



Canadian Hard of Hearing Association British Columbia Chapter

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The Loop Newsletter

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Hearing Loss is Everyone's Affair: Report on CHHA-BC's Public Forum

By Courtney Walliser, CHHA-BC Receptionist

On Saturday, June 2nd, participants gathered at the SFU Harbour Centre in Vancouver for an afternoon of engaging presentations and discussion. Entitled "Hearing Loss is Everyone's Affair," the forum aimed to provide information to help people live optimally with hearing loss in their individual lives as well as in their families and communities. This event was well-attended and featured guest speakers Gael Hannan, Dr. Nancy Newall, Dr. Kathy Pichora-Fuller, and Dr. Gurjit Singh.

In her performance, "I Love You—Now Speak Up," Gael entertained attendees with her usual charm, sharing humorous and relatable hearing loss anecdotes. Hearing loss impacts not only the individual, but their communication partners. Unaddressed hearing loss can become a source of tension for families and friends; a hard of hearing individual may become frustrated when their loved ones forget to use necessary communication strategies. It is important to be patient with each other and keep a sense of humour; as Gael writes: "*Hearing loss isn't funny - but a sense of humour makes living with it easier.*"

Dr. Newall's topic, "The Importance of Social Connection," explored how social connection relates to health and wellness. Research has shown that loneliness can affect one's sleep, cardiovascular system, and immune system. As well, Dr. Newall described a study revealing that the areas of the brain activated by social rejection were the same as those areas activated by physical pain. She highlighted the importance of maintaining social connection, whether that be talking or visiting with family and friends, working, connecting with an organization, or volunteering within the community.

Cognitive decline, as it relates to decline in sensory functions (hearing loss and *(Continued on page 2)*)



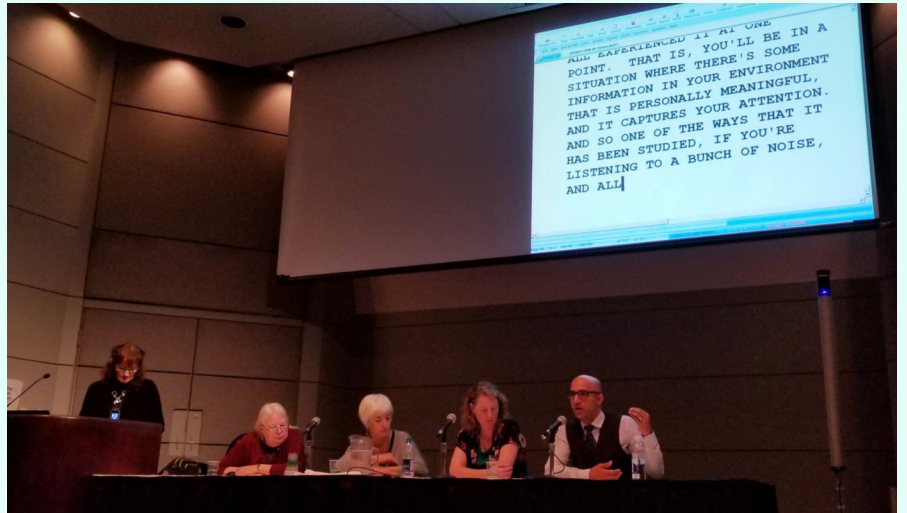
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(Continued from page 1) vision loss), was the focus of Dr. Pichora-Fuller's presentation on "Hearing and Healthy Aging." Studies have shown that higher levels of hearing loss are associated with greater cognitive decline. As well, social isolation has a direct impact on cognitive decline. This speaks to the importance of earlier identification of sensory losses, managing one's hearing loss, and staying socially connected.

The final topic, "Factors that Contribute to Success with Audiologic Rehabilitation," was presented by Dr. Singh. Dr. Singh spoke about the shift in audiology from providing a medical model of care to a more patient-centered focus. In patient- or family-centered models of care, decision-making is shared by the patient and clinician and is guided by the patient's values. Research suggests that patients are more likely to use hearing aids if they receive care from a clinician with a

patient-centered focus. Dr. Singh also discussed the benefits of involving family in hearing rehabilitation. Family members can encourage a hard of hearing individual to seek help, they can be advocates, facilitate communication, decrease hearing-related distress, and assist with care and operation of hearing aids.

