When I got my brain scan, they found there was no sign of that. So my parents were like, hmm. There's no neurofibrosis. Ever since then, we still don't know the cause. I was born during the rebel generation. I did not experience that myself. In the past, they would call it the oral approach. Now they say LSL. That's what I was taught growing up. Relying on listening and speaking. I used hearing aids at that time. And then I entered Gallaudet University and my entire world changed. I became immersed within the deaf community. I was able to learn. And then I slowly shifted to total communication. Where I was using my voice as well as sign language. Because my peers had a similar background as well. They grew up orally then learned sign later. Upon graduation, I went back home to Kentucky. And then I really got involved with the grassroots community, grassroots deaf community there. And that's when I came fully immersed in ASL. And now I typically use sign language. But I will code switch. Depending on who I'm talking to at the time. If they're a deaf person with an oral background, I may use a more total communication type of approach versus signing with someone who is more fluent, then I'll match their language as well. So really depends on who I'm communicating with. With my hearing boss, though, I do tend to use English. Spoken English. But I always have an interpreter. Because even though I may be able to speak, a lot of hearing people misunderstand and assume that means I can hear as well. But, no, I'm still deaf. So I stopped using my hearing aids about ten years ago. I have a very rare condition. It's called noise-triggered confusion. Sorry, noise-induced confusion. Vertigo. Noise-induced vertigo. That's the interpreter jumping ahead. So when using my hearing aids, that would cause me to feel very dizzy. Once I removed them, I was fine. Then I noticed when I put them back on, I'd be dizzy again. I went to the ear, nose and throat doctor. Then they told me that my only solution was to get a cochlear implant. But I realized that the noise was what was triggering my dizziness. So then I decided just not to use my hearing aids from then on out. So I haven't used hearing aids for cochlear implants or anything of that nature. I just sign and, you know, depend on technology. >> JILL: Thank you, Eric. Okay. So let me start off by asking a question and any of you panelists that would like to answer it, you can just jump in. What age did you realize that you first had a hearing loss? How old were you? When you realized you had a hearing loss. Not when your parents found out you had a hearing loss. When did you realize that you couldn't hear the same? Anybody? Okay. Eric Raff. >> ERIC RAFF: I mean, since I was born, I've been deaf. I'm fully deaf. I can't hear anything. So I -- I really just depend on vibrations. That's all. I know others may have been born hearing and lost their hearing over time. I was born completely deaf. So I hear nothing. >> JILL: Eric Raff. >> ERIC RAFF: It's hard to say exactly when. I did notice when I was pretty young, I'd say maybe 4 or 5. I was socialized with other kids. Other hearing children. And I think that's when I started to realize, hmm, maybe I'm different. Because I couldn't hear what they were saying. I have a feeling this is around anywhere between 4 and 6, that age range. It's hard to pinpoint exactly where. I was definitely young. That's when I realized I couldn't hear. >> JILL: I picked the same age right around preschool. I picked it because I had an older brother and younger brother with normal hearing. And my older brother was only a year older than me. And I realized that he didn't have to go to the same class that I had to go to. When he was in preschool and kindergarten. I realized about that time I was getting some special services that he didn't have to have. >> I'll share. I think it's a hard question to answer. I don't think I have a direct answer. But I think when I mainstreamed in 3rd grade, there was a trial period where I went to a private school before I mainstreamed into a local public school. So I think that probably exposed me to hearing peers. It was probably a very accommodating environment in terms of teachers knew how to talk to me. And how my peers and I could talk with each other. So I think I needed an environment where I became more conscious of my hearing loss in that particular environment. >> EMILIE: I think for me the first real realization was probably in fourth grade when I had moved from one elementary school to another because I had all new people and new friends. And I struggled a little more in the classroom because it was also my first male teacher. And I have more trouble with male voices. And I recognize that my peers were wondering why I didn't catch what the teacher said or asking all the time, oh, what page are we on? Because I missed the number. And such. But the first time I think