

# EXPLORING NURSES' EXPERIENCES LEARNING FILIPINO SIGN LANGUAGE FOR INCLUSIVE SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTHCARE

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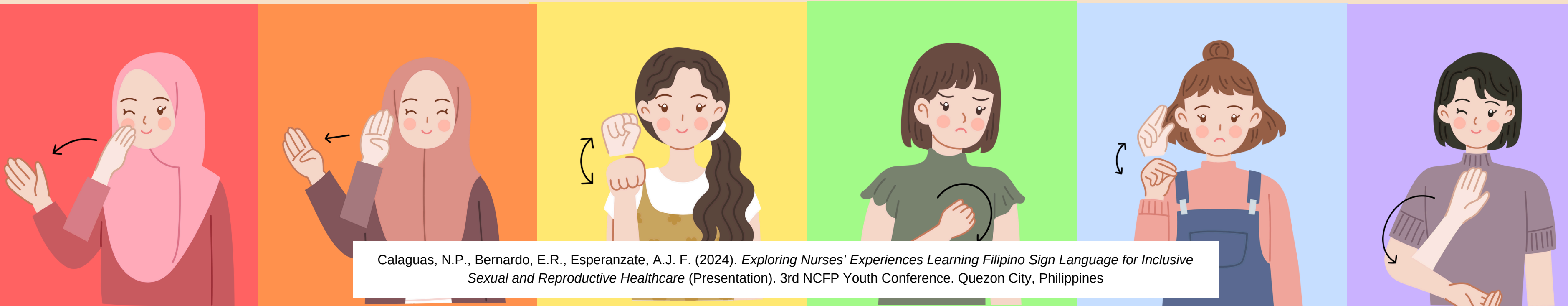
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- **Protocol approved by Holy Angel University – Institutional Review Board (Ref No. 2020-046-NPCALAGUAS-SRHISDEAF)**



- In 2000, the National Statistics Office noted:
  - 942,098 PWDs in the Philippines
  - 121,598 people with hearing difficulties
  - 8,168 people with hearing difficulties in NCR
- In 2010, the Census of Population and Housing noted:
  - 1,442,586 PWDs in the Philippines
  - 265,752 were women of reproductive age
- In 2011, DSWD's National Household Targeting System for Poverty Reduction noted:
  - 1,514 DHOH women of reproductive age in NCR.
- No demographic studies present recent number of DHOH Filipinos.

# CONTEXT

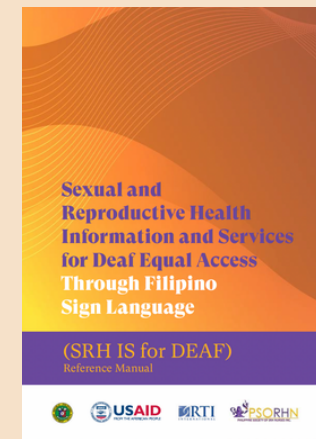
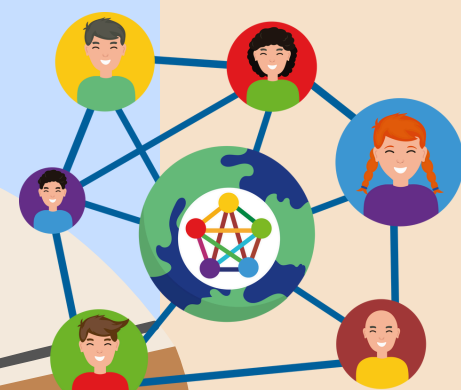


- Deaf Filipinos struggle to access health care due to severe communication barriers.
- Most healthcare professionals are linguistically and culturally ill-prepared to provide competent care to Deaf patients.
- Nurses play a critical role in providing sexual and reproductive healthcare (SRH) to the Deaf, which can improve their sexual health outcomes and overall well-being.
- Filipino Sign Language (FSL) is not part of the BSN curriculum (CMO 15 series 2017)
- A FSL training program for nurses was designed to address the gaps in SRH access and delivery for the Deaf population.

