

Hear It Is!

Oregon



Autumn 2017

Issue 71

Hearing Loss and Depression

By Tashiko Weinstein

According to studies, having hearing loss can have ties to depression, especially among women and younger generations. For people having some form of hearing loss, the depression can be moderate to severe as reported by Dr. Chuan-Ming Li, a researcher at the U.S. National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders. James Firman, CEO of the National Council on Aging, said "people without hearing aids find it harder to communicate" and therefore are more likely to get depressed. Take me for example. These past few months I have been dealing with severe depression and most of it has to deal with my hearing loss. I recently moved in with roommates from different countries and all of them come from countries that have few laws dealing with the Disabled community. Trying to have basic conversations with them is extremely difficult and I have often been left out. When I am engaged, I often have to ask if they can repeat or rephrase which leads to phrases like "forget it" or "never mind", and often times I can't leave my room without putting my hearing aids on. All of these things have led me to become more isolated, less talkative, struggling to keep up with basic care and school, and I have started to put on weight. All of this is due to hearing loss and the lack of knowledge or understanding and support from my roommates about my hearing loss. However, in the past few weeks I have been getting better so here are my tips on how to deal with depression while living with hearing loss.

- 1) **Get in a routine.** That can be something as simple as walking the dog or attending a monthly HLAA meeting. It gives you something to look forward to.
- 2) **Set goals.** For me, getting out of bed is an achievement because often I don't want to or feel like I can't do anything. So set any kind of realistic goal and reward yourself for reaching that goal. My goal is to clean my room and make my bed on a regular basis.
- 3) **Exercise.** Not all of us are able to do things like swimming or running, but exercise can simply be a walk to the store or through the park. Just make sure you get out the house/apartment. Trust me, you'll feel better once you do.
- 4) **Eat healthy.** That is easier said than done and often times it seems impossible, but if you have the passion and the will for it then it can make all the difference. I have started not eating as much sugar and wow, I have so much more energy in me.
- 5) **Sleep.** We all need sleep -- at least 8 hours is recommended but if you have depression getting enough can be hard! I can tell you that from experience, so reading a good book before bedtime and avoiding bright lights at least an hour before can help you fall asleep. But be warned -- too much sleep can make depression worse.
- 6) **Take on responsibilities.** This has always been a challenge for me, even when not depressed, but doing so can make you feel valued and wanted, which helps with depression.
- 7) **Challenge negative thoughts.** I have always had more negative thoughts than positive thoughts my whole life, but these bad thoughts can make you feel down and give you low self-esteem and a lack of confidence. Having happy thoughts and saying "yes I can" instead of "no I can't" can make all the difference in the world!
- 8) **Check with your doctor before using supplements.** If you tried all the natural ways of dealing with depression, but still nothing helps then talk to your doctor or care provider. Only your doctor can determine whether using supplements is the best way to dealing with depression. In some cases prescription medicine is required to correct a biochemical imbalance. If you do start taking medication or supplements for depression tell your family or close friends in case of emergencies (this can be life-saving).
- 9) **Do something new.** It can be something simple and basic like taking up sewing or going to the community center for art classes, and can help with depression.
- 10) **Try to have fun.** It will help you forget your depression and make you feel better.
- 11) **Join a peer group or talk to someone.** It helps to know that you are not alone. Attending HLAA chapter meetings and talking to other chapter members is a good start.

From My Lips to Your Ears

Editorial by Chuck Vlcek

The front page article is something that touches most if not all of us. Author Tashiko Weinstein is a current HLAA-OR board member and college student. With the holidays coming up, we must make sure that we are not left out of the loop at family gatherings and discussions. An article on that aspect appeared in this newsletter a couple years ago. The real angel is the one who acts as an impromptu oral interpreter, making sure that the person with hearing loss at least understands what topic is being discussed at the moment.

I unexpectedly got to experience the hospital scenario first-hand, and made good use of the tips that were provided for the article that appeared in the last issue. Thus I elected to take over writing the sequel to this scenario, which appears on page 7.

Kudos to Karen Swezey! She has retired from the HLAA-OR board of directors and participation on this newsletter after many years of fruitful service, including work with the Lane County chapter. You can read all

about her good deeds on page 6, along with a photo of her with a well-deserved plaque honoring her as a token of gratitude. She leaves big shoes to fill, and we hope to attract new board members who can help fill them, as well as current chapter and state leaders who are able and willing to step up.

