

TITLE | “Emotional Baggage”

MEDIA | Canson Cold Press, Watercolor, Micro Pen

SIZE | 8 x 10

By Kim Anderson

#FEBCHALLENGE19

Deaf individuals are more than two times as likely as their hearing peers to experience some form of trauma. Having worked as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor and as a Mental Health Navigator for 18+ years . . . every Deaf individual that I have worked with came with a wide range of mild to severe emotional baggage of systemic trauma. Every Deaf individual. Including myself. Unfortunately, that is a tragic normative. Most Deaf individuals never have an opportunity to work directly with a counselor/service provider who is Deaf like them and is fluent in both ASL and English. Once they have that opportunity, during many in-depth journeys of counseling/guidance sessions, the layers/baggage of systemic oppression would be peeled back to the point of fully accepting and loving their core Deaf selves with all the bursting emotions – joyful, exuberant, mischievous, sad, scared, angry, confused, and so on, that come with being human – processing and living with it in a healthy way. Deaf individuals have difficulty accessing direct services they need. There is urgent need for counselors in all kinds of fields who are Deaf (preferred) or hearing and are Deaf centric and fluent in ASL and English.