

The Current Situation of Psychological Difficulties and Support Needs of Deaf Children in Specialized Educational Institutions

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Abstract: Deaf children face a range of different challenges, one of which is psychological difficulties. When encountering difficulties in communication and accessing information, this leads to barriers in the process of absorbing information, knowledge, and learning, resulting in deaf children experiencing significant stress, anxiety, and low self-esteem. Children with hearing impairments want to be supported in many different aspects. In this study, the author examines the psychological challenges and support requirements of deaf children in specialized educational institutions in Lam Dong Province, Vietnam. The study involving 149 children with hearing impairments showed that the institutions' psychological support activities for children encompass understanding the psychological problems they encountered such as communication, learning, feeling lonely, not having someone to share, etc. Social workers in these facilities have provided support at various levels to help children feel listened to, understood, and receive appropriate support plans, so that psychological problems are alleviated or ended. In addition, the study conducted in-depth interviews with 6 social workers who are teachers and 16 deaf children in 2 institutions, and conducted an online parent group discussion to provide further details for explaining difficulties, needs, and evaluating psychological support activities. Children with hearing impairments appreciate the institutional support they receive. However, there is also a need for in-depth support to help children with hearing impairments learn and integrate better in life.

Keywords: Deaf children, specialized educational institutions, difficulties, needs, support activities.

1. INTRODUCTION

In 2021, approximately 97.83 million children and adolescents under the age of 20 globally were affected by hearing loss, resulting in approximately 3.91 million years of life with a disability. Between 1990 and 2021, the prevalence increased from 3537 per 100,000 to 3711 per 100,000, with an estimated annual rate of change of 0.15% (95% CI: 0.12–0.17) (Guo et al., 2024). Currently, more than 5% of the world's population - or 430 million people - need rehabilitation to address disabling hearing loss (including 34 million children). It is estimated that by 2050, more than 700 million people - or 1 in 10 people - will have hearing loss (WHO, 2025; Worldwide, 2022). In Vietnam, according to statistics, for every 1,000 newborns, about 03 babies have hearing impairment (with 1 or both ears). It is estimated that up to 5,232 babies have hearing impairment out of 1,744,400 babies recorded in 2023. That shows that the number of people with hearing problems is increasing. The results of the workshop were organized by the Australian Embassy and the New South Wales Trade and Investment Agency to present the reality of hearing loss in Vietnamese children, the benefits of early intervention, and to

share Australia's experience in solving this problem. According to annual statistics from the Ministry of Health, on average, 1.4 million children are born in Vietnam each year, of which 1.5-2% have birth defects. The implementation of screening is not high; only 30% of children are screened for postnatal hearing in Vietnam (Ministry of Health, 2023). Ninety percent of children with hearing impairment are born into families with hearing abilities (Society, 2002).

In Lam Dong province, there are a number of specialized educational institutions for deaf children, of which two large ones are Cam Ly Center for Inclusive Education Development Support and Anh Sao Private School for the Deaf. The two institutions have educational programs for deaf students from kindergarten to junior high school. Children are supported to learn in a specialized educational environment and are supported in many different aspects; however, deaf children also face many difficulties, of which psychological difficulties are a big challenge. Due to limitations in communication and access to information, children are more stressed, guilty, and confident than other children.

Deaf children have some difficulties in aspects such as communication and information reception (Schild & Dalenberg, 2016; Yoshinaga-Itano et al., 1998). When there is less verbal communication, the limited use of sign language also limits sharing in the family (Freitas et al., 2021). In learning, children with hearing impairments also experience difficulties when learning in schools where verbal and written language are used as the main communication tools (Mwambe et al., 2018) thus leading to deaf children having psychological difficulties when participating in classroom and school activities. Related language barriers lead to deaf children having difficulties in communication and social interaction, children lacking confidence and becoming confused during communication, children having difficulty integrating and having feelings of isolation, loneliness, and depression (Fitriyani et al., 2024; WHO, 2016). Psychological manifestations of children with hearing impairment, such as stress, are associated with a greater risk of psychological trauma (Bowman, 2018). In addition, children with hearing impairment also have problems related to difficult economic conditions, resulting in limited access to assessment resources, a lack of hearing aids, and other technological equipment. Deaf children may feel comfortable communicating in a peer environment with children in the same situation as themselves, but will have difficulty communicating and learning, integrating with listeners (Dixon et al., 2004).

