

To Be Deaf

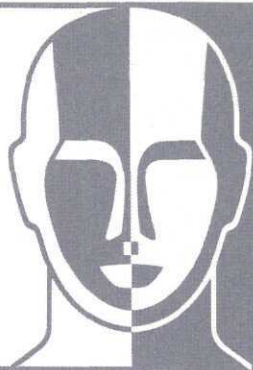
**A film about the deaf —
their reality, our misconceptions**

A National Film Board of Canada production made
in collaboration with Health and Welfare Canada



National
Film Board
of Canada

Office
national du film
du Canada



To Be Deaf

Hearing people can scarcely comprehend the isolation inherent in deafness. Deaf people do not even hear the sound of their own voices. This film was made to help the hearing public understand the extent of this isolation, its effects upon the person, and how this isolation can be partially overcome.

The film goes directly to those best able to talk about their isolation—the deaf. They speak freely about themselves, their efforts to function in everyday life, their work, their entertainment and their learning to communicate. Specialized teachers explain, and demonstrate with their students, the different teaching methods. For example, oralism tries to teach the deaf child to communicate like a hearing child. Total communication, another technique, is based on the use of structured gestures with speech. Sign language, in contrast, is the language of the deaf, adapted to their real, and not their perceived, needs.

The issue of communication has created a very real divisiveness within the community of the deaf. One group advocates a deaf way of life; the other champions integration into mainstream society, sometimes at tremendous cost to the individual. A group of deaf activists argue their case. They do not hesitate to point out that the hearing fail to consult the deaf on matters that vitally concern them, specifically, educational systems imposed upon them that do not correspond to their particular reality.

The film is about a minority cultural group. Because the deaf don't hear, they have a different concept of the world around them.

To Be Deaf is an attempt to penetrate their world. Watching the film, the viewer is forced to examine some of the misconceptions held so long about the deaf.

This film is an English version of the French film, **La Surditude**. Both are sub-titled for viewing by the deaf.

SUGGESTED USES

To sensitize the hearing to the problems of the deaf;
To study the conflict that divides the deaf community regarding the most appropriate system of communication;
To demonstrate perseverance and courage in overcoming an obstacle;
To encourage acceptance of self.

SUGGESTED AUDIENCES

General public;
Teachers of the deaf;
University, sociology and psychology courses;
Human rights groups;
Social workers.

RELATED FILMS

Ears to Hear Out of Silence

Directed and edited by
Photography
Location sound
Animation
Commentary
Spoken by
Sub-titles
Sound editor
Re-recording
Administration
Producer

Yves Dion
Jean-Pierre Lachapelle
Yves Gendron
Yvon Mallette
Clément Perron
Michelle Magny
Louise Spickler
Gilles Quintal
Jean-Pierre Joutel
Diane Leblanc
Jean Dansereau

Produced for Health and Welfare Canada
Distributed by National Film Board of Canada

16 mm Color
Screening time: 84 minutes 57 seconds

16 mm: 106C 0181 546
Videocassette: 116C 0181 546

© National Film Board of Canada 1982
P.O. Box 6100, Montreal, Quebec H3C 3H5
Printed in Canada



National
Film Board
of Canada

Office
national du film
du Canada