I realized, like, oh, I am deaf without my hearing aids, like, this is really there, it was probably in middle school. Like I said, when my hearing got worse. And I had a harder time in bigger classrooms. And had to rely, or just needed more visual input to be able to understand what was going on. That was when I felt like I really recognized what I needed to succeed. >> JILL: Can any of you tell us about a time where your parent had to advocate for you? In an educational setting. >> ERIK: I can. When I mainstreamed, I used -- in elementary school, that was a whole hassle because I kept sending it back and getting it back and it still would not work. I think in middle school I started using CART captioning assistant. But I had a hard time getting it for every classroom because special school district in my area was not familiar with it. It was a little bit costly and they were trying to encourage me to use an interpreter. I did not know sign language at the time. And I was also a heavy reader. So I had to demonstrate to I guess the IEP people that that was the case. That I was a big reader. I could keep up with a live transcription. So I, you know, my parent and I worked together to practice my advocating personally in front of them. And with that, I was able to get CART all the way through middle school and high school. And thankfully in college, it wasn't as much as a chore to get. >> JILL: Emilie? >> EMILIE: Yes, the biggest one I can think of for my parents is we had to switch from being oral to using Cued Speech transliteraters. I'm actually from a small town in Utah is where I grew up. So the idea of Cued Speech was brand-new. Because we were the first family in the whole state to utilize it in a school setting. So it was a big fight to get the teachers and administrators to understand that my needs had changed enough that I needed something else. And this is what we chose and what we were going to use. I also had my mom and dad help me in driver's ed because the driver's ed teacher felt that deaf people shouldn't be able to drive. So we had to fight a lot with that. And even though I should have passed, the test, he failed me and I ended up having to take it from the state instead of through the school. Because of that. But that went, like, all the way up to the superintendent and it was a tough battle to say no, I can drive. It shouldn't be a problem. So there's been lots of little battles here and there because we were in a small town that didn't know much about deaf and hard of hearing education. Let alone Cued Speech as well. >> JILL: My mom also had to pave the way for me because I grew up in a really small town in Iowa. And they had never had anybody like me go through their system before so I remember it was a lot of hard work. But one thing that I remember in particular was I had to go to meet with a therapist. Like, once a week. And there was a lady that would come to the school and she was an oral rehabilitation therapist. She was basically teaching me how to listen and I remember whenever I had to see her, they would pull me out during specials because they didn't want me to miss science or math or some really important subject. And it was so devastating to me because specials was my favorite part of the day. It was art. It was music. It was PE. And I remember one day just crying and being really upset because I was missing specials again. And my mom came into the school and she had to fight for them to give that to me because I needed it. And so, you know, yes, science was important. But I needed to be happy. So that was really something sweet that I just remembered that she did. Okay. Tell us, do you have any positive, negative, or -- positive/negative social experience that you want to share? And how you learned from it. Eric Raff? >> I'm going to try to pin him. Try to pin you, but it's not allowing me. Let me see if I can drag it. Okay. Okay. Try. It's small. >> JILL: Okay. Thanks, Rachel. >> ERIC RAFF: I education -- >> JILL: Rachel -- >> ERIC RAFF: I grew up in the -- >> JILL: Hey, Rachel, I don't know if it's just me, but you're cutting in and out. Is it just me? Oh, sorry. Sorry, Eric. I can -- sorry. Sorry. I thought you were cutting in and out for a minute there. But let's try this again. Eric Raff? You can go ahead and try again. Yes. >> ERIC RAFF: Sorry about that. Let's see. So, you know, I grew up in the '70s like I said. IDEA had just been passed. And we had these new regulations and my parents weren't quite sure, like, what that meant. They didn't really have all the resources. There weren't -- wasn't an interpreter. We didn't have an -- I didn't have an FM system. We didn't have these kind of things available. And my mom would go every year, she would meet with every single one of my teachers. And review the course work. Explain to the teachers. Arrange a place where I would be sitting at the front of the class. That way I