## CONTEXT



# FSL IS FOR DEAF PROGRAM'S ACTIVITIES



Network Building

FSL Training of Nurses

Output Development

Demand Generation

# METHODS



- The study utilized a qualitative descriptive approach to explore nurses' experiences learning FSL online as part of the program.
- Nine (9) nurse completers of the FSL program were interviewed through Zoom.
- Data were gathered from four (4) focus group discussions.
- Transcription of the FDGs were prepared.
- Data was collected from May 2021–Oct 2022.
- Coding and Thematic Analysis was done.

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# FINDINGS: PARTICIPANT PROFILE

- A total of 9 nurses completed the FSL course. Majority of the completers are Female, who did not have relatives or friends who are DHOH, and an average of 15.7 years of nursing practice.
- 4 focus group discussions were conducted to understand the nurses' experiences learning FSL through the SRH IS for DEAF program.
- One was scheduled before the program's start, then one each after the level of FSL training. Using the transcripts of the FGD, we were able to extract salient quotes and generated the following themes and subthemes.

# THEME 1: EXPECTATIONS AND SENTIMENTS PRIOR TO TRAINING

- Subtheme 1: Anxiety and Apprehension in Serving DHOH and/or FSL Users
- Subtheme 2: Familiarity with FSL Due to Proximity to DHOH Individuals and/or FSL Users
- Subtheme 3: Perceived Barriers in Communicating Technical Jargon or Sensitive Information





# **THEME 2: EXPECTATIONS, SENTIMENTS, AND LEARNINGS DURING TRAINING**



- Subtheme 1: Barriers and Gaps in Training
- Subtheme 2: Facilitators and Advantages in Training
- Subtheme 3: Suggestions for Improving Training

# THEME 3: NURSES' DESIRE TO HELP VIA FSL

Participants highlighted the importance of patience and eagerness when serving DHOH individuals, and FSL users.