Presentations were followed by a question and answer period where attendees were able to ask questions of our panel of speakers. We would like to express our thanks to Gael Hannan, Dr. Newall, Dr. Pichora-Fuller, and Dr. Singh for presenting, to Advanced Listening Systems and Phonak for providing assistive devices for this event, to Catherine Siegler of Accurate Realtime Inc. for providing CART captioning, and to The Caldor Foundation for funding assistance. Special thanks also go to Dr. Gloria Gutman of SFU's Gerontology Research Centre, the CHHA BC Board of Directors and Forum Organizing Committee, and SFU Harbour Centre for contributing to the success of the day.



(From left) Dr. Ruth Warick facilitating the question and answer period with Dr. Kathy Pichora-Fuller, Gael Hannan, Dr. Nancy Newall, & Dr. Gurjit Singh



Proposed Accessible Canada Act and the Hard of Hearing Community

By Dr. Ruth Warick, CHHA-BC Director-at-Large & President of CHHA Vancouver Branch

Accessibility is key for the hard of hearing community. We require access to the environment through enlightened attitudes and appropriate and quality technology such as hearing aids, cochlear implants, assistive listening devices, loop systems and captioning, supported by qualified personnel. As a result of the importance of accessibility, the recent (Continued on page 3)



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(Continued from page 2) announcement of the proposed Accessible Canada Act to Parliament is of key interest. The Bill passed first reading on June 20th. The second reading is expected to happen in the Fall when the House of Commons sits again. Here is a link to the full Bill: parl.ca/DocumentViewer/en/42-1/bill/C-81/first-reading .

According to a government release, the Bill outlines how the Government of Canada will require organizations under federal jurisdiction to identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility, including in:

- the built environment (buildings and public spaces);
- employment (job opportunities and employment policies and practices);
- information and communication technologies (digital content and technologies);
- the procurement of goods and services;
- the delivery of programs and services; and
- transportation (through air, rail, ferry and bus by carriers that operate across provincial, territorial or international borders).

It is heartening to see the wide scope covered in the Bill. As expected, the language of the document is universal but is intended to be sufficiently broad and inclusive to cover the principles of access. Furthermore, there are mechanisms to ensure its provision, but it remains to be seen if this will become a powerful Bill, or simply a paper tiger. The Government did extensive consultation in coming up with the Act and CHHA was involved in this process. A delegation from CHHA BC and its branches attended the consultative meeting held in Vancouver in November 2016. In March 2017 CHHA Vancouver Branch held a special meeting on the topic, and forwarded its feedback to CHHA National. As well, our national body collected feedback from CHHA and other non-government organizations, and submitted views to the federal consultative process as part of its Spotlight on Invisible Disabilities Project.

Feedback from CHHA Vancouver included the following:

- Accessibility needs to be part of policies and codes. E.g. The National Building Code
- Accessibility is required for emergency situations and natural disasters.
- Improve telephone communications.
- Improve airport and airline accessibility.
- Create a Centre of Excellence i.e. on captioning access.
- Provide incentives for provinces to support subsidies for hearing aids and cochlear implants.

Now that an Accessible Canada Act has been tabled, the task is before us to review it by applying a hard of hearing lens. Once adopted, we will need to stand up and hold the relevant authorities accountable for its implementation. It will be up to us, in part, to ensure that the Act is a real - and not a paper - tiger.



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Reaching Out: The Power of Connecting with Others

By Gael Hannan

Gael is a writer, humorist, hearing loss advocate, and volunteer on the CHHA-BC Board of Directors.

I like looking back at significant events in my life. Some were immediately obvious – turning 18, leaving home, getting my first hearing aid, first good job, meeting husband, marrying husband, birth of child at age 41.

