

The Official Newsletter of HLAA-PA

Support and Advocacy since 2001 for Pennsylvanians with Hearing Loss

In This Issue:

[Nancy's Message](#)

[State Happenings](#)

[Auracast](#)

[ChesCo Awards](#)

[About HLAA-PA](#)

HearSay Articles

HLAA-PA welcomes articles of interest to the hearing loss community for publication in HearSay, as well as suggestions for topics. Send e-mail to editor@hlaa-pa.org

DISCLAIMER

Opinions expressed in HearSay are those of the authors. Mention of goods and services in articles and advertisements does not mean HLAA-PA endorsement, nor does absence suggest disapproval. To reach readers of HearSay, contact Dale Long

Sponsor Coordinator
(long@hlaa-pa.org)
for information

Nancy's Message

. By Nancy Kingsley, HLAA-PA State Director
Hearing loss can cause anxiety due to difficulty in understanding conversations, concerns about missing important information, and the mental strain involved in trying to follow what is being said. In turn, anxiety can interfere with hearing ability by making it harder to concentrate. Studies have found that the more severe a hearing loss becomes, the greater is the degree of anxiety. There is also a higher likelihood of experiencing depression, which can worsen anxiety. The information in this message is based on an article from the National Council on Aging at <https://www.ncoa.org/adviser/hearing-aids/hearing-loss-anxiety/>.

Below are some typical anxiety-provoking thoughts associated with hearing loss:

"I'm missing important information." This can include conversations, instructions, and announcements.

"People are judging me": There can be fears of being thought of as inattentive, uninterested, unfriendly, or dumb due to not responding appropriately to what wasn't heard.

"I'm a burden to others": People may be concerned about inconveniencing others by needing repetition or accommodations.

"I can't participate fully": People often feel left out.

"I can't rely on my hearing": Worries can develop about safety and the ability to detect dangers or emergencies. "I'm losing control": People may fear becoming unable to manage their daily lives or maintain independence.

"What if my hearing worsens?": People may have doubts about their ability to adapt.

Fortunately, there are a number of ways to reduce anxiety from hearing loss. For starters, the appropriate assistive listening devices—hearing aids, cochlear implants, amplified or captioned telephones, etc.—should be investigated and acquired. Social support from sources like HLAA chapters is also very helpful. Beyond these hearing loss-specific strategies, there are general ways to reduce anxiety from any cause, including the following:

Counseling: Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) helps to address thoughts that contribute to anxiety, and psychiatrists can prescribe medications to treat it. Websites and apps like BetterHelp and Talkspace provide online counseling services via video, voice, or text chat.

Relaxation techniques: Deep breathing and muscle relaxation exercises can help.

Exercise: Walking, yoga, dancing, and other physical exercises are beneficial.

Journaling: Writing down thoughts, feelings, and concerns allows for self-reflection. This can also assist in recognizing anxiety-producing triggers.

Limiting stimulants: Cutting down or eliminating caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol is helpful. |

If you experience anxiety as a result of your hearing loss, be sure to take advantage of these coping techniques.

State Happenings by Carolyn Meyer, Outreach Coordinator

STATE HAPPENINGS

Warm sunny days have finally arrived! Time to meet friends and for chapters to plan outdoor events as we go from spring into summer.

CHAPTERS IN THE NEWS

The ChesCo chapter is very excited to announce their 8th Annual Mortimer Bauer Scholarship Award and Ice Cream Social on June 13 at 6 PM. There are two award winners this year: Carys Collins and Shane Tyree. Both are high school seniors planning to use the award toward college education. After the awards ceremony ice cream sundaes will be provided by Grace and Bill Pfeifer. The social will be at Christ Community Church, West Chester, PA, 19380. For details and to register contact hlaachesco@gmail.com or see the announcement below.