could see the teacher and see her face to be able to read the lips of the teacher. And it was a wonderful experience to have my mom advocate for me and provide that access for me. I didn't like having to sit in front of the class. I wanted to sit in the back of the class. But that's the way it was. So, you know, I had to see the teacher's face so I could read their lips. And that way I could see the board. The blackboard. And see what -- when the teacher would look to the blackboard and write and talk without looking at me, honestly, I couldn't -- I didn't know what they were saying. So I had to really advocate for myself about those needs. And, you know, I daydreamed in class a lot. I didn't really pay attention. I passed notes to other kids and write notes when I was supposed to be paying attention. But that's kind of my experience. And I learned through reading basically. So that kind of was my experience. You know, I -- everyone else was hearing. In the classroom. My parents, especially my mom, was a real advocate for me and looking back on that, especially for high school, there was a lot of frustration for me. There weren't enough resources. And there was carbon paper so that way I could get a note taker to take notes. And then they could give me the other copy. That was really helpful. So a student would write the notes. But unfortunately, I always got a lousy note taker so then we tried recording. To see if that would work. And then that recording would be given -- I would take that home to my mom and then my mom or my sister would listen to the two-hour or three-hour recording and take notes for me. They'd do this every night for me. And give me those notes. And then I would read those notes the next morning in school. So that's how I got through high school. In some of those methods, kind of an old-fashioned approach to making it through school. But I think, you know, many thanks to my mom, my sister, for helping me through that time period. >> JILL: Reba. >> REBA: Yeah, mine is a little bit different of an experience coming from a deaf school. You know, growing up in that situation is very different. So some things are similar. That you're talking about. But sometimes we would get a teacher that didn't sign very well or used home sign communication. And they were supposed to have teachers that were able to sign, but occasionally, you know, that wasn't the case. And that was difficult. I would miss what they were saying. I wouldn't know -- and I would get upset about it. And I'd be, like, why, you know, what is going on? Sometimes a teacher -- so I remember that at that time. I think -- I went to an oral class. I didn't really understand what was going on at all. You know, I came from a really strong deaf family. Where everyone at home could sign and didn't use any speech. So that was really difficult for me. So, you know, speech was something that I didn't really connect with at all. And I -- even though I went to this class, tried to teach me, I tried to learn. I finally had to give up. And, you know, I was so frustrated. It didn't work for me in that situation. But, you know, I think about teachers. I think, you know, I'm not sure how it is now from teachers. I think a lot of them, I didn't understand a lot of teachers that were trying to use speech. Sign was always the better way for me. And some couldn't sign. And they would, like, point to stuff a lot. And direct in that way. Kind of sort of an aggressive sort of way. But speech, reading, it was very difficult but it was part of that back then and I think it's a lot better now. At my time period, it was, you know, a different time period than it is now. I think there's a lot more resources now. >> JILL: So let's -- did any of you change your views about being deaf or hard of hearing as a child transitioning into an adult? Did any of you change how you viewed yourself? Yes, Erik Nordlof. >> ERIK: So growing up speaking and going to an oral deaf school, I think I grew up with the mentality that speaking was better than signing. And it took being part of a deaf teen club in St. Louis to be exposed to other deaf people and to become friends with them to make me realize that it was not a healthy mentality. That's why I learned sign language. Things I do today are an effort to bridge gaps, that so-called gap. Like in the D.C. area I advocate for open captioned movies. Deaf people all around benefit from that kind of thing. That's an example of how I've evolved since my childhood. >> JILL: Emilie? >> EMILIE: Pretty similar as well. I remember when I first got my first job at 14, working at the courthouse as an assistant, they were asking about my hearing loss. And I was like, no. I'm not deaf. I'm not hard of hearing. I'm fine. I don't need anything. Because I didn't want a label. But shifting to an adult, after I got out of my rough teenage years because they -- it was just rough. I learned that it's