But some events only gain significance with hindsight, “Wow, THAT sure changed my life!”

In 1995 I attended my first gathering of people with hearing loss – and I came home a changed woman.

When we talk about reaching out to others, it sounds powerful and emotional, a striving to connect. But my only intention in speaking at a local Canadian Hard of Hearing Association (CHHA) meeting was to talk about myself. In a eureka moment, I’d decided to write a book about being hard of hearing. Someone thought I was a journalist with hearing loss and invited me to be a guest speaker.

I’m mortified when I think back on how naïve I was going into that meeting. I was going to tell these people a thing or two about being hard of hearing! Who did I think I was?! I was nothing more than a 40 year-old who had recently graduated from one BTE to two CIC hearing aids; I knew nothing about hearing loss beyond my personal experience. Apart from my great-grandmother who barked at everyone, I had never known anyone else with hearing loss.

Walking into that meeting was like entering a science fiction movie. People were walking around with big honking hearing aids, hand-held transmitters and FM systems – and they were happy! Somebody was fussing with looping the room, there were speakers, two screens, two projectors, and most of all, there was this miraculous thing called real-time captioning!

As I addressed the group of 80 people with my personal story, I kept looking sideways to see my own words on the screen, keeping up with me as I spoke. (Not an easy feat; I speak quickly and I’ve felled more than one captioner in my time.) It was almost an out-of-body experience. Even more disconcerting were the many audience members who were also looking at that screen, rather than me. They gave a new meaning to the term “shifty-eyed” as they kept up constant eye movement between the screen and my face and back again. Watching them watching me made me dizzy! ***(Continued on page 5)***



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(Continued from page 4) Almost a third of the audience was wearing headphones (this was over 20 years ago) attached to their FM receivers. It was like being in the United Nations with all participants receiving simultaneous translation in their own languages, which is exactly what was happening. Apart from a couple of senior ladies who promptly fell asleep in the front row, everyone was intently following what was being said, using combinations of residual hearing, headphones, FM, caption-reading and speechreading. This access was something very new to me.

It hit me like a rock. I was looking out at 80 people who were just like me. These were my people! I understood their issues and they understood mine. Even though I hadn't intended to reach out, I felt powerfully connected to them. In talking with them, I found a new perspective. Hearing loss affected every area of my life and it wasn't just my issue; it was almost a way of life that I shared with other people. I came home pumped and bubbling, but still not aware that I was in the middle of a life-changing process.

A few months later, I went to my first CHHA National conference. I was pregnant and worried about how I was going to cope as a hard-of-hearing mom. How would I hear my baby crying in the night? If I didn't hear him burp, would he blow up? I needed answers.

Three knowledge-packed days gave me answers, new friends, and a revelation. Without realizing it, I had always felt shamed, in a small way, by my hearing loss, even though I had been raised in an affirmative environment. My family and friends had a better perspective about my hearing loss than I did, because deep down I felt a bit defective and hampered by my hearing loss.

And now, by inadvertently reaching out to other people – my people – that shame was gone, replaced with a healthy, positive attitude.

Again, I came home a changed woman. I looked at my husband almost pityingly because he was hearing, the poor man. But he did come in handy. A few months later I discovered how I would answer the night cries of my hungry baby. My poor, hearing husband jabbed me awake until I stumbled out of bed while he returned to the joy of sleep.

CHHA Vancouver Walk2Hear

CHHA Vancouver Branch invites you to their 8th annual walk/run to raise awareness and funds for hearing loss. Hearing loss affects one in five people and, without proper technology and supports, can lead to isolation, loneliness and negative impacts.



Walk2Hear will be held **Sunday, September 23, 2018** at **Jericho Beach Park, East End.**

Meeting place is between 2nd Ave. & Wallace St. Registration between 1-1:30pm. Walk begins at 1:30pm.