Specialized educational institutions have many functions to support children with hearing impairments, such as specialized education, early intervention, life skills support, etc. One of the very important functions is psychological counseling for children with hearing impairments, including counseling and support for their social integration. Therefore, in this study, the goal is to understand the psychological difficulties that children are facing, the needs for support, and the actual support activities of social workers in specialized educational institutions.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Besides difficulties in communication, learning, integration, and access to resources, deaf children face psychological difficulties. Hard - of - hearing children feel isolated because they are different from their peers due to communication difficulties. The study *Resilience in deaf children: A comprehensive literature review and applications for school staff* by Freitas, Simões, Santos & Mineiro (2022) reviewed 11 studies from 2000 to 2019 with children aged 9-22 years, with various forms of research. The results showed that children with hearing impairment had difficulties regulating emotions, behaviors, and social interactions, had higher rates of negative emotions, aggressive behavior, hyperactivity, and problems with emotional regulation. For example, a study by Rieffe (2012) in the Netherlands with 26 deaf children and 26 hearing children aged 9-13 years old found that deaf children had difficulty distinguishing between negative emotions and were less developed than hearing children. A study by Hintermair (2006, 2007) in Germany with 213 parents of deaf children found that deaf children had significantly higher rates of conduct and hyperactivity problems than the normative group of children of the same age. Deaf children are prone to social isolation, difficulty participating in natural communication activities, stress, and behavioral problems such as rebellion and hyperactivity (Freitas et al., 2021).

Other people's perceptions related to hearing loss also cause children to feel uncomfortable. Deaf children learning in an inclusive educational environment also face other difficulties, with the study *Bullying and Difference: A Case Study of Peer Group Dynamics in One School in London* showing that deaf students are seen as different and in a weaker position. Stigma and discrimination also show the use of words, the use of negative words such as "deaf", "mute" and "dumb" (Nguyen Thi Kim Hoa, 2014, p. 111). Feelings of low self-esteem and anxiety make deaf children more prone to psychological difficulties. Studies show that problems with depression, anxiety, etc. Deaf children face tension between the deaf culture and the national culture. Experience from schools shows that deaf children are isolated in formal schools where teaching is spoken and lack sign language support (Jones et al., 2001). Many deaf students say they are looked down upon, teased, or not properly evaluated. According to Vo Thi Le Huong (2019), some psychological difficulties of deaf middle and high

school students in Dong Nai province (Vietnam) have been pointed out at a regular level. Psychological difficulties related to (1) academic activities, (2) career orientation, (3) relationships in life, such as relationships with friends, parents, and normal listeners, and (4) internal psychological difficulties of deaf students. The author also pointed out that with the study object of 122 children, in middle and high school age, there are many psychological difficulties in many different fields. The author also proposes the need for academic advisors and school psychologists to support the psychological difficulties in learning activities of deaf students (Võ Thị Lệ Hương, 2019).

Many deaf children also experience psychological trauma, as in the study "Information Deprivation Trauma: Definition, Assessment, and Interventions" by Sven Schild & Constance J. Dalenberg (2016), which talks about trauma caused by information deprivation. Information Deprivation Trauma (IDT) is defined as a negative emotional reaction (such as fear, helplessness, panic) that occurs when an individual lacks an understanding of the extent, consequences, or probabilities of an event, is unable to access the equipment needed to prepare and respond appropriately, and it causes increased vulnerability. Deaf people are at high risk of developing IDT due to the inability to access information through sound, many deaf children grow up in an environment where they do not communicate effectively with their families because their parents do not know sign language, so they do not understand events well, such as natural disasters or major events like the 9/11 terrorist event...The lack of information increases the level of crisis, negative emotions, and reduces the ability to control and predict...(Schild & Dalenberg, 2016). Children with hearing impairment have a 2-to 4-times higher rate of mental health problems than children without. The level of hearing loss is not directly related to mental health, but the key factor is communication and social support capacity (Aanondsen et al., 2023).

Psychological characteristics of children with hearing impairment: Sensitive, emotional: Deaf children are often very sensitive to non-verbal cues, and the emotions of others. However, children with hearing impairments who find it difficult to express their feelings or who do not receive verbal encouragement may feel sad, angry, self-pity, or lonely. Deaf children also have difficulty regulating their emotions, especially when they do not understand or are unable to express themselves in language (Marschark, 1993). Low self-esteem, guilt: Due to difficulties in communication and feeling different from friends, children may develop low self-esteem, guilt, fear of communicating, and avoid strangers (Fitriyani et al., 2024). Difficulty socializing: Limitations in communication make it difficult for children to participate in group activities, make friends, and maintain relationships, leading to feelings of isolation and loss (Fitriyani et al., 2024; WHO, 2016). They feel ashamed, scared, inadequate, and inferior (Aguayo & Coady, 2001). Stress, behavioral disorder: Some children show stress-related problems, irritated behavior, or impulsive reactions, and easily cause trouble because they cannot express their frustration (Aanondsen et al., 2023).