The HLA-PA Lancaster County chapter hadn't met since the COVID-19 pandemic had caused its continuing care retirement community (CCRC) meeting site to stop hosting outside groups. When the chapter wanted to resume, too few of the CCRC's residents planned to attend, so a new location was found at Landis Homes in nearby Lititz. The first meeting there was held March 12, with chapter leader Nancy Kingsley giving a PowerPoint presentation on "Hearing Loss Basics and How to Cope." Don Groff and Dale Long provided technical guidance, and about 25 others also attended. Landis Homes social worker Leigh Ann Farling was a big help in publicizing the meeting to residents and encouraging audience feedback after Nancy's presentation.

The MontCo chapter will host their annual picnic July 21 at Fort Washington State Park, MHL-3 Pavilion. Last year there was a record attendance and the weather was perfect. It is open to all. Once again the hostess and organizer is Kathy Harral. She requests that you bring a suitable lunch food and that you advise her the type and amount of your contribution. Water will be provided. It is fun to share everyone's best dish in a pot luck. Please contact Kathy for further details. k.harral@verizon.net

The MontCo chapter meeting topic on June 4 is music and the CI. They will use a video by a member of the NYC chapter who was a professional musician, lost his hearing, and got a Cochlear implant.



MORE AWARDS

The Joe Meyer Memorial Grant Award 2024 was presented to Aidan Healy, a Senior from Harleysville at Souderton Area High School. He has bilateral hearing loss. Aidan was very excited and appreciative to win this award.

HEARING LOSS CONFERENCE WRAP UP

April 13 was great day for all. Barbara Kelley, Executive Director of HLAA was a featured speaker and spent time speaking to guests individually as well. Dr. Tina Childress, an educational audiologist presented before and after lunch. Her background as a late deafened bilateral cochlear implant recipient was an interesting story in itself. She works in mainstream and residential school settings and is an adjunct lecturer and mentor for adults and children. She shared a wealth of experiences with us. You can find more about her on the internet and view her other presentations. A continental breakfast was served followed by a plentiful lunch buffet. Homemade goodies were included and enjoyed by all. It was a wonderful afternoon and we hope it will be on the schedule for next spring. So many faces of members whom we have not seen as well so a chance to socialize in between. Special thanks to the hard working crew who put this afternoon together and for the financial support of the Southeastern PA HLAA chapters and Louis N. Cassett Foundation.

THE PA WALK 4 HEARING OCTOBER 20, 2024 SAVE THE DATE

Details: Registration 9 AM;

Stage presentation 10:30;

Walk begins 11:00.

Location: The Navy Yard, 4747 South Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA 19112.

Join the community on Walk Day to connect, celebrate, learn more about hearing health care and enjoy fun activities!

Auracast: The Future of Assistive Listening

Since its release in 2022, Auracast has been making headlines, being hailed as the next generation of assistive listening. But what exactly is it?

Original Bluetooth signals were one-to-one secured signals that required pairing a transmitter to a receiver, which needed a high amount of power to operate. In contrast, Auracast Broadcast Audio, known as Auracast for short, is a new Bluetooth capability that will allow audio sharing. One device can broadcast signals to multiple receivers, similar to the way people listen to a radio. Auracast works off the Bluetooth Low Energy (LE) Audio platform, which provides higher audio quality while consuming less power. This will be the basis for Bluetooth signals going forward (Sygrove, 2024). Auracast is touted as offering a low-cost private audio broadcast with the capability of filling an entire stadium with an uninterrupted signal easily accessed by any compatible device.

To access an Auracast signal, users may have a public option or a secured signal through a QR-code specific to the event with encryption for privacy (Sygrove, 2024). The signal will begin with

advertisements that tell the user that a broadcast is available and the name and content of the stream. An Auracast assistant device, such as a smartphone or smartwatch, will scan for the available broadcasts and allow the user to select the stream to connect with, similar to the way users find and connect to wi-fi networks. Once the broadcast is selected, the assistant device provides the information needed to join, and the selected signal will be sent to the hearing aid, implant processor, earbud, or headphone that is paired to the assistant device (Bluetooth SIG, 2024).



To accept an Auracast signal, a device must be capable of running Bluetooth LE 5.2 or higher, which is currently available in a handful of smartphones, televisions, tablets, computers, and Bluetooth accessories such as earbuds and speakers (Roberts, 2024). Many products are still in development, and approval stages have yet to be released to the market. In 2022, hearing aid and cochlear implant manufacturers started introducing Auracast-ready devices, with many others indicating that only a firmware update to the hearing aid or implant processor will enable the capability when Auracast systems are widely available.

