



**Presentation Title:** 'Getting Them Set for Their Futures': The Importance of Hearing Parents Connecting Past, Present, and Future Time. Building Deaf-Child Futures.

**Keynote Presenter:** Jane Russell

**Abstract:**

The future of deaf children is a significant concern for hearing parents, often triggering worry and distress. Research suggests that parents may experience grief due to the loss of their anticipated future for their child. However, as a parent-researcher and mother of deaf/hearing triplets born in 2000 I have found that exploring the concept of future time with experienced parents provides a deeper and more nuanced understanding.

In this presentation, I draw upon the findings of a qualitative interview study involving eight hearing mothers of deaf young people aged 11-23. Additionally, I incorporate my own autoethnographic commentary and draw on an analysis of wider literatures. The aim is to delve into the concept and power of what I now refer to as 'Deaf-Child-Futures.' To achieve this, I employ a hermeneutic phenomenological methodology and a modified version of Braun and Clarke's (2019) reflexive thematic analysis. Through this approach, I shed light on how parents' perceptions of future time influence their present actions.

The results of this study reveal that hearing parents' assumptions about the futures of deaf children can significantly shape their child's outcomes. Through engaging in Deaf-Child-Parenting-Practices, most mothers come to actively participate in envisioning and shaping multiple-possible-futures for their children. This sense of agency in "futures-making" expands upon the conventional understanding of parent involvement and its impact on deaf children's outcomes. Moreover, the concept of embracing multiple-possible-futures and learning to positively use and navigate uncertainty emerge as valuable perspectives. Such perspectives align with the ongoing focus on how childhood experiences contribute to the long-term outcomes for deaf adults. In conclusion, I advocate for early and continuous discussions on Deaf-Child-Futures among deaf/hearing practitioners and parents. By doing so, we can better support the well-being of deaf children and parents and positively shape the future life trajectories of deaf children.