



# Canadian Hard of Hearing Association British Columbia Chapter

## THE LOOP NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2020 | VOL. 25



### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

BY RUTH WARICK, PRESIDENT OF CHHA-BC

As restrictions are slowly being eased in our province, two strategies for dealing with COVID-19 remain, namely, the use of face masks and social distancing. Both strategies pose difficulties for us because, as hard of hearing persons, most of us need to see another person's face and to be in closer proximity to understand them. I have had several occasions where I could not understand a store clerk even with repetition of the message and many others have told me of similar problems.

Broken communications may result in disappointment or frustration. In a medical situation, health care may be compromised and, in an emergency, a person's safety and well-being may be impaired.

There are some ways to improve communications. One of the most effective is what we urge all the time: speak clearly at a moderate rate, repeat using different words, and supplement

with pen/paper. Above all, be patient and kind.

A more technological solution is the use of an assistive listening device thereby magnifying the other person's voice. In such cases, it would require us to use our arm to extend the device to the other person since it is not feasible to ask someone else to hold it. Use of the cell phone as an amplification device is another strategy. Both approaches involve explaining to the other person the nature of our condition and the purpose of the device (i.e. to amplify sound, not being a recording device). This presents an opportunity to create a teachable moment if the circumstances are favorable.

Another partial solution is for the use of an opaque mask to provide more visibility of another person's lips. In health care settings such masks must meet medical standards. Few are produced in Canada at this time, but

#### What's inside this issue:

Message from the President.....	1-2
Certificate of Participation.....	2
It's about De-Risking.....	3
Online Learning.....	4-5
Acknowledgement.....	5
Letter to Editor.....	6
Face Shields.....	7-8
Contact Us.....	9

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

efforts are underway to encourage production. Consumers can make their own opaque masks by googling on-line patterns; home-made masks do not meet requirements to meet medical standards.

Wavefront Centre for Communication Accessibility is working with a local company to produce face shields. When combined with social distancing, they provide an alternative solution. Typically, they would be worn over a face mask but can be used solo, along with social distancing, in non-essential situations where communication is affected by use of a face mask.

Meanwhile, we need to get our message out. Awareness-raising about our challenges and potential solutions is vital.

CHHA-BC has issued a press release to the media, shared with our members in a previous issue of the Loop. We have raised the issue of use of opaque masks by healthcare workers during bi-monthly briefings with the disability community of the BC Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction. We also signed up with the Canadian Consortium on Neurodegeneration in Aging in issuing a press release nationwide (included in this

issue). Members of the Consortium are working with their contacts to promote the production of opaque face masks.

We are in a new era that has altered usual ways of doing things and affected previous norms for interactions. The quarantine-like period may be coming to a close, but we are still facing restrictions for some time. We need more people to understand our challenges and to collaborate on solutions. Meanwhile, to repeat the words of BC's top Provincial Health Officer Bonnie Henry: Stay safe. Be kind.

## OUR CERTIFICATE OF PARTICIPATION FOR WORLD HEARING DAY





# IT'S ABOUT DE-RISKING!



**HENRY KUTARNA**  
**CHHA-BC OPERATIONS MANAGER**

Unbelievable. Surreal. Massive surprise.  
Black swan event. Unexpected.  
Shocking. Unprecedented.

We've become used to these kinds of headlines in recent months. And when you see these words you immediately know what people are talking about!

What has CHHA-BC done to react?

Well, as you know, we accelerated our business model towards on-line financial transactions. Staff worked from off-site locations coming into the office for vital matters only. We learned how to queue up for seemingly hours on

end at the bank and on the phone with service providers. We learned new unusual terminology (social distancing, flattening the curve, etc.). We encountered strange behavior walking outside with people veering way out into the middle of the street to avoid coming too close. We saw commerce and business drop out of sight. And we became highly tuned to the sound of the slightest cough or sneeze from 50 feet away. We saw great things and not so great things. We persevered.

We also moved into risk analysis mode on the CHHA-BC organization and mission. You'll know that our president and board have been active in educating the media, elected officials, and public sector representatives about the needs of hard of hearing persons – which can be exacerbated by a crisis like this one. The simple but enormous challenge of trying to make out the words and mood of someone wearing a mask cannot be overstated! Or, how about the increased use of signing on television broadcasts? Our president and board were very active in making known the challenges and solutions.