HLAA, Oregon State Association

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Hear it is! will regularly print your hearing loss-related stories – personal experiences, coping strategies, and evaluations of technology are welcomed. Maximum word count is 500 words. Article contributions should be made to the editor at info@hearinglossOR.org.

For advertising information and rates, contact Eileen Marma at info@hearinglossOR.org.

Deadline for Winter 2018 edition: Dec. 31, 2017.

Looking for Induction Loop System Information?

Check out <http://hearinglooporegon.com> . It lists public places in Oregon that have loop systems already installed as well as access information on how obtain a new installation. Please be advised that this web page probably needs to be updated. Suggestions for updates, such as additional locations in Oregon that already have a loop system, should be e-mailed to info@hearinglossOR.org with something like "Oregon loop website update" in the subject line.

The next HLAA-OR board meeting will be held Jan. 6, 2018 at Albany General Hospital (Reimar Building). Other 2018 meeting dates will be April 7, July 7, and October 20.

Guests and persons wishing to confirm should contact President Clark Anderson at clarkoa@msn.com or leave a message at (541) 736-4804.

Board Election Notice

Elections will be held in April 2018 for up to 12 positions on the HLAA-OR Board of Directors (3-year term). We meet once each quarter (see schedule in the middle of this page). There may also be committee meetings. A full description of Board duties and activities is provided by the Board Reference Manual at: http://www.HLAA-OR.org/HLA-OR_BoardReferenceManual.pdf. Should you be interested in serving on the board or have questions, please contact the Nominating Committee Chair at info@hearinglossOR.org **no later than January 6, 2018**. You should include your biography with any application to be placed on the ballot. All board members are *required* to be members of the Hearing Loss Association of America (see page 4 to join). NOTE: If the number of candidates does not exceed the number of board positions available, candidates will be confirmed by a simple majority of current board members at the annual meeting of all HLAA-OR members on April 7, 2018, in conjunction with the quarterly board meeting on that date. Otherwise ballots will be distributed several weeks prior to the annual meeting and counted at that meeting. Also note that the president may appoint someone to fill a vacancy at any time, subject to confirmation by a majority vote of the board of directors. Appointees shall complete an unfinished term or serve until the next election.

We welcome aboard Mark Knecht who was appointed by President Clark and confirmed by the board at the October 14 meeting. Mark is a veteran with hearing loss who works at Chemeketa Community College. He is on the advisory board for the committee for the Salem Housing Authority. He also does other advocacy work for veterans and people with disabilities, including help with the incarcerated veterans program in the Oregon state penitentiary.



Next HLAA Convention: Join us in Minneapolis, Minnesota June 21 - 24, 2018, home of the 2018 Super Bowl LII! With its urban edginess and cultural authenticity, the city of lakes guarantees visitors a fabulous time. Stay tuned for more details to be posted soon: <http://www.hearingloss.org/content/convention>

HLAA Membership

Individual Membership in HLAA is \$35 for 1 year, \$95 for 3 years, or \$140 for 5 years.

One-year membership in HLAA is \$20 for student, \$45 for couple/family, \$50 for professional.

Membership includes the award-winning bi-monthly magazine, *Hearing Loss*.

Write to HLAA, 7910 Woodmont Ave., Ste. 1200, Bethesda, MD 20814

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Within Earshot: News You Need to Know

Honoring Karen Swezey



Karen Swezey has dedicated many years to serving Oregonians with hearing loss. Her volunteer work began as a co-founder of SHHH-Lane County which was incorporated in 1987. This organization later became HLAA—Lane County chapter.

Karen worked to provide many people with information and resources that they could use for better hearing and communication with others. She responded to phone calls or emails from people who were struggling with a new hearing loss or for those with long term hearing loss. Her phone number was on the HLAA-OR website for people looking for help, to call.

As a Board member of the Hearing Loss Association of America, Oregon State Association (HLAA-OR), she collaborated with professionals and other hard-working Board members to develop, print and distribute the very successful publication, Facing the Challenge: A Survivors' Manual for Hard of Hearing People and she has worked on all updates and revisions that have followed. She continues to respond to calls from people who read the manual because her phone number is listed as the person to contact for more information.

Dedicated to getting the word out to all who may benefit, she initially was both newsletter editor and the business editor for the HLAA-OR, "Hear It Is". She continued as business editor until 2016. Her recruitment of sponsors to run ads in the newsletter kept the quarterly newsletter in print. Her gentle voice on the phone and pleasant correspondence to companies and Oregon state organizations that serve the hearing loss population successfully led to adequate newsletter finances and long-term strong relationships with these agencies.