Children with hearing impairments who want assistance with ear exams (Bộ Y tế, 2023), Hearing aids (Nagels et al., 2024; WHO et al., 2010). Children with hearing impairment want learning support in general and sign language in particular, and look forward to learning at a higher level (Alhuzail & Levinger, 2022). Deaf children expect to learn in an inclusive and specialized educational environment (Khairuddin et al., 2018). Need for psychological support (Steyn & Hindley, 2009). The expectation that social workers will be a bridge to the outside world can stem from communication difficulties (Alhuzail & Levinger, 2022). Children need support to be confident and socially inclusive and participate in community activities (Wong et al., 2017)

Therefore, this study aims to systematize the psychological difficulties faced by children with hearing impairments, the desires for support, and the current situation of support activities of social workers in terms of psychological aspects for children at specialized educational institutions of Lam Dong province.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study uses a quantitative method to understand the psychological difficulties of children with hearing impairment, the need for support, and the current state of psychological support activities of educational institutions for children with hearing impairments. The study was conducted at 02 specialized educational institutions, namely Cam Ly Center for Inclusive Education Development Support and Anh Sao Private School for the Deaf of Lam Dong province. In addition, the study conducted in-depth interviews with social workers who are teachers in 2 campuses and deaf children, and discussed parent groups to have more basis for assessing difficulties, needs, and psychological support activities for deaf students in 2 institutions.

Sample

The study subjects of this study included all deaf students studying in grades 1 to 9 at the two campuses. The total number of deaf children participating in the survey was 149. The selection criteria are that children with hearing impairments in the two institutions voluntarily participate and can communicate in sign language. The survey is conducted by a sign language interpreter in the facility.

This study used data from a survey for which sample characteristics are detailed in Table 1. There were 75.8% (n = 113) from Cam Ly Center for Inclusive Education Development Support and 24.2% (n = 36) from Anh Sao Private School for the Deaf. Sex was 51.7% (n=77) and 48.3% (n=72). The average age at the survey was 14.11, and the standard deviation was 2,667.

Table 1. Sample Characteristics (N=149)

		N	Tỷ lệ (%)
Special institutions	Cam Ly Center for Inclusive Education Development Support	113	75,8
	Anh Sao Private School for the Deaf	36	24,2
Gender	Male	77	51,7
	Female	72	48,3
Ethnicity	Kinh	125	83,9
	Others (Cham, Co Ho, Cil, Dao, Mong, Nung, Tay, Thai, Tho)	24	16,1
Grade	1	20	13,4
	2	20	13,4
	3	24	16,1
	4	13	8,7
	5	24	16,1
	6	21	14,1
	7	13	8,7
	8	6	4,0
	9	8	5,4
Level of hearing impairment	Mild	12	8,1
	Moderate	26	17,4
	Sereve	88	59,1
	Profound	23	15,4
Disability Certification	No	6	4,0
	Yes	143	96,0
Learning Outcomes	Unpassed - Incomplete	6	4,0
	Pass - Complete	68	45,6
	Fair – Good Done	39	26,2
	Good - Excellent Finish	36	24,2

Source: Field survey data (2025).

I also conducted in-depth interviews with 6 social workers who were actual homeroom teachers to teach and support vocational training. 16 deaf children agreed to participate in an in-depth interview on this topic, and an online parent group discussion was conducted with 7 parents.

Measurement Instruments

The survey tool is a questionnaire consisting of the first part that collects information about age, gender, education level, and level of hearing impairment. The second part focuses on understanding the difficulties, needs, and psychological support activities for children with hearing loss. Participants were rated on the frequency of difficulty, desirability, and effectiveness from 1 to 5, using the Likert scale to score each aspect.

Data collection procedure

The data was collected through face-to-face interviews assisted by sign language interpreters. Before the survey, the researcher contacted the facility and asked for the consent of the facility leader. Children volunteer to participate in the survey with the consent and confirmation of the facility leader. All participant information is kept confidential and used for research purposes only.

Data analysis

The data collected was analyzed using SPSS software version 25.0. Perform descriptive statistics, including frequency, rate, mean, and standard deviation, to compile sample characteristics and describe variables. With the in-depth interview data and group discussion, I asked for permission to record, remove the tape, and use NotebookLM software to support the tape removal and convert the recording file into text. The researcher listened to the tape and reviewed it.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Psychological difficulties

From the results table, it is shown that the manifestations of psychological difficulties have an average score of 3.12 to 3.46. Deaf children with the most difficulties are the lack of people to share and support psychologically, with an average score of 3.46, followed by feelings of loneliness and isolation, with an average score of 3.39, and the third place is a feeling of an inferiority complex with a score of 3.29. The next two difficulties are when it is difficult to control emotions (stress, anger, sadness, anxiety, etc.) and irritability when teased by friends, with scores of 3.18 and 3.12, respectively.