ABI Research, an independent technology advisory firm, forecasts that by 2028, annual shipments of Bluetooth LE-enabled products will reach 3 billion devices (Zignani, 2024). The Bluetooth Special Interest Group (BSIG) expects 2.5 million public locations to implement Auracast by 2030 (Marcel, 2024b). Implementation may be seen in the form of audio access to televisions in public venues, public address systems in transit centers and airports, theaters, and conference centers. Since Auracast can broadcast multiple streams concurrently, this expands offerings to include real-time language translation services and audio descriptions for the visually impaired for conferences and tour systems (Vonau, 2024). As businesses adopt Auracast, the BSIG is asking for them to register their locations so a map can be created to show where access points are available (Bluetooth SIG, 2024b).

Even with the popularity of Bluetooth-enabled devices, don't expect Auracast to overtake other more traditional forms of assistive listening devices such as induction loop and FM systems just yet. As Auracast receives a lot of publicity to create hype and interest, the International Hearing Access Committee (IHAC) cautions that current access to audio signals must be maintained and not compromised by "overly optimistic expectations of future technology" (IHAC, 2019). IHAC projects that full transition to Auracast from hearing loop systems could take 10-15 years (IHAC, 2019). Most importantly, accessibility to critical information must be provided in multiple forms as defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to support access for all (U.S. Department of Justice, 2016). The idea of users needing to bring their own device to have access to important information needs significant research and consideration. Additionally, there can be no exclusion of access for anyone using older hearing aids and cochlear implants that rely on telecoils and FM receivers for connection to appropriate signals. During this transitional time, newer smartphones may not be capable of pairing to older hearing aids for access and streaming through Auracast even though the smartphone itself will be Auracast-ready (Sabin, Drullman & Thomas, 2023). The Bluetooth SIG is considering this potential pitfall to implementation and realizes that Auracast will be utilized in tandem with other systems until there is more widespread adoption of the technology (Sabin et al., 2024). Until that time, any public entity that chooses to offer Auracast will need to provide the appropriate number of receivers as defined by ADA for the size of the venue for anyone entering the facility that needs access and does not already have a compatible device (U.S. Dept of Justice, 2016).

Anyone with hearing difficulties who has used assistive listening devices can attest to the significant benefit provided. Auracast has the opportunity to expand hearing access to all through the momentum generated by consumers who have already adopted Bluetooth for recreational uses. Since Auracast's introduction in 2022, more and more hearing aids and implant processors are being released with Bluetooth antennae as a standard feature to be ready to connect. As more Auracast devices are sold,

there will be more incentives for businesses to incorporate the technology into their locations. For anyone using a hearing aid and Auracast, the signal will offer the most direct, customized sound providing the best clarity for listening in large areas, along with the least interference from background noise. That is the ultimate listening experience, and time will show whether Auracast truly delivers.

Rebecca Blaha, Au.D.

Assistant Professor

Osborne College of Audiology

Salus University

Lead Audiologist for the Pennsylvania Ear Institute.

Dr. Blaha specializes in amplification devices ranging from traditional hearing aids to cochlear implants and bone conduction hearing devices.

Resources:

Bluetooth SIG. (2024). *Auracast: How it works*. Retrieved from

<https://www.bluetooth.com/auracast/how-it-works/>

Bluetooth SIG. (2024b). *Auracast Public Location Brand Guide*. Retrieved from

<https://www.bluetooth.com/auracast-location-guide/>

Complete resource list hlaa-pa.org/docs/AuracastReferencesHearSay.docx

**Hearing Loss Association of America-Chester County, PA
Awards 8th Annual College Scholarship**

*The Hearing Loss Association of America-Chester County, PA Chapter will be awarding this year's **Mortimer Bauer Memorial Scholarship to Carys Collin & Shane Tyree.***

West Chester, PA, May 28, 2024 – In recognizing the need to encourage post-secondary education among the high school population with hearing loss, our chapter is awarding the 8th Annual Mortimer Bauer Memorial Scholarship for \$1,000 each to two High School Seniors. Both students submitted award-winning essays and related their lives spent learning how to speak up for themselves and advocating for people with hearing loss.