For more information, to register, or to donate please visit: <https://bit.ly/2KcmhdT>



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Branch Updates

- CHHA-BC Chapter hosted the first in a series of sessions entitled “Seniors Talk About Hearing Loss.” The session was held on May 9th at the Chilliwack Library. Dr. Lorne Hansen, a volunteer with CHHA-BC, shared his hearing loss journey, including the process of being fitted with two cochlear implants. This new project is funded by Employment and Social Development Canada through the New Horizons for Seniors Program.
- The CHHA BC Youth Peer Support Program hosted its final BC Buddies event of the school year in April. The goal of the Buddies program is to connect students who are deaf and hard of hearing and build a sense of community. To read a report of their latest event, visit: <https://bit.ly/2KnEZeG>
- CHHA Abbotsford Branch will be holding its next meeting on Wednesday, October 10th at 1:00 pm. There will be loop listening devices at the meeting for attendees to try. The meeting will be held at Chances Abbotsford, 30835 Peardonville Rd, Abbotsford.

Speechreading Instructor Training

Leslee Scott, CHHA’s Western Instructor for the “Let’s Talk” course, will be providing Speechreading Instructor Training this summer!

This 5-day training course will take place in Chilliwack from Thursday, August 30th to Monday, September 3rd.

The “Let’s Talk” program was developed by experienced hard of hearing speechreading instructors throughout Canada to address the growing demand for speechreading training among individuals with hearing loss.

If you are interested in taking this Speechreading Instructor Training course, please contact Leslee by email: leslee@idhhc.ca

Connect with a local branch!

CHHA BC Youth Peer Support Program Email: chhbcypsp@gmail.com Website: http://www.chha-bc.org/youthpsp/	Abbotsford Branch Email: abbotsfordretiree@gmail.com
CHHA BC Parents’ Branch Email: info@chhaparents.com Website: http://www.chhaparents.com/	Comox Valley Branch Email: cvhardofhearing@gmail.com
North Shore Branch Email: chha_nsb@telus.net Website: http://www.chha-nsb.com/	HEAR Branch (Coquitlam) Email: anna.r.bernard@gmail.com
	Vancouver Branch Email: chhavancouver@gmail.com



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Articles & Resources

Do You Have a Hearing Buddy?

by Shari Eberts (taken from Living With Hearing Loss: A Hearing Loss Blog)

“I didn’t do it on purpose — finding a hearing buddy to help me navigate my recent yoga retreat. It just happened, mostly because my hearing buddy enjoyed helping me and because I wasn’t shy about letting her know about my hearing loss. I used to regularly hide my hearing loss, but since I came out of my hearing loss closet, I make a point to announce my hearing issues at the start of any retreat / meeting / class where they might impact my interactions with others. This retreat was no exception...” **READ MORE:** <https://bit.ly/2IV6qQ9>

Control Over Hearing Aids: A Consumer’s Perspective

by Carolyn Haas (taken from Hearing Health Matters: The Better Hearing Consumer)

“When I got my first hearing aid, I was an immature 13-year-old high school freshman. I was meeting weekly with a special education teacher because I am blind. She noticed I was struggling with orientation and navigating the school hallways, and I wasn’t always responding appropriately to questions. A trip to the school nurse and a hearing screening later, I was off to the nearest dealer who fitted me with a Zenith hearing aid in my right ear...” **READ MORE:** <https://bit.ly/2xtY3pH>

How to Travel Like a HOH

by Monique Les (taken from the CHHA Youth Peer Support Program’s website)

“Summer is just around the corner! For some, this may mean lots of travel – whether it be a road trip, a flight to somewhere exotic, or even visiting sights in your hometown. Here are some quick tips for you to have a fabulous summer...” **READ MORE:** <https://bit.ly/2sSWc8S>

Patient Centered Care for Hard of Hearing?

by Ainsley R. Latour (taken from the CHHA National website)

“As a young health care professional, I commonly hear the phrase “patient centered care.” What does this mean? The patient is surrounded by a circle of health care professionals, all working on their behalf. The patient has the right to be informed and participate in their care...” **READ MORE:** <https://bit.ly/2yeQLpU>