Table 2. Psychological difficulties of deaf children

No.	Psychological difficulties	Difficulty level (1 is not difficult and 5 is the most difficult)					Mean	Standard Deviation
		1	2	3	4	5		
1	Lack of people to share, psychological support....	3.4	18.1	26.2	33.6	18.8	3.46	1.094
2	Feelings of loneliness and isolation	0.7	16.1	39.6	30.9	12.8	3.39	0.928
3	Feelings of guilt and low self-esteem	7.4	10.7	35.6	38.3	8.1	3.29	1.015
4	Difficulty controlling emotions (stress, anger, sadness, anxiety...)	4.0	14.1	47.7	28.2	6.0	3.18	0.893
5	Annoyed by being teased by friends	5.4	22.8	37.6	22.8	11.4	3.12	1.059

Source: Field survey data (2025).

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.723	5

Cronbach's Alpha score of 0.723 is valid for these items.

Deaf children have difficulty communicating and learning; they cannot express their mood or ask for help from others. Therefore, sadness, stress, depression, and even anger can occur. *Specifically, the case of a 5th-grade girl shared that she "Difficulties in communication, difficulties in Vietnamese, unable to release emotions, so she will be irritated (In-depth interview 14, female, grade 5). It is easy and reassuring for children to communicate with teachers and friends in sign language, but when they leave a specialized educational institution, they encounter many psychological barriers, as shared by a female teacher. "If it is psychologically speaking, children do not have many problems in school, but when they go out, it is a big problem. The barrier is too big. When going out to communicate with outsiders, it is easy to lead to frustration and confidence when communicating with outsiders. The ability to express yourself is difficult. Through talking to some children who graduated from school, the psychology of low self-esteem is there because when they go to work, they do not*

communicate with their employers, causing frustration, misunderstanding each other, making them feel inferior about their abilities, not trusting their abilities, and wanting to have a community. When you don't have a community, it's easy to get bored and quit your job (In-depth interview, teacher, Female, 40 years old).

The group of parents also said that their children showed anger when speaking, that their parents did not understand, guilt, low self-esteem, stress, and feeling insecure: "My child is often stressed, I oppose him even more, he is deaf and can't hear, so he pays more attention to him. Many times, she can't be active with friends and neighbors, so she stays at home. Children are angry, smash things, sometimes they can't communicate, sometimes they can't communicate, sometimes they don't say what they mean, they are uncomfortable" (Parent group discussion).

In fact, some children who have just started at the grassroots also have a sad and lonely mentality, and in some cases face difficulties and stress when they do not have enough sign language to express their feelings to others. According to a long-time teacher at a specialized educational institution, "Some children know how to agree that when they first come to (the facility), they are far from home, so those children may also show signs of crying, but one or two meals later, they are also used to it. So even though they are new, they miss their parents a little and cry too. But when I cried, in the afternoon, some of these brothers and sisters patted me again, and then I was close, and then I forgot" (In-depth interview, teacher, Female, 54 years old).

Thus, children with hearing impairment face many different difficulties, which are reflected in 5 aspects, including the greatest difficulty, which is the lack of people to share and support, followed by feelings of loneliness and isolation, and being teased by friends.

4.2. Need for support

Deaf children face many different difficulties, so the needs of deaf children are very diverse. In addition to basic physiological and survival needs, children have been met in special education institutions. Children can eat and live concentrated, meet physiological needs for survival, ensure safety, and study, play, and entertain. The specific needs of children with hearing loss are shown in the following table 3. According to the Demand Theory, the needs are arranged as follows:

Table 3. The needs of children with hearing impairment

No	The needs of children with hearing impairment	Level of need (1 is very low and 5 is very high)					Mean	Standard Deviation
		1	2	3	4	5		
1	Medical examination and treatment, rehabilitation	1.3	5.4	24.8	33.6	34.9	3.95	0.968
2	Supplies Hearing aids, hearing aids)	3.4	6.0	17.4	27.5	45.6	4.06	1.086
3	Communication support	1.3	10.1	24.2	30.9	33.6	3.85	1.042
	Psychological support	0.0	10.7	21.5	38.3	29.5	3.87	0.963
4	Inclusion Support	0.0	12.1	26.2	36.9	24.8	3.74	0.967
5	Academic support	1.3	4.7	29.5	38.3	26.2	3.83	0.918
	Vocational guidance and vocational training support	0.7	6.0	22.1	40.3	30.9	3.95	0.914
	Support for information, training, and job placement	0.7	2.0	19.5	43.6	34.2	4.09	0.821

Source: Field survey data (2025).