fine to have -- it's good to have that identity to be able to tell people this is what I need. And I will do my job well. Or I will be -- do my best. But, you know, it's a two-way street. You want this, I also need help with this. And I also know sign language because a deaf girl moved to my town the same year I started using Cued Speech. And she was ASL only. No voice. We were the only two of the three children with a hearing loss in the whole school district that had a hearing loss. And so we -- I became really good friends with her and learned to sign with her. And so now I try to adjust to -- I code switch. Like Erik Nordlof, I think it is, I code switch to meet whoever I'm trying to communicate with. I feel that was important. Once I learned that early intervention, told my mom a long time ago, that she must do spoken language. If she does sign language, I will not learn to speak or read. I will always be behind. Which we now know this is not true. At all. There's research that shows that. And once I learned that and met many of my deaf friends in college and learned their parents were told similar things, or people didn't know about Cued Speech or what, I felt strongly parents needed to know more information and have the ability to choose for themselves what they think might work. And if they find it doesn't, they need the support to be able to find what does work. We don't know what will or won't work until we try something. But once we see if it's not working, it's okay to make the changes to make it work. And so that's part of why I became early interventionist because I felt parents were often told you must do this, this, this, and this. Or your child will fail. Basically. And that's not okay to do. So, yes. It's -- >> JILL: I like that. That's great advice. I think our parents need to hear that. That's great advice. Do you guys have anything to add? What else do you wish parents knew? I think Reba had a question. Reba? >> REBA: Yeah. I have a question, Emilie. I'm just curious, I don't know much about Cued Speech or that kind of thing. So are you speaking -- so did the Cued Speech help you learn to be able to talk better? Like, that actually helped you be able to speak better? I'm just curious about that because I don't know much about that topic. But did that help you actually be able to articulate better? >> EMILIE: So Cued Speech helped me to see more different sounds in there. But it doesn't teach me where to put my tongue to make a certain sound. Or how to make a certain -- how to do B and L together with my mouth. You need a speech therapist to do that. And support for that. Cued Speech just helps you see all the consonant sounds. And the vowel sounds. The basic ones. And not all the tricky little ways of how you say all those different sounds in there. >> JILL: That was a really good question, Reba. Thank you. >> REBA: Yeah, this is one of the first times for me to see this actually being used in person. And so I just wanted to ask you because, yeah, this is fascinating. >> JILL: Do any of you -- Emilie gave great advice for parents. Do any of the rest of you have any advice you would give out? Erik Nordlof, I see your hand going up. >> ERIK: Okay. So I typed up something, actually. But I'll try to summarize it a little bit. So I think that if you are a hearing parent, you will never 100% be in your deaf child's shoes. It's worth making the effort to do that. Because I know a hearing parent have their own lives. And they're so engrained in predominantly hearing society. And how the fact that when you speak and, it's like a very easy two-way street. So for me, it's helped my parents to try to be aware of what environments work for me. How my interactions should go. Like, I think it helps if you can empower the child to figure out how to best deal with the environment. Like, picking the most quiet corner of a restaurant. Or the right seat at the table. Or perhaps if you're dealing with family members, you know, there's something called the table syndrome where a deaf person can be lost at a very big table of relatives. So I think of ways to change that to where maybe there are smaller tables. Or where a deaf child can hang out with a family member one-on-one. Or something. So there can be a better connection. Because basically, situations are going to be challenging for us. I think parents should constantly try to be mindful of that. No matter whether they're deaf, themselves, what would my child experience and have a conversation with your child about that. And at the end of day, sometimes we will be tired from having to interact with people. So we'll need a break. So give us a break, please, sometimes. >> JILL: Thank you, Erik. We have a couple of questions that showed up in the chat. Eric Raff, did you want to add something? Go ahead. >> ERIC RAFF: Yeah. I'd just like to add two cardinal rules. For parents to be aware of. Never tell a deaf