



MEDIA RELEASE

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Making sense of deafblindness

Did you know there are almost nine thousand people in Western Australia who live with deafblindness?

Deafblindness is a complex and unique disability distinct from the single sensory disabilities of hearing or vision impairment.

The two impairments impact on each other and amplify the effect and difficulties faced by the individual. A person does not have to be completely deaf or blind to be considered deafblind.

In 2009, Senses Foundation is using Deafblind Awareness Week to raise awareness of congenital deafblindness and the impact it has on the individual and their family.

Many people will have the opportunity to learn more about deafblind populations, causes and developmental issues from David Brown, a world leader in congenital deafblindness.

David is a well-published practitioner in the field of deafblindness. Formerly the head of the UK's Sense Family Advisory and Education Service, he is now an Education Specialist with the California Deafblind Services.

For more than 20 years he has been writing training manuals for universities and other training organisations and published articles on a variety of topics. He has also delivered training for university degree courses, parent groups and various professional groups and presented at over 50 conferences around the world.

David will address a half-day seminar hosted by Senses Foundation and aimed at professionals in the disability sector, paediatricians, therapists, medical practitioners, specialists and families. He will also talk one-on-one with families at a special Senses Foundation excursion to Perth Zoo.

David says congenital or early acquired deafblindness is more common than people may realise and, while we need specialised strategies, they are all based on common sense. He also feels very strongly that good positive relationships, based on respect for each child, are the keys to success.

Senses Foundation is a charitable, not for profit organisation providing disability support services to people of all ages throughout Western Australia and specialist services to people who are deafblind.

Deafblind Awareness Week is held internationally each year to correspond with Helen Keller's birthday on 28 June.

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