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.866	8

Regarding physiological and survival needs: Children are fed and housed centrally at the facility, so they have ensured eating, sleeping, and resting. Children assess the need for medical examination and treatment, and rehabilitation at a level

of 3.95. This is very necessary to help children hear information and communicate socially, as research shows that for children with hearing impairment, if not treated early, it will lead to poor academic performance, which can lead to reduced job opportunities later in life (Olusanya et al., 2014; WHO, 2016).

Safety needs: Children expect to be provided with items (hearing aids, hearing aids) that reach 4.06. Children who are mildly deaf and medium are very eager to be supported with hearing aids to help them hear better, so that they can communicate and hear the voices of their parents and teachers. The results of the in-depth interview also clearly show this, specifically, a deaf girl in grade 6 said "I want to have hearing aids to hear my parents, teachers and friends" (In-depth interview 12, female, grade 6) and other students answered "There are new hearing aids that are suitable" (In-depth interview 25, Female, grade 3). This is a very important need to help deaf children hear and communicate with people.

The need to be loved and belong: According to statistical results, both needs are communication support, high psychological support, 3.85 and 3.87 points, respectively. In addition to the need for academic support to open a higher level than level 2 at school and level 3 at the center, children want to receive psychological support, as shared by a sixth-grade girl "Adequate material and equipment, the need for a lot of psychological support, recreational activities and community integration" (In-depth Interview 10, Female, Grade 6).

The need to be respected: Children desire support to integrate into life. The survey results showed a high score of 3.74. Children want to be listened to and shared, but they have a language barrier, so they cannot communicate with teachers and friends regularly. Therefore, deaf children want their parents to be able to learn more sign language, as in the case of a student who said, "I want my parents to learn more sign language to talk to my parents, in the past, deaf schools organized basic teaching for parents, but for many reasons and parents were busy, cannot accompany them, so there are no more classes" (In-depth interview 16, Female, grade 4). Children want to be supported "Academic, psychological" (In-depth interview 17, Female, grade 3). The survey showed that the ability of deaf children to express and write deaf children is limited, so they only write simple words. From the results of the group discussion, it was shown that parents also said that their children wanted to be supported to have a job and an environment for their children to integrate: "I want my child to be a career guide in learning and career, what I am most concerned about my child is a special person, I am only limited to my limits, only in that environment, you can't step outside. I hope that my child will at least have knowledge, direct him to have a profession, and he can more or less serve himself" (Parent Group Discussion).

The need for self-assertion: In which, the need for academic support reached a score of 3.83, the need for vocational guidance and vocational training support was 3.95, the most appreciated need for children with hearing impairment was the need for information support, training, and job introduction, with an average score of 4.09 and a standard deviation of 0.821. When interviewing in depth, children also show that they want to study at a higher level, such as junior high school, high school, vocational training, have a stable job to support themselves, and become useful people for society. There are even students with hearing impairments who want to go to university. Specifically, the exchange of a student, "I want to go to high school" (In-depth interview 15, male, grade 4). For girls in grade 8, they want to study at a higher level than me: "I want to go to higher education, to study high school in Da Lat, I want to have a high school and support learning programs specifically for children with hearing impairments" and "I want to learn a lot, study at higher levels, go to university because they love learning and have good academic ability. Despite the difficulties of my own shortcomings, I always try, and I am praised by the teachers for being good and quick-witted" (In-depth Interview 3, Female, Grade 8).

Thus, the needs of children with hearing impairment are at a high level, and the most needed support needs are employment information support and hearing aid equipment.

4.3. The current state of psychological support

Psychological problems encountered by deaf children

The psychological problems encountered by children with hearing impairment are also quite diverse (Table 4), among 149 children. Thus, the needs of children with hearing impairment are at a high level, and the most support needs are employment information support, and hearing aid equipment for hearing impairment, 74.5% said that children with hearing impairment had been abused by friends teasing and 71.8% of children have experienced stress, anger, sadness, and anxiety. Children feel stressed and angry when they cannot express their will to their parents and others. When conducting the discussion, the parent group also said, "Children also feel stressed and angry when talking to their parents and relatives, but they see that their parents and relatives do not understand them, and children with hearing impairment also have tension, anger, and anxiety" (Parent Group Discussion). Some children will feel sad and decide not to communicate with the people around

them, as in the case of "Dad and grandma don't communicate at all" (Parent Group Discussion). Some children feel sad because when they first go to a specialized educational institution, they are homesick, they feel lonely and want to go home and some children are sad because they cannot communicate with others as in the case of girls "Children are homesick and like to go home to play" (In-depth interview 16, Female, Grade 4) and "My parents both work in the fields. Normal economic conditions, good family relationships, but you're a little sad because of communication difficulties" (In-depth Interview 12, Female, Grade 5).

