

Hearing Impairment (Deafness): Surviving in Silence (Non-Fiction)

Est. Time: 2 Weeks Reading/45 Minutes Class

Objective

Gain insight into the life of an individual with deafness who survived the Holocaust.

Synopsis

During the 1940s, Harry Dunai, a Jewish boy who was deaf, is sent by his family to the Jewish Institution for the Deaf in Budapest. However, when Hungary fell under the Nazi regime, he was not able to return to his family. Harry, along with others from the institute, learned to do whatever it took to avoid deportation to the gas chambers.

Activity

Read the following book and be prepared to discuss the questions below in class.

Title: *Surviving in Silence: A Deaf Boy in the Holocaust, The Harry I. Dunai Story* (2002)

Author: Eleanor C. Dunai

Publisher: Gallaudet University Press • Washington, DC

For Your Information

To learn more about hearing impairments, visit:

- [Deafness and Hearing Loss](#) (Center for Parent Information and Resources)
- [Hearing Loss in Children](#) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

Questions/Discussion Topics

1. What was Harry's birth name and why did he change it?
2. Why did Harry have such a difficult time adjusting to the Jewish Institution for the Deaf?
3. Who was the teacher he loved and what did she do for him when the school was disbanded?
4. What helped Harry move easily from country to country?
5. Harry had a love-hate relationship with Dr. Kanizsai. Although Dr. Kanizsai was a father figure to Harry and protected him, Harry felt that he was too harsh and not trustworthy. Do you think Harry was justified in feeling this way? Explain.
6. Do you think Harry would have been as successful in overcoming barriers related to his disability if he had not been so focused on survival? Explain your answer.
7. Do you think Harry's parents made the right decision to send him to the institution? Why or why not?