On September 14, 2017, Karen received a plaque from the HLAA-OR Board. This recognized Karen's ongoing dedication and service provided with kindness, concern and strong support for those of us with hearing loss. Karen is a marvelous example of volunteerism at its best and she has served as mentor and model for us all!

Well done, thou good and faithful servant. Matt. 5:21

Hearing Loss Scenario: Hospitals

By Chuck Vlcek

This is part 2 of the hospital scenario. Ironically, as part 1 was being prepared, I learned that I needed to have triple coronary bypass surgery. This was done on August 4 at Providence Portland Medical Center. My surgeon was Dr. Ott. At the pre-op appointment with him, I was able to show him the list of tips for communicating while at the hospital. He and his staff were very cooperative and kept copies of the tip sheet, and later thanked me for educating them. The applicable tips were utilized quite successfully, and I had few problems related to hearing loss. I have bilateral cochlear implants and can hear and understand speech quite well even with only one of them turned on. The most significant incident occurred when I jammed one of my CI processors while trying to change a rechargeable battery in the dark, so that no battery could be properly fit into it. My sister and advocate Pat Lichty hopped over to the OHSU audiology department where my audiologist Jessica VanAuken fixed it without charge. It turned out to be a simple fix, to my great relief. There were other minor issues worth mentioning. When I first woke up from surgery (a day later), I had a tube in my throat and my arms were strapped down so I couldn't talk or write for a half hour or so. At least I could hear – my CIs were turned on. The TVs at the hospital and at the rehab center in Roseburg had captions but the TVs were so small that the captions were hard to read. I was too tired to watch it very long anyway. Finally, the room phone at the rehab center had terrible sound quality. If you have a cell phone, bring it but make sure you know when and where you will be allowed to have it turned on – some parts of the hospital have sensitive equipment.

As a person with hearing loss, how would you handle this situation? More tips:

Can your hearing aids/cochlear implant processors stay in/on during surgery or until you fall asleep? If not, can they be placed in your ears/reattached immediately after surgery or as you leave the operating room? Bring a small container labeled with your name for storing your devices during surgery to avoid losing them.

Can staff wear clear surgical masks or remove them when they speak with you? Let everyone know prior to entering the operating room if you rely on lip reading and therefore need to see people's faces. Wearing clear surgical masks or removing them when they speak with you allows you to see their lips.

Is a portable FM or amplifier such as a PockeTalker available? This can improve communication even if you do not have a hearing aid and may be helpful when communicating critical medical information.

Is your doctor aware that your otolaryngologist or audiologist should be contacted if there is any perceived change in hearing? Anesthesia can sometimes cause a decrease in hearing loss. Hospital personnel may need to compare or review your most recent hearing tests. You may want to bring a copy with you to the hospital.

Are any of the medicines that will be used ototoxic and have hearing loss as a side effect? If yes, can these be avoided? This information should be provided to your doctor even if they do not anticipate that you will receive medication. The situation may change and the consequences are serious.

Do you have an experience, plausible scenario, and/or tips you would like to share? If so, please e-mail info@hearinglossOR.org with "Hearing Loss Scenario" in the subject line, or write to HLAA-OR, P.O. Box 22501, Eugene, OR 97402.

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Do you have difficulty hearing when someone speaks in a whisper?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does a hearing problem cause you to have arguments with family members?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does a hearing problem cause you difficulty when listening to TV or radio?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you feel a hearing problem limits or hampers your personal or social life?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Chapter Capers

Douglas County Chapter: The June, September, and October meetings were primarily social affairs since the chapter gained a total of four new members. There was no meeting in July, and the chapter had its annual picnic at the home of Ann and Tasha Havens in August. One new member brought a dog from Dogs for the Deaf and still wears a cochlear implant processor he obtained in 1991. A Christmas party will be held at the home of Frank and Dolores Elias on December 16.

Portland Chapter: The program for the meeting held on November 20 was "Assistive Listening Devices and Systems". Attendees were invited to bring and/or talk about ones that they used and liked. The December 18 meeting will be a holiday potluck and gift exchange. Winter meetings will be held on Jan. 15 (MLK, Jr. holiday) and Feb. 19 (Presidents Day holiday). Programs will be announced later.