Table 4. Psychological problems of children with hearing impairment

No.	Psychological problems deaf children encounter	No	Yes	Total
1	When stressed, angry, sad, worried	28,2	71,8	100,0
2	When feeling low self-esteem and guilt	38,9	61,1	100,0
3	When teased by friends	25,5	74,5	100,0
4	When there is no one to share	45,0	55,0	100,0
5	When you feel lonely, isolated	44,3	55,7	100,0

Source: Field survey data (2025).

The results also showed that 64.1% of children with hearing impairment felt low self-esteem and guilt, and more than 55% of children felt lonely, isolated, and had no one to share with. This table is also similar to the psychological difficulty score in Table 2 above, assessing the psychological difficulty score of children, which is at a high level of 3.12-3.46. The results of the in-depth interview also showed that children with hearing impairment had the same psychological problems, especially when they first arrived at the facility, feeling sad, lonely, and not knowing who to share with. A female deaf student feels homesick. "In boarding, sad, missing parents. Remember that my parents want to go home to visit my parents, when they quarrel or have a problem, I find her immediately" (In-depth Interview 24, female, grade 2). Some children are afraid to wear hearing aids because they are different from other children, and some children do not want to wear them because it is a sign that they are deaf. They will be teased as disabled. In the facility, there are several cases where two siblings who are both deaf children also face similar difficulties: "The family has 6 people, 4 children, and 1 younger brother who is also a deaf student in grade 4. My parents both worked in the fields. Normal economic conditions, good family relationships, but you are a little sad because of communication difficulties" (In-depth interview 12, female, grade 5).

Psychologically depressed because they do not want to study, it is difficult to study, and they cannot absorb knowledge. For example, when interviewing deaf children, they answered, "I don't like to go to school, I like to learn the profession of a coffee farmer because I have to learn a lot and it is difficult" (In-depth interview 27, male, grade 3). Children are afraid to communicate with others, as shared by a parent: "I just stay at home, I don't want to communicate with others, I want to be autistic, I just watch TV at home... I don't want to come into contact with...." (In-depth interview with parents, female, 30 years old).

Children are nervous when communicating with listeners in their daily lives, or have difficulty communicating at work. A teacher in a specialized education institution said, "Psychologically, the children in school do not have many problems, but when they go out, it is a big problem, too big a barrier. When going out to communicate with outsiders, it is easy to lead to frustration and confidence when communicating with outsiders. The ability to express is difficult" and "Through communicating with some children when they graduated from school, the psychology of low self-esteem is there because when they go to work, they do not communicate with their employers, causing psychological frustration, misunderstanding each other, making you inferior about your abilities, not believing in your abilities, you want to have your friends" (In-depth interview, teacher, female, 40 years old).

Regarding the supported content, children are helped with psychological problems that appear at the grassroots, in class, and in school. Some problems are related to learning, sometimes even with problems of the child's family.

How often does the deaf child seek help?

Table 5 shows how often deaf children seek help from 89 children, accounting for 59.8%, the occasional rate of 31.5%, 8.1% is rare, and only 0.7% of deaf children never seek support.

Table 5. Level of access to psychological support for deaf children

Level	Frequency	Percent (%)
Never	1	0.7
Rarely	12	8.1
Occasionally	47	31.5
Often	81	54.4
Very often	8	5.4
Total	149	100.0

Source: Field survey data (2025).

Psychological support for deaf children

When children are in difficulty, they go to teachers, staff, nannies, or nuns (Anh Sao Private School for the Deaf is managed by sisters in the convent). Through conversation, it helps children solve their difficulties and helps them release their emotions. Deaf children said, "Participate in group chats to share feelings," and children also look forward to regular support, as shared by children, "Social workers need to understand the psychology of children and actively counsel" (In-depth interview 19, female, class 2a1).

Table 6 shows that 93.3% of children are counseled and supported by teachers. When interviewing teachers, the research team said that the children were very closely monitored and supported by the nanny and homeroom teacher promptly when the children had problems that needed support. Specifically, the case at the school said that "When quarreling with friends, the sisters take the stand to solve it, the children can see the sisters continuously, so they can be supported in time, small problems" (In-depth interview 22, female, grade 1). When talking to teachers in the two campuses, it also shows that there are timely support activities for children, helping to solve the psychological difficulties that children encounter, as shared by the teacher afterwards: "That is, a homeroom teacher of the school, in addition to their teaching work, often has to share with students about problems psychology and physiology that children encounter, resolve conflicts or private problems of children" (In-depth interview, teacher, 40-year-old female). Or another teacher said: "My school provides psychological support in which the board of directors is very concerned, the Director and Deputy Director at the center often stay at the center for a lot of time, so there is something to do, they are the first to explain to the children and then they are close to so there is something urgent that can be solved immediately" (In-depth interview, teacher, 54-year-old female).

