

“Meaning Making” is the third out of four booklets on Congenital Deafblindness and Communication, which are written to inspire families and professionals communicating with deafblind children and adults. The way human beings understand the world is an essential issue for seeing/hearing partners of congenital deafblind persons. Because of their dual sensory loss, deafblind persons experience the world first and foremost bodily, which challenges seeing/hearing partners when they try to take the perspective of their deafblind partner, when experiencing the world together, and when they communicate about shared experiences.

The first chapter addresses how gestures emerge from bodily emotional experiences in the world. The experiences that leave traces in the body and the mind of a deafblind person, often appear as bodily gestures referring to significant aspects of an event.

The second chapter focuses on narratives. The dynamic narrative form is essential for meaning making in all human beings. In this chapter we will address how partners of deafblind persons can use this knowledge in their intervention strategies.

In the third chapter two different but supplementary theories are described, clarifying the processes of meaning making. Katherine Nelson’s model on Mental Event Representation and a model from cognitive semiotics are described as supplementary tools.

The fourth chapter addresses negotiations, which is the pragmatic phenomenon happening in dialogues between partners, when meaning is co-created and shared.

The last chapter of booklet three addresses the exposure to the cultural language in the case of deafblindness. The specific challenges we meet in tactile communication, when we are trying to introduce linguistic elements, are addressed theoretically and practically.

The second part of this booklet gives information about the DVD that is enclosed together with guidelines for watching the video. It illustrates the essential concepts from the five chapters of this booklet.