child, oh, I'll tell you later. That is number one. And never say, never mind. That's where deaf children can feel devalued. As if something's not important enough for me to know. Those are my two cardinal rules for any parent of deaf children. >> REBA: Yes, I agree completely. Yes. That's so true. I've seen the same things. I faced the same things many times. Be, like, what did they say? I'll tell you later. Then they never tell me. They'll forget about it or whatever the case may be. They'll just be carrying on conversation and then I'm never in the loop. They'll always say, oh, whenever we're done, I'll tell you later, just wait, wait. I'll tell you later, then it never happens. So, yeah. I agree with what you said. It's very true. It's very common. Especially in group situations. It's the worst. With all the conversations going on around you. You feel left out. What they're talking about. I prefer to be in a space where there's signing as well. And so we can all communicate better. Really, if you want to get deeply involved within the deaf community, learn how to sign. One of the best ways to get connected. Even though there are some deaf people that do use spoken language, sign language is always really helpful. And that way if you know both, everyone is in the conversation. Can understand what's going on. Or get an interpreter. Whatever you need. So that's the best, in my opinion. >> JILL: Thank you, Reba. We have a couple questions here in the chat that I was hoping we could take a few minutes to answer. The first one I can see is what would you tell your young child self knowing what you now know as an adult? >> EMILIE: I would love to touch on that. I would tell my young self to not be afraid to tell people what I need. Self-advocacy is not being selfish. It's not -- oh my gosh -- inconveniencing other people. It's just telling people what I need to be able to be a part of the conversation. What I need to be able to say, hey, just like at a restaurant, can we not go to this restaurant? Can we try this one instead? Because the lighting sucks at the other one. And I can't see you. Or the music is too loud at this one. Can we try this one instead? That's self-advocacy. And if I can tell my younger self and say, you know, it's okay to tell a friend, yeah, I don't want to go swimming today because my hearing aids are not waterproof and it's going to be ten people. I won't enjoy it with all hearing people who don't know how to cue or sign. Can we do something else instead? Or, you know, don't be mad at me, but I just can't go. Because I won't have fun. So, but how about I do this instead? So that's what I would tell my younger self. And the second half of that question I saw was what would you tell parents? I would say model that positive self-advocacy talk with your children. So they can see it. It doesn't need to be behind the doors. And you tell another mother and call and say, hey, my child has a hearing loss, they might need this at your house. But just model it for them and say, oh, Emilie has a hearing loss. Sometimes she needs to have you repeat it. So Emilie, what do you say when you don't understand? Like, to show them that is okay to tell people you need something to make it equitable. >> JILL: That's great. I agree with that, too. Because I think as I was growing up, I always felt a little bit ashamed sometimes. That I had hearing loss. Because I grew up in a hearing family. And I didn't have any deaf cousins, sisters, brothers, you know. So I think in some ways, I would tell my younger self it's okay. You're going to be okay. And I think that was kind of one of the things that I wanted to get across tonight was we all turned out okay. Right? You know, despite how we grew up and the methods that we had to use when we were growing up to where we are today. You know, it's going to be okay. And I think for me, that's really important for new parents of kids with hearing loss to hear. Because they just don't know. And I think, you know, all five of us being here tonight is a great example of that. Does anybody else have anything to add to that? Eric Raff? >> ERIC RAFF: Yes. I would tell my younger self two things. First, I would say be proud of your deafness. Don't be ashamed. It's part of your journey. I wish I knew that a long time ago when I was a kid, but don't be ashamed of yourself as a deaf person. Secondly, I would say you're going to face a lot of struggles and barriers tp be ready to overcome those and fight for those and keep pushing. You'll always face struggles and barriers. You got to be ready. Figure out how to overcome those. So those would be the two things I would tell my younger self. Because that's -- my own life journey, been a lot of pitfalls along the way. >> REBA: I agree with that exactly, Eric. So true. I agree. >> JILL: Why don't we end with one more question here. And I'm going to tell the audience that if they have any