In addition to teachers, families play an important role in psychological support for deaf children, accounting for 80.5%. Next is support from friends in the school/center, accounting for 75.2%. Deaf children will communicate and share more with their parents and friends when they have difficulties, be it in person or by texting; some children have friends on social networks. This is also a way to help children have friends, release emotions, and share their thoughts. The proportion of children who think they receive support from staff in schools and centers is 49% and 32.2%, respectively.

Table 6. Psychological support persons for deaf children

No.	Psychological support persons for children with hearing impairment	No	Yes	Total
1	Teachers	6.7	93.3	100,0
2	Staff in the school/center	51.0	49.0	100,0
3	Family	19.5	80.5	100,0
4	Friends in school/center	24.8	75.2	100,0
5	Social Media Friends	67.8	32.2	100,0

Source: Field survey data (2025).

The survey showed that the nurses in the school should completely support deaf students regularly, while at the Center, teachers, in addition to 8 teaching sessions a week, in the evenings, the teachers are assigned to be on duty to support the children to study, sleep, and solve problems if they arise.

In addition to the support from young teachers who are supported by the children themselves at the grassroots, older brothers and sisters are also involved. Each room is arranged with older siblings and younger siblings to support and help each other. A deaf child in grade 5 said, "Friends support me to be less sad. I confide in you. When I first arrived at the center, I felt sad... Teachers connect with parents to text, call their children to talk, and parents talk to their children (In-depth interview 12, female, grade 5). The parent group also added "Older brothers and sisters love their children, support them" (Parent group discussion).

Children appreciate the support of teachers, family, and friends, with a score of 3.96. Her psychological problems were relieved or ended with a score of 3.77. Other support activities were also rated by the children with a high score above 3.5 for deaf children to receive an initial assessment of the problems they encountered, to talk to learn more about the problems they are facing, and to plan to help. When we interviewed the school's teachers in charge, we also learned that deaf children are supported and helped as soon as a problem is detected. Especially children have conflict problems, and have difficulty communicating with other members of the room, specifically in the case of "When deaf students come to me, they can share about their conflict when living in the boarding room, they will reconcile and analyze who is wrong. Which friends are right, or the deaf children confide in them about the psychology of being away from home, homesickness, or not calling their family or homesickness for a long time" (In-depth interview, teacher, 36-years-old female).

Table 7. Psychological support activities for children with hearing impairment

No.	Supporting content	Level of support (1 strongly disagrees and 5 strongly agrees)					Mean	Standard Deviation
		1	2	3	4	5		
1	Receive an initial assessment of the problems encountered	2.7	8.7	46.3	35.6	6.7	3.35	0.838
2	Get a chat to learn more about the issues you're facing.		3.4	38.3	51.0	7.4	3.62	0.673
3	Get Planned Help	1.3	5.4	40.9	38.3	14.1	3.58	0.847
4	Get help from teachers, family, and friends	1.3	34.9	30.2	33.6		3.96	0.861
5	My psychological problems are relieved or ended	0.7	4.7	27.5	51.7	15.4	3.77	0.792

Source: Field survey data (2025).

Children are listened to, and supported to help solve their psychological problems, specifically for example, a 7th grader said: "I am listened to and shared about my problems, I am very hot-tempered, they help me to be calmer and control my emotions. It has also decreased by 20-30%. I have changed my emotions a little" (In-depth interview 6, male, grade 7).

The level of satisfaction of children with hearing impairment with psychological support activities is shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Satisfaction with psychological support activities

Satisfaction with psychological support	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Standard Deviation
Dissatisfied	3	2.0	3.77	0.833
Normal	64	43.0		
Good	47	31.5		
Very satisfied	35	23.5		
Total	149	100.0		

Source: Field survey data (2025).

The level of very satisfied and satisfied accounts for 55%. The average overall satisfaction score is 3.77. Specifically, children with hearing impairment rated the activity as satisfactory, specifically "When encountering difficult problems, teachers help talk and relieve psychological stress. The problem is alleviated... I am satisfied with this, feel comfortable when the problem is solved" (In-depth interview 7, female, grade 7).