Fortunately, CHHA-BC has conducted its financial affairs with great prudence over the years. There is a reserve that can help carry on our work without pushing us into hasty actions. There is an established professional fund-raising

team in place – which recently conducted a short one-week test to see if a donor mood signal could be discerned (obviously it's early but the signs were satisfactory). There is an excellent reputation borne of many years of sound work representing the hard of hearing. And, in view of the fact that the economic impact of the crisis has not yet fully emerged we are heightening our surveillance of the charity/not for profit fund raising scene. We are in contact with a wide variety of not for profit organizations similar to ours (including larger and smaller organizations) to share experiences and information. And we're continuing to operate on a prudent, careful basis as always.

In the coming months we will stay on top of the situation. And we'll keep you well informed. Perhaps one of the best things we could ask you to do is to continue to speak openly and confidently about CHHA-BC and remind people that we still rely on the good will and donations of a wide variety of BC residents. That will not change and we can feel that the "cause" we represent continues as a legitimate and important one – even more so in a crisis like this. Thank you for your tremendous belief in and support of CHHA-BC!

# MAKING ONLINE LEARNING ACCESSIBLE FOR DHH STUDENTS

Recommended by: Bowen Tang, Director, CHHA-BC YPSP

## General Tips (taken from Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education)

- All materials used for online learning should be available in print and sent to students and parents in advance for previewing.
- Students should continue to use Roger, FM or Bluetooth systems if there will be auditory information presented in online learning activities.
- All visual media should have closed-captioning available. Please review material ahead of time and ensure that captions or subtitles have been created for the material.

## Online Platforms for Video Meetings

The platforms shown on the right side all have in-built live captioning, which are suitable to use when you host a live video session. Simply look for the “CC/Captions” button.

If you are only showing the speaker, use Google Hangouts Meet or Microsoft Teams.

If you are including a presentation, use Google Slides or Microsoft PowerPoint, then activate screen sharing on your video platform.

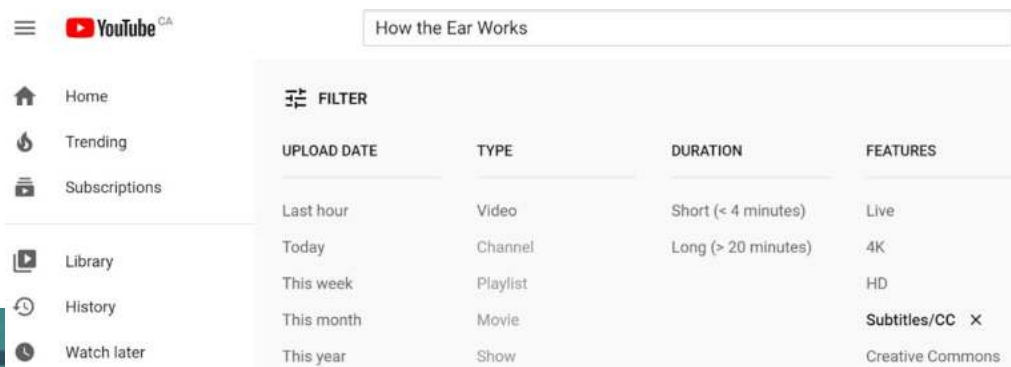
## Ensuring Optimal Audio/Video Quality

- Close proximity to the microphone on computer
- Minimize background noise around you (close the doors and windows)
- Sit in a position where the light is facing you (allow student to see your face clearly)
- Repeat or rephrase classmate’s comments and questions as you would in a classroom during group conversations

## Captioned Videos

Below are websites which contain a library of captioned videos on a variety of learning topics:

1. BrainPop (<https://www.brainpop.com/>) - all videos on the site are captioned.
2. Described and Captioned Media Program (<https://dcmp.org/topics?nm=1>) - videos are typically 1-5 minutes long.
3. Khan Academy (<https://www.khanacademy.org/>) - all lessons are captioned.
4. YouTube - to select videos that are captioned, open “Filters” icon located below the search bar and click “Subtitles/CC”



## **Pre-recorded Activities**

If you plan to record a video in advance and it has an audio component, upload it onto YouTube to generate automated captions. You can set your videos to “private only” and share the link to those who you want to view.

