

Format and Questions of the Post COVID discussions

The COVID-19 Pandemic saw NZ introduce a series of restrictions between March - June 2020, including going into a nationwide lockdown. A number of initiatives rose from this change in life. Deaf people came together online to share videos and stories and organisations sprung into action to ensure that information was delivered. It got us thinking, just what were Deaf people thinking during this time? People were scared, people were contemplative and people were also being creative. We got asking.

A series of Zoom conversations were held on 10 and 26 May and 11 June 2020 with 29 participants from all over NZ.

Participants went into breakout rooms with three or four people per room. There was one moderator per breakout room who went through **four questions**.

1. What has COVID shown you about the NZ Deaf community?
 - a. Positives = strengths (and why is this a strength?)
 - b. Negatives = challenges (and why is this a challenge?)
2. What is an ideal NZ Deaf Community? (e.g. how can we become stronger, united, and kinder?)
3. How can the NZ Deaf community take steps towards being healthy?
4. What are the top 3 things that need to happen for the NZ Deaf community?

Participants went into breakout rooms with three or four people per room. The aim was to spend 15 minutes on each question. For the last question, participants were asked to give three top things that they wanted to happen. Moderators reported back on the top three things to the full group.

Participant's identities have been kept private, as there are a lot of mixed boundaries where Deaf people work in the community as professionals and those giving their views as individuals. The participants made it clear that they were giving their views as an individual member of the Deaf community.

While some Māori Deaf participated in these discussions, we felt it is important that Māori Deaf, Tū Tangata Turi have their own discussions with their own processes and procedures. We refer to [Kirsten Smiler's research into Māori Deaf Identity in New Zealand](#) where Māori have a plural identity and want the opportunity to foster their identity in their own space, or turangawaewae. If Māori are given the opportunity to explore both their Deaf and Māori identities, they can articulate their identity and aspirations to both Māori and Deaf communities.

The Post COVID discussions are not conclusive nor do they represent the many tangents and sectors of the Deaf community. It is our hope that these can continue in other areas, such as Deaf Sport, Youth, Māori Deaf etc, not to mention face to face community consultations.