

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COMPLEMENTARY
PSYCHOLOGICAL TREATMENT PROGRAMME FOR
COCHLEAR IMPLANT TEAMS**

by

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I declare that THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COMPLEMENTARY PSYCHOLOGICAL TREATMENT PROGRAMME FOR COCHLEAR IMPLANT TEAMS is my own work and that all sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

E.M.Schoeman

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ABSTRACT

The impact of the diagnosis and the reality of being hearing impaired could trigger uncomfortable feelings at different times in the client's life. With the cochlear implant, these feelings will still be a reality, as the implant does not heal the hearing impairment. Psychological interventions could assist the client during this healing process.

The process of cochlear implants could also bring other challenges into the client's life. Expectations of quick healing play a major role and should be addressed throughout the process of implantation and rehabilitation. This is another opportunity for the psychologist to intervene.

This research shows that the role of the psychologist could be expanded not only to evaluate but also to bring about change. The treatment model gives a logical and workable explanation of how and where the psychologist may intervene in the process of cochlear implantation. This model was tested and adapted by the cochlear implant team at the University of Pretoria over a period of ten years. The model may be used as a template for new teams. Intervening as described in the model presents the opportunity to address various different needs as they occur.

The qualitative research design proved to be a fitting method to explore the experiences of the participants from their own viewpoints. The qualitative research is also congruent with a systemic perspective and emphasises social context, multiple perspectives, complexity, recursion and holism.

This study aims to develop a complementary psychological treatment programme and create awareness within professionals working with hearing impairment of the complexity of systems. The study shows that one can only understand the behaviour of any given system by tracking changes that occur within that system and its subsystems and by tracking changes between that system and the larger whole.

In this study three different therapeutic interventions are used on three different case studies, two children from different age groups and an adult, to accommodate the multiple realities of the different systems. The aim of the study with cochlear implantees and their families is to stimulate new leads and avenues of enquiry that may be used as a basis for further research.

Key words: Hearing impairment; cochlear implants; systemic perspective; psychological interventions; Structural Family Therapy; Theraplay; SHIP®; naturalistic paradigm; qualitative research; cochlear implant teams; treatment programme.