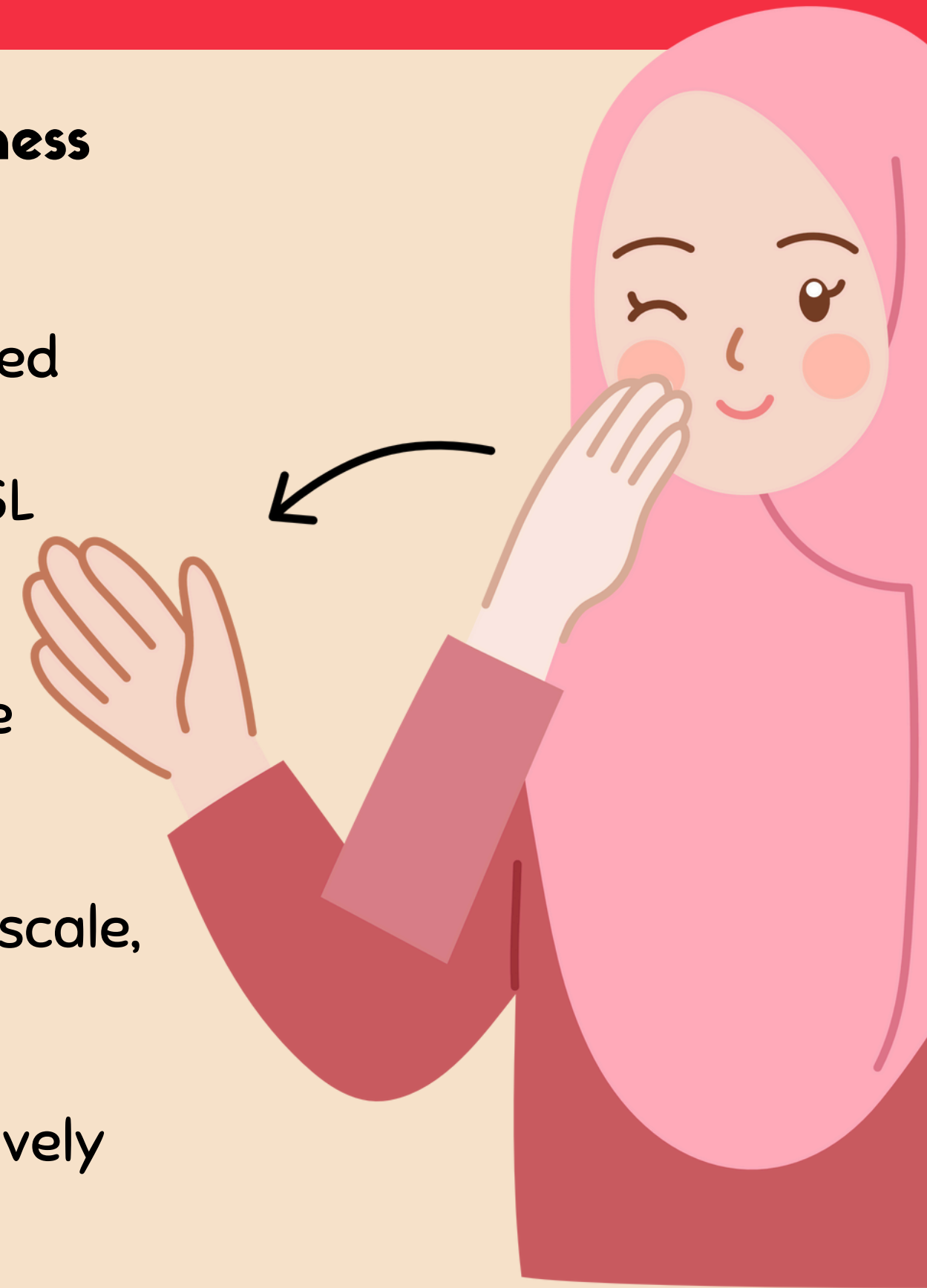
- The training emphasized nurses' inherent sensitivity and non-discriminatory nature but also revealed biases favoring able-bodied SRH service receivers.
- Enhanced empathy and understanding of DHOH individuals and FSL users were significant outcomes of the training.

**Early Integration of FSL in Nursing Curriculum:**

- Participants recognized the need for early integration of FSL in the academic curriculum for its cultural sensitivity and language components.
- Suggested focusing on SRH-specific jargon and conducting small-scale, face-to-face sessions to improve learning and skill retention.

**Genuine Desire to Improve Care:**

- Nurses expressed a strong desire to better understand and effectively communicate with DHOH individuals and FSL users.



# THEME 4: ASSESSMENT OF TRAINING



- Finally, some general subthemes were identified, forming the Assessment of Training theme.
- Participants often compared FSL to other languages, noting distinct differences.
- Cultural sensitivity was somewhat developed during the training, but fluency in FSL was not achieved.

## Expectations and Challenges

- Significant anxiety among nurses due to unfamiliarity with FSL, concerns about communication errors, and barriers in conveying technical or sensitive information (Chapple, 2019; Hommes et al., 2018; Panning et al., 2021).
- Mixed impact of FSL familiarity; exposure alone does not equate to confidence or competence in clinical settings (Hommes et al., 2018; Jacob et al., 2022; Panning et al., 2021).

## Communication Barriers

- Difficulty conveying medical jargon and sensitive information due to interpreter accuracy concerns and confidentiality issues.
- Communication barriers lead to miscommunication and patient non-adherence, highlighting the need for specific competencies in translating complex information (Chapple, 2019; Nicodemus et al., 2014).



# DISCUSSION

# DISCUSSION

YES!



## Training Limitations

- Challenges in retaining FSL skills due to infrequent use and limitations of online learning platforms (Alawajee, 2021; Gournaris, 2022).
- Importance of consistent practice and face-to-face interactions for effective sign language learning (Krishnamoorthy et al., 2021; Nugroho et al., 2022).