## **Speech-to-Text Apps (suitable for group conversations)**

If you are planning to do a class discussion on the online platform, the DHH student should download one of the apps below on another media device, which will enable them to see all the text from audio output in the group discussions.

- Ava Scribe
- Google Live Transcribe
- Microsoft Translator

## **Text-to-Speech App**

Speechify: <https://www.getspeechify.com/> (adjust speed & voice)

If you have any questions regarding this, please do not hesitate to contact your Teacher for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

## **CHHA-BC Acknowledges Ollie Lantela Foundation for their Donation**

CHHA-BC expresses deep appreciation for your donation. It is through such generous contributions that we are able to continue to offer programs and services for hard of hearing persons.

## **CHHA-BC Acknowledges Provincial Funding for The Loop**

CHHA-BC gratefully acknowledges provincial funding for The Loop newsletter. This financial support makes possible regular and direct communication with members and friends.

# **DONATIONS WELCOME**

Donations are always welcomed by CHHA-BC. A receipt for income tax purposes will be issued upon request. To donate to CHHA-BC, please make cheque payable to CHHA-BC Chapter and send to:

**CHHA-BC Chapter**

**208-2005 Quebec St. Vancouver BC V5T 2Z6**



## CHHA-BC was a signatory to the following letter to the editor...

### COVID COMMUNICATION ACCESSIBILITY IN ISOLATION: THE INVISIBLE FACTOR

May 21st is Global Accessibility Awareness Day. Nowadays, most people are aware of the importance of mobility accessibility, but fewer are aware of the importance of communication accessibility for people with “invisible” disabilities such as hearing, vision or cognitive difficulties.

COVID-19 puts older adults at greater risk, especially those with health problems such as diabetes, chronic pulmonary diseases and heart conditions. What we have not yet realized fully is the invisible factor for those with hearing, vision and/or cognitive impairments. By 75 years of age, half of Canadians have hearing impairments; by 85, half have both hearing and vision impairments. Those with sensory loss are also more likely to have cognitive impairment. It is common for residents in long-term care to have a combination of hearing, vision and cognitive impairments. In other words, those who are at the greatest risk for COVID-19 may also be those with the greatest risk for isolation because of their need for communication accessibility.

Communication challenges have escalated as COVID-19 has altered the ways in which people interact socially because of the need for distancing and wearing masks. People cannot touch or hug. It is impossible to see a face and difficult to hear the emotion in a voice

or the words being spoken through a mask. Hearing aids and glasses are not always used when people need healthcare, whether in an ambulance, the ER, or ICU, when receiving palliative care, or even having an elective surgery. While visiting is restricted, people with communication difficulties are often alone when health care decisions are made. The best health care cannot be provided without communication accessibility.

We will all need to find new solutions for communication accessibility as we adapt to the extremely challenging stresses of the pandemic. Hopefully, we will also learn some useful lessons that will improve communication accessibility into a future after COVID-19.

Organizations of people living with hearing, vision and cognitive disabilities, associations of specialized professionals working with them, manufacturing companies, and researchers studying healthy aging are working to find new made-in-Canada solutions. For example, some innovative people who are hard of hearing and audiologists have been making their own do-it-yourself masks with a clear panel and some are using clear face shields so that people can lip-read.

Researchers in the Sensory-Cognitive team of the Canadian Consortium on

Neurodegeneration in Aging are pursuing collaborations with industry to produce medical-grade PPE options to improve communication accessibility in healthcare settings. Canadian clinicians who work with individuals who have sensory and cognitive impairments are developing ways to improve clinician-patient communication in a time of physical distancing, including telehealth. Other solutions to improve communication accessibility include the use of video conferencing with personal amplifiers and captioning or speech-to-text apps to help people see and hear better. Communication accessibility for some individuals may require other more specialized technologies or the use of sign language interpreters. But for everyone, simple, tried, tested and true communication tips may be very helpful, including patience, clear and slow speech, good lighting, minimal background noise, taking time to confirm that people understand, and including others who can facilitate communication and help to recall conversations later. We are looking for new ideas and solutions to overcome the invisible factor ([ccnateam17.ca](http://ccnateam17.ca)).

Everyone can benefit if we all become more aware of the importance of the senses and communication for overcoming isolation. Let's make a visible difference!