Lane County Chapter: The chapter will be holding a Christmas potluck at its meeting on December 14. There will be a gift exchange and an appearance by Santa or an elf. Attendees should bring a gift that costs no more than \$8 and either a salad, side dish, or dessert to share. Ham and condiments will be provided by the chapter. Future meetings will be held quarterly, on the second Thursday in the months of March, June, September, and December.

What is your chapter doing? Please submit your story to the editor at cvlcek@centurytel.net See pages 14-15 for contact information for these chapters and events.

CI Corner

When is it time to upgrade a CI processor? It seems like a simple question but surprisingly, some people seem to be unaware of the need for and/or availability of upgrades. One person who recently joined a chapter was still wearing the processor he obtained in 1991.

The implant itself is supposed to last forever and usually does, unless there is a defect or some other unusual problem. But it will be compatible with any new external processor of the same brand, sooner or later. Thus the user can take advantage of new and improved technology without having to get a new implant.

Most advances have been due to smaller and faster chips with higher memory density which provides more sophisticated processing power and mapping options. More recent bells and whistles include wireless connectivity with other media and assistive devices. Not everyone needs everything, but everyone does have more choices.

Keeping an older processor, except as a spare, is risky. Eventually a company discontinues support for an older generation processor, which means that if something goes wrong with it, it cannot be repaired or replaced.

However, new processors are expensive, even factoring in any discount or trade-in value of an older processor. Insurance may cover the cost, with certain stipulations. For example, Medicare will pay for the cost of a new processor if the old one is at least five years old, obsolete, and not working well. That means that the new processor should be supported for at least the next five years. If support is likely to be discontinued sooner than that, the user must decide whether to hold on to the old processor until the next new generation becomes available. Unfortunately, the company does not provide much advance notice on exactly when it will be marketed and when it will be compatible with older internal implants. This is at least partly due to the regulatory approval process, but it still leaves the consumer in a quandary. He can only gather all the information he can, then try to make an intelligent decision.



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Buying a Hearing Aid? Northwest Access Fund Can Help Finance It

Frances E. Pennell

According to the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, *among individuals with hearing loss who would benefit from hearing aids, only 30 percent of adults aged 70 and older and approximately 16 percent of those aged 20 to 69 have ever used them.* One of the biggest factors is the challenge of paying for them. Hearing aids and other assistive devices are rarely covered by Medicare or private insurance and, in some states, excluded from Medicaid as well. Unless you are in K-12 education, a DVR participant or an eligible VA client, it is likely that you will need to pay for them on your own.

The Northwest Access Fund was established to address such “funding gaps” by providing low interest loans for all types of assistive technology, home and vehicle accessibility modifications, and related services. The Fund is a nonprofit organized by and for individuals with disabilities. It is also certified as a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) by the U.S. Department of Treasury -- a designation that reflects the special efforts we make to serve-low income and low-asset individuals within the disability community. The Fund’s mission is to promote access to technology and economic opportunity for individuals with disabilities in Washington and Oregon. It has been active in Washington state since 2004 and expanded into Oregon last year.

Loans of up to \$10,000 are available (\$25,000 for home and vehicle modifications). The interest rate is 5% for the lifetime of the loan and there is no application fee. The loan term is based upon a balancing of the useful life of the technology with the individual’s ability to pay. Eligible applicants include individuals with disabilities and their families. About 40% of our loans are used for hearing aids and related devices.

Loan applications are available on line (<http://washingtonaccessfund.org/apply-for-loans/>) or by calling the Northwest Access Fund (1-877-428-5116). The loan application asks for information on income and expenses with the goal of determining available cash flow. All sources of income are recognized including Social Security, SSI and SSDI and public assistance. Poor or no credit and pre-existing debt are not disqualifiers per se. The average loan is processed in about two weeks from the time the application is completed. Loan decisions are made by a committee comprised of Access Fund Board and community members. Smaller loans (less than \$1500) are typically processed in a few days.

Another unique way to finance hearing aids and other assistive devices is through our Individual Development Account – or matched savings program. Through this program, Washington residents can save up to \$2000 and receive an amount equal to the dollars saved in match for purchases of any type of assistive technology. <http://washingtonaccessfund.org/faq/#idasfaq>. At present our IDAs are only available to Washington residents; however, there are also IDA programs in Oregon and we would be happy to help you connect to an appropriate agency to find out what resources are available in your community. Some of you also may be interested in the Access Fund’s business equipment loans. These loans are designed help employees and entrepreneurs with disabilities purchase equipment (including tools of trade) needed for employment or self-employment. The Fund also offers financial education and coaching in both Washington and Oregon.

