

Reflections

Abigail Bentz

In my time as a clinical audiology student and working one on one in the clinic with various patients, it came to my attention how valuable a support group can be. A support group provides individuals the opportunity to collaborate with others' similar experiences, feelings, coping strategies; to receive encouragement, guidance, and benefits where needed. Over the course of a semester, we discovered how important and beneficial it was to re-educate cochlear implant users on their device and the equipment it came with.

While working on this project and facilitating many support groups for cochlear implants, I was able to see firsthand the benefits of the discussion that surrounded the hearing mechanism, the features of the cochlear implant devices, as well as methods for cochlear implant rehabilitation. It was truly fascinating to witness life changes, personal growth and confidence, and relationships made during our support groups. It showed just how impactful a simple education session and discussion can be for those experiencing this new chapter in their lives. It also provided insight into how I can adjust my clinical services to ensure my patient's confidence in their devices.

This project was successful and provided me with inspiration to continue leading support groups for not only cochlear implant users but for other aspects of audiology as well. It is immensely important to continue to provide for our patients by advocating for their success and continuing to provide resources over the course of time serving these individuals.

Reflection

Jean Hong

Before joining University of Iowa's Doctor of Audiology program, I spent two years working at the Cochlear Implant Research Center at University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics. While I had learned scientific knowledge regarding the benefits of cochlear implants, I quickly realized I was largely unaware of the perspectives and challenges directly experienced by cochlear implant recipients in their everyday lives.

Organizing this support group for cochlear implant users and their frequent communication partners provided me with invaluable learning opportunities. Throughout the sessions, I gained insights into their individual listening journeys with cochlear implants, which was deeply inspiring. Witnessing firsthand how cochlear implants have significantly enhanced the quality of life for both cochlear implant recipients and their communication partners was truly remarkable.

Moreover, this experience significantly impacted my confidence and skills as a student clinician. Being able to directly assist individuals facing challenges with communication barriers underscored the benefits of the support group sessions. I learned the importance of fostering a sense of community among cochlear implant users and their partners, providing them with a platform to share their experiences and support one another on their respective journeys.

As I continue my journey in the field of audiology, I am committed to advocating for and facilitating such supportive environments, recognizing their immense value in empowering individuals with hearing loss and their frequent communication partners to lead fulfilling lives.

Reflection

Meggan Lind

As an audiology student, we are taught in depth about the devices we fit for patients. We learn how to fit them physically to the patient's ears, verify they are working correctly, teach the patients to use them, and more. However, throughout this training of important content, sometimes the supplemental material of the assistive technology that operates with those devices audiologists fit, isn't covered in depth. This project helped to give me a better understanding of the remote microphone assistive technology, how beneficial it can be for patients, and the importance of education for the patient and audiologists.

Throughout this experience, I gained a wealth of knowledge of using remote microphone technology. To create the educational materials to give to patients, I looked through user manuals and guides to learn how to pair and use the devices for the different manufacturers. These manuals and guides hold an abundance of information, which I sorted through to make the information easy to understand and access. I also created illustrations to show real-life examples of how patients can utilize the remote microphone in their everyday lives. I have learned and grown in my confidence working with cochlear implant users by creating these educational materials about remote microphones.

The support groups were a valuable space to learn about personal experiences with cochlear implants and remote microphone use. We heard successes and frustrations from the perspective of patients with cochlear implants and from their frequent communication partners who use remote microphones. These insights can help guide me as a clinician to offer support and education to patients as they begin their journey of using a remote microphone with their cochlear implant.