

Fostering Affective Involvement in people with deafblindness. An intervention model for staff training

Marleen Janssen, Professor, PhD

Affective involvement (the mutual sharing of emotions) is a key characteristic of well attuned social interactions, which are essential for the regulation of emotions and the development of secure relationships. For children and adults with congenital deafblindness and multiple disabilities, it is enormous difficult to develop well attuned social interactions, because they struggle with orienting, perceiving information and communicating feelings and intentions. Despite the inherent difficulties several studies showed that it is possible to improve affective involvement between these persons with deafblindness and their communication partners (parents, support workers and teachers).

This contribution will give an overview of an evidence based intervention model for fostering affective involvement. The model is effective during social interaction, the process of mutually influencing each other's behavior, but also during communication, which is defined as a more complex form of interaction in which meaning is transmitted by the use of utterances that are perceived and interpreted by the communication partner (Janssen, Riksen-Walraven & Van Dijk, 2003, p. 198). The seven-step protocol will be presented which can be applied by a communication coach in consultation with a team of communication partners around the person who is deafblind. Video-analysis and video-feedback proved to be very useful during individual coaching and during team coaching. Application of the model recently proved to be effective for children and adults across different communication partners and settings, and also in regular organizations for people with intellectual disabilities (Martens, Janssen, Ruijsenaars & Riksen-Walraven, 2014- 2016).