Carys Collin is graduating from Conestoga High School and will be studying International Business in the Honors College of The University of South Carolina beginning in the fall of 2024. She is very interested in business economics, global workforces, and the intersection of supply chains across countries. Carys will also continue with her study of languages and use these skills in her planned study abroad.

Carys has been completely deaf all her life and wears two cochlear implants. Being deaf has not stopped her from living a very productive and active life. She credits several of her teachers that helped her to achieve her goals, including Ms. Carol Mantsch, Dr. DeVita Jones, Ms. Christine Shanley and Mr. David Anderson.

Shane Tyree is graduating from Downingtown West High School and will be attending Delaware County Community College in the fall of 2024 where he will pursue his passion for baking and pursue a degree in Baking & Pastry Arts. He likes to bake at home for fun and for his family as well as baking for family events. His goal is to own a cafe or bakery in the future.

Shane was born with mild to moderate bilateral sensorineural hearing loss and has been wearing hearing aids since he was a toddler. Each step in his hearing loss journey brought new challenges, whether it was learning how to use an assistive listening device in elementary school or playing baseball when he couldn't hear the coach when he was in the field. But he became a problem solver and found ways to succeed at each level. Shane would also like to thank several of his teachers and mentors, including Ms. Angela Kottmeyer, Chef Emily Landis and Ms. Robyn Evert, each of whom played a part in helping Shane reach his goals.

Carys and Shane will receive the award and a certificate during an Award Ceremony & Ice Cream Social that will be held on June 13, 2024, at 6pm. Registration information can be found on our website.

Location: **Christ Community Church, 1190 Phoenixville Pike, West Chester, PA 19380**

HAAA is the nation's largest consumer advocacy organization for people with hearing loss and provides information, education, support, and advocacy to enable those with hearing loss to live full and productive lives. For more information about the HAAA-Chester County Chapter, see our website at www.hearinglosschesco.org, email us at hlaachesco@gmail.com or check us out on Facebook at: HAAA Chester County www.facebook.com/hearinglosschesco/.

About HAAA and its State Office, HAAA-PA

The Hearing Loss Association of America (HAAA), founded in 1979, is the nation's foremost membership and advocacy organization for people with hearing loss. HAAA opens the world of communication to people with hearing loss by providing information, education, support and advocacy. The national support network includes the Washington, DC area office, 14 state organizations, and 200 local chapters. HAAA is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

Hearing Loss Association of America
6116 Executive Blvd., Suite 320
Rockville, MD 20852

HAAA-PA is the all-volunteer state office of Hearing Loss Association of America. We were established *in 2001 to carry out the mission of HAAA for Pennsylvanians with hearing loss, their families and friends.*

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!!

Assist the HAAA-PA State Director by serving on the Advisory Council or one of its committees. The Council meets periodically at locations convenient to its membership. But committees conduct most of

their business by e-mail and occasionally meet in various parts of the state. If you think you would like to serve on the council or any of its committees, please contact one of the state leaders listed here:

State Director: Nancy Kingsley (kingsley@hlaa-pa.org)

Editor: HearSay and HLAA-PA Website Don Groff (groff@hlaa-pa.org)

Advocacy: Nancy Kingsley, Chair (kingsley@hlaa-pa.org)

Sponsor Coordinator: Dale Long (long@hlaa-pa.org)

Outreach Coordinator: Carolyn Meyer, Chair (meyer@hlaa-pa.org)

ALD Demo Kit: Bill Best, Chair (best@hlaa-pa.org)

Chapter Coordinators: Mike Miles, Eastern PA (miles@hlaa-pa.org), Dale Long, Central PA (long@hlaa-pa.org), Teresa Nellans, Western PA (nellans@hlaa-pa.org)

Link to online version: tiny.cc/HearSay20242

202406