other questions they want to ask, to see if they can put it into the chat box. I think that might be the easiest way for us to pick up any extra questions. And if you feel like you want to chime in from the audience, and say something, feel free to put your hand up in the chat box, too, and maybe we can see if we can unmute you and hear what you have to say. Okay. Let's see. So the last thing I was going to ask tonight is do you have any tips or information that you wish professionals or your parents had when you were younger? >> ERIK: I'll share one thing. I know sometimes I say words as I see them in print and they're not going to come out the right way. So one frustration I have with my parents from time to time is when they correct what I'm saying in the middle of my sharing. And what I try to teach them is to kind of hold off on that until I finish sharing. Because I think -- it feels like that's more important than what I'm actually wanting to share. So that's just something I want to put out there. Like, just save it for when I finish. Or when your deaf child finishes their thought. >> ERIC RAFF: Oh. I had a similar experience. >> JILL: I see one question that popped up. Oh. I see a couple. Did you -- do your peers in school give you a hard time for being deaf? Did you feel like an outsider, bullied? Anybody want to tackle that one? I mean, personally, for me -- give me a second, Emilie. You know, I did feel like an outsider. I don't think I was given a hard time for being deaf. I don't think I was bullied. But, yeah, it is isolating. When you go to a school and, you know, you have to sit at the front of the classroom. And you have to use an FM system. And you have to, you know, have an interpreter. Or whatever the situation is. It can feel a little bit isolating. But it all comes back to, you know, attitude. And just building that strength to overcome adversity and being a survivor. And that's what I think of all of us. Is we're just survivors. You know, we have just made our way through and that's what I mean by we all just got where we are. And we turned out okay. But, yes, you know, in the spirit of being transparent, it is an isolating place to be. Sometimes. Emilie? >> EMILIE: I'll make it short. I was going to say with Erik, I have a rule with my husband that he can only correct me up to three times a day. On a word I mispronounce. Because I get frustrated in the same way that it makes me feel like I never can share what I want to share. He does wait until I finish my thought. But I have a rule. Three times a day. It usually doesn't even end up being three times a day. But I have my limit of being corrected. And that's a personality thing. But also my own self-advocacy thing. Nope. Don't like it. Stop. And the other tip I was going to say is each child is an individual. So what works for one family doesn't mean it works for another. Even my sister and I are different enough that we had different needs. Even though we both have a profound hearing loss. And both use Cued Speech. We have different levels of how we use those services and such. So it's all individual. And you will learn along the way. >> JILL: That's really great. Let's hit one more question. I'm sorry. I'm kind of looking at these here. Some of these questions we might be able to answer individually. There's two -- there's one right here that I kind of like. Right here. If you have any hearing siblings, what do you want hearing siblings to do -- I'm sorry. Let me see. Said did any of you have hearing siblings? What would you like to see from them to show that they understood? So let's tackle that one then we'll close this up again. >> I'm an only child. I can't directly relate. I have a few clients who have siblings and struggle the same way. I recommend the -- hearings brothers and sisters to be in their sibling's shoes and try to be an ally. Just understand all the circumstances. That might be difficult for a deaf child. >> JILL: Thank you, Erik. Well, I think we are all out of time for this evening. And I want to wrap this up by thanking all of our panelists for being here tonight. And also to thank our audience for being here. And for patiently watching all of us talk and listening to our stories. This was really great. And I hope that we can keep doing this in the future. So thank you, all. And if you are interested in learning more about Virginia Hands and Voices, we do have a website. It is www.vahandsandvoices.com. And on that website we do post a lot of events for parents of kids with hearing loss. So I can see it's in the chat box right now. Thank you, Terri. So, thank you so much. All of you. Erik Nordlof, Eric Raff, Reba, Emilie. Thank you to the interpreters and captionist as well. So you all enjoy your week. And any question that we did not answer, we will see if we can collect them and get them answered directly to those people. Okay? Thank you, all. Have a great night.