## Training Facilitators

- Positive feedback on the accommodating nature of instructors and flexibility of online learning.
- Enhanced awareness, empathy, and cultural competence towards Deaf patients align with findings emphasizing culturally competent care (Chapple, 2019; Jacob et al., 2022).





# **Sexual and Reproductive Health Information and Services for Deaf Equal Access Through Filipino Sign Language**

**(SRH IS for DEAF)**  
Reference Manual



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

**IRTI**  
INTERNATIONAL



# SENTIMENTS OF DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING (DHOH) FILIPINOS ON SRH SERVICES

- **Lack of Awareness**

- Many DHOH individuals are unaware that SRH services are unique, essential, and integral to human development.
- There is a general lack of knowledge on how to access SRH services.

- **Challenges in Accessing Health Services**

- DHOH Filipinos face significant challenges in accessing general health services, compounded when seeking SRH services.
- Language barriers and the absence of FSL interpreters in health institutions create substantial access difficulties.





# SENTIMENTS OF DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING (DHOH) FILIPINOS ON SRH SERVICES

- **Impact of Communication Barriers:**
  - The lack of FSL interpreters and accessible information in healthcare settings leads to confusion, miscommunication, and unmet health needs.
  - Communication barriers contribute to the exclusion of DHOH individuals from critical health information and services, affecting overall health outcomes.
- **Need for Inclusive Healthcare:**
  - There is an urgent need for healthcare systems to include FSL interpreters and provide accessible SRH information to better serve DHOH communities.



# IMPLICATIONS FOR FSL TRAINING

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- FSL training should be more comprehensive and practical to address identified challenges.
- Emphasize face-to-face sessions, practice translating technical medical information, and provide ongoing practice opportunities.
- Integrate cultural competency into healthcare education early to prepare providers for Deaf patients' unique needs.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

- Conduct periodic and accurate determination of the population of DHOH Filipinos
- Improve health services information dissemination efforts to DHOH Filipinos
- Incorporate FSL training into nursing curricula to ensure future nurses possess essential communication skills.
- Expand focus on technical and sensitive information translation within training.
- Support ongoing skill development to maintain proficiency in sign language.

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# RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop and refine similar inclusive training programs for healthcare providers.
- Equip future nurses with the necessary FSL skills to enhance patient care for the Deaf community.
- Prioritize linguistic inclusivity in healthcare policy, education, and practice to improve patient outcomes.



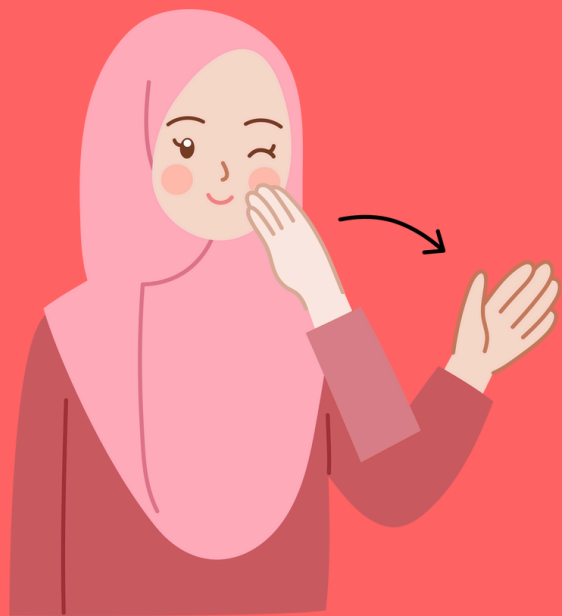
# CONCLUSION

- The FSL program significantly benefits nurses by enhancing communication with Deaf patients, addressing gaps in healthcare access (Chapple, 2019; Hommes et al., 2018).
- The findings underscore the need for linguistic inclusivity in healthcare education and practice, contributing to the goal of universal health coverage.
- Integrating FSL training into healthcare education reinforces the importance of inclusive, patient-centered care.



# THANK YOU!

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