Want to stay up-to-date on events happening near you?  
**Follow CHHA-BC on Facebook and Twitter!**  
(Click the icons to visit our pages)



## Face shields, essential for communication

In sign language, facial expressions serve as cues for grammar and tone. Additionally, lip reading is often essential to both Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals to supplement auditory understanding.

When it comes to protecting oneself against COVID-19, wearing a face mask fully covers the mouth, which severely restricts communication within this community. The face shield, with its transparent visor, becomes an excellent form of protection for audiologists and the community alike.

“

As frontline hearing healthcare workers, our registered audiologists have been serving the urgent needs of clients. The face shields add an extra layer of protection for clinicians and clients during the pandemic. Most importantly, face shields do not obscure our mouths, which allow clients to read our lips and understand us better when we serve them. The face shields are making a world of difference in communication and personal protection for clinicians and clients during this time.”

— Henry Lam, M.Sc., Aud(C), RAUD, RHIP, Interim Head of Audiology



## Tinkerine Face Shield

The face shield, a Class 1 medical device, protects the entire facial area from splashes, sprays, and spatters of body fluids. The current design is the result of feedback from medical professionals. Not only is it balanced for functionality and comfort, it is also optimized for production speed and ease of assembly in order to meet the increasingly high demand.

Tinkerine holds an active Medical Device Establishment License (MDEL) approved by Health Canada, which permits the Class 1 devices Tinkerine manufacture to be used in hospitals and other medical centres.

The face shield, a Class 1 medical device, protects the entire facial area from splashes, sprays, and spatters of body fluids. The current design is the result of feedback from medical professionals. Not only is it balanced for functionality and comfort, it is also optimized for production speed and ease of assembly in order to meet the increasingly high demand.

## Special Offer to CHHA-BC Members

**As a valued CHHA member, you will receive one additional free shield with your purchase. That means you get two for one! The members need to add 2 into the cart, and one will become free. See this link <https://store-ca.tinkerine.com/products/wavefront-face-shield-donation>**

**Code for checkout: chha2020**





## Canadian Hard of Hearing Association British Columbia Chapter

# CONTACT US

### Reopening COVID-19 Protocol

We are creating some safety precautions for CHHA-BC employees and visitors as we reopen our office. We promote proper sanitation in the workplace, provide guests with face-masks, ensure that hand sanitizer is given to guest-facing staff, provide a place for sanitizing wipes to be disposed of and encourage hand washing before and after breaks.

### CHHA-BC CHAPTER

2005 Quebec Street  
Vancouver, BC, V5T 2Z6

#### Hours of Operation:

Mon and Thurs 8 am to 4 pm  
Tues, Wed, and Fri 8 am to 12 noon

☎ **Tel:** 604-795-9238

☎ **Toll-Free Tel:** 1-866-888-2442

✉ **Email:** [info@chha-bc.org](mailto:info@chha-bc.org)

🖱 **Website:** <https://chha-bc.org/>

💝 **Charitable #:** 86571-8365 RR0001

# CONNECT WITH A LOCAL BRANCH

### ABBOTSFORD BRANCH

**Tel:** 604-864-2916  
**Email:** [abbotsfordretiree@gmail.com](mailto:abbotsfordretiree@gmail.com)

### CHHA BC YOUTH PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM

**Email:** [chhabcypsp@gmail.com](mailto:chhabcypsp@gmail.com)  
**Website:** <https://www.chha-bc.org/youthpsp/>

### HEAR BRANCH (COQUITLAM) COMOX VALLEY BRANCH

**Tel:** 604-939-0327  
**Email:** [anna.r.bernard@gmail.com](mailto:anna.r.bernard@gmail.com)

**Tel:** 250-339-4706  
**Email:** [cvhardofhearing@gmail.com](mailto:cvhardofhearing@gmail.com)  
**Website:** <https://www.hearinglosscomoxvalley.ca>

### NORTH SHORE BRANCH

**Tel:** 604-926-5222  
**Email:** [chha\\_nsb@telus.net](mailto:chha_nsb@telus.net)  
**Website:** <http://www.chha-nsb.com/>

### VANCOUVER BRANCH

**Tel:** 778-358-9955  
**Email:** [chhavancouver@gmail.com](mailto:chhavancouver@gmail.com)  
**Website:** <https://chhavancouver.ca/>