The level of support is rated as normal at 43%, and there are 2% of deaf children who are not satisfied with this activity. The teacher evaluated this activity as follows: *"Actually, this activity is not clear, but only when the child has any difficulties, he will go to the teacher and confide in the teacher. Discrete activities when students in the homeroom class have any problems in life, family, or friends. When they come to her, they can share about the conflict when living in the boarding room, they will reconcile and analyze for their children's which friends are wrong, which friends are right, or they can confide in them about the psychology of being away from home, homesickness, or not calling their family for a long time. They will interpret for their parents, but the deaf children do not have phones. There are even very few, very long before a friend can confide in you about your feelings about your girlfriend or boyfriend. You look to her for advice on personal feelings"* (In-depth interview, teacher, Female, 40 years old). However, parents highly appreciate the support activities of teachers and teachers for their children, with their parents being very supportive. *"Children have collisions... It's normal, you support the solution, and you are number one, you are great, the nanny is number one"* (Parent Group Discussion).

With psychological support activities, it has supported assessment, information gathering, and support to help relieve emotions, resolve conflicts and stress, and help children be less sad to integrate into the facility. She and her teachers perform the main task of teaching, supporting digital skills activities, and providing psychological support. However, there are currently no staff in charge of social work activities in schools or intensive training to support this activity.

5. DISCUSSION

In the process of research, it was found that the scores of psychological aspects were at a high level. In particular, it can be seen that the most difficult thing is the lack of people to share and support psychologically, which is also quite similar to previous research when children with hearing impairment experienced feelings of isolation (Freitas et al., 2021). Children in the facility meet with teachers every day, and the main language of communication is sign language and lip cues. The similarity of this study with some previous studies shows that children have psychological manifestations of stress, anger, sadness, anxiety, etc. (Nguyễn Thị Kim Hoa, 2014, p. 111). This study also showed that feelings of low self-esteem and anxiety were the same as the results of the study. Lesley Jones (2011) (Jones et al., 2001). In addition, children use body language, expressions, non-verbal behaviors, and can use writing down paper or texting. However, regular support in all aspects of life or psychological support is not always available. Deaf children also sometimes feel lonely, isolated, and guilty or teased by their peers. This was also shown in previous research (Fitriyani et al., 2024).

To overcome that difficulty, deaf children want to be supported in many different aspects, from examination, communication, provision of information, and career introduction. The highest need for support is information about employment and the provision of hearing aids, which is similar to the results of previous research. For children with hearing impairment, if not treated early, it can lead to poor academic performance, which can lead to reduced job opportunities later in life (Olusanya et al., 2014; WHO, 2016). And psychological support is also at a high score. Many children admit that they have such psychological manifestations. The reasons for such psychological manifestations are related to difficulties in communication, learning, and integration, as well as vocational training or other problems. This is also similar to a study by a Vietnamese author in 2019, when middle and high school students had difficulties related to learning, career orientation, relationships in life, and students' inner self (Võ Thị Lệ Hường, 2019).

Grasp the difficulties and needs for psychological support in the two facilities, with the function and task of psychological support for children. Children receive direct support from social workers who are homeroom teachers, subject teachers, and friends in school. Although there are regulations on this issue in Vietnam, which are reflected in Circular 33/2018/TT-BGDĐT and recently Circular 18/2025/TT-BGDĐT guiding school counseling and school social work, there are still no official activities. When knowing that the child has psychological manifestations, the social worker has assessed, talked to collect information, and has a plan to help. Most children feel that their problems are alleviated or over. However, according to the assessment of social workers in the grassroots themselves, although they have tried very hard, the results have not been as desired. There is still a great need for a team of professional social workers, with counseling rooms to support children, because currently, teachers are in charge of support, not trained in psychological counseling.

The study had some acknowledged limitations. The study only stopped at identifying the manifestations of the child's psychology. The study has not clearly studied the factors affecting social work activities in supporting children with hearing impairments.

6. CONCLUSION

The results of the study show that deaf children face various psychological difficulties. Despite being educated in a specialized educational environment, deaf children still face barriers when there is a lack of people to share with, psychological support, feelings of loneliness, guilt, and self-esteem issues, etc. The manifestations of psychological difficulties are all at a high above-average level.

Children with hearing impairment want to be supported in many aspects, from examinations, hearing aid support, psychology, and employment information support. Children want to be heard, shared, and supported when they are struggling. Children with hearing impairment have received psychological support when it is detected that the child has signs of tension, anxiety, or anger... teachers have approached, evaluated, collected information, and made plans to help. The jobs are in addition to the duties of teachers, and social workers have partly met the needs of children. In order for this activity to be even better, in the future, institutions need to send teachers to train in this field, or follow the circular on Social Work in schools; the activities need to be more methodical and professional. Although most teachers have the appropriate qualifications, special education or inclusion certificates... But to provide in-depth support for psychological activities, social workers need more in-depth courses and certificates. Schools need more seminars to discuss difficult issues, needs, and appropriate support activities for children with hearing impairments.

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