For Additional Information: Our web address is: <http://nwaccessfund.org> . I also would be more than happy to answer questions. I can be contacted via the main number (1-877-428-5116) or email at frances@northwestaccessfund.org .

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If you have not contributed in the last 12 months and are able to do so, please use the form on the back of the newsletter, and mail your tax-deductible gift to:

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We thank the donors who have contributed since the last issue.

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Chapters in Oregon

Local chapter meetings are open to all. Family, friends, and professionals are encouraged to attend and become involved. Through chapter meetings and newsletters you'll find:

- *Insights into effectively living with hearing loss*
- *Support/Referrals/Information*
- *Information about the latest technology*
- *Coping strategies & tips*
- *An opportunity to make a difference*
- *Diminished feelings of isolation and aloneness*
- *Opportunities to share concerns and hear from others*



We believe in education - for those who hear well and those who cannot - so that both may understand the causes, challenges and possible remedies for hearing loss. At our meetings, you'll find a comfortable place where hearing loss is accepted and not a problem. Many people report that being a part of a Hearing Loss Assoc. group has made a major difference in their lives. Your participation benefits not only you, but others who attend as well. Following is a list of the current chapters and contact people in Oregon.

HLAA of Salem meets the 4th Tuesday each month (except July and August) - 6:00 PM at the Salem Hospital Community Health and Education (Building D), Creekside Overflow Room, 939 Oak Street SE, Salem, OR.

Contact: Mary Fagan
e-mail: hlasalem@live.com
(503) 409-5491
3253 Dallas Hwy NW Salem, OR 97304-4222

HLAA of Lane County meets quarterly: 2nd Thursday in March, June, Sept., and Dec., at 7 PM at the Hilyard Community Center, 2580 Hilyard Street - Eugene.

Contacts: Andrea Cabral
e-mail: angora@comcast.net
(541) 345-9432 voice
PO Box 22501
Eugene, OR 97402

Clark Anderson
e-mail: clarkoa@msn.com

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HLAA of Portland meets the 3rd Monday each month (except June, July and August) 6:30 PM in "Building 2", 2nd floor, on the Legacy Good Samaritan Campus, 1040 NW 22nd Ave. (at Marshall), Portland 97210

Contact Anne McLaughlin
e-mail: hlaportland@gmail.com
PO Box 2112
Portland, OR 97208-2112
www.hearinglossor.org/portland/

HLAA of Douglas County meets the 4th Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at Westside Christian Church, 2712 West Harvard Avenue, Roseburg, Oregon.

Contacts: Vincent Portulano, President:
email: HLAADC@outlook.com

Ann Havens, Secretary (541) 673-3119

HLAA of Linn and Benton Counties meets the last Wednesday of each month (except July and Dec.) – 6:30 PM at the Reimar Building, adjacent to the Albany General Hospital, Albany.

Contact: John Hood-Fysh
e-mail: jhood-fysh@wwmore.com
541-220-8541
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Albany, OR 97321

For an electronic version of this newsletter:

<http://www.hlaa-or.org>

Click on "Resources", then "Newsletter". To subscribe, e-mail info@hearinglossOR.org and we will notify you with the above link when a new issue is available.

Chapter coordinator contacts:

Oregon: Richard Little
e-mail: Richard16@comcast.net
(541) 223-8810 (cell text only) or
(541) 818-0003 (home)
PO Box 215, Sweet Home, OR 97386

Oregon: Vincent Portulano
e-mail: vportulano@hotmail.com
15491 Highway 99, Oakland, OR 97462

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Here It Is! Oregon Autumn 2017 Newsletter

I would like to receive (or continue to receive) this newsletter.

Name _____

Phone _____

Organization Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-Mail _____ Please send my newsletter via e-mail _____

I learned about the newsletter from: _____

- Enclosed is my contribution of \$ _____ to support the **Hearing Loss Association** outreach programs in Oregon. Contributions will be acknowledged in the next issue.
- I wish to remain anonymous.
- I cannot contribute but would like to receive the newsletter.
- I want to join **Hearing Loss Association of America**, the National Organization. Please enroll me as a member. I'm including my membership fee (see bottom of page4 for fee schedule).

Or you can sign up online at www.hearinglossOR.org (click membership, then click application)

Hearing Loss Association of America, Oregon State Association, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) charity and depends on donations and grants. All personnel are volunteers. Please send your donation to support our efforts to ***HLAA, Oregon State Association*** PO Box 22501, Eugene, Oregon 97402.