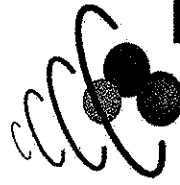


Hear It Is!

Oregon



**Hearing Loss
Association
of Oregon**

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Issue 44

Hear Ye! Hear Ye!!

Imagine attending a church service or other public meeting, and not being able to hear what leaders or other participants are saying. Public gatherings and meetings can be frustrating for people who wear hearing aids or cochlear implants, and for those who won't admit their loss and thus don't have hearing aids. This shouldn't be. Affordable technology exists to make public spaces such as churches user-friendly for hard of hearing people. When people cannot hear in church, they often decide to stay home and watch captioned services on TV. Or they opt not to attend a class or meeting because they feel left out.

The simplest solution is to make the meeting room or sanctuary accessible.

- Padded seating, carpeting and drapes all help with acoustics.
- Seating arrangements are crucial to facilitate speech reading, bonding and audience participation. The hard of hearing person should sit close to the presenter or leader in order to hear better and see the faces of those speaking. Too much distance from the speaker makes it hard to hear or lip read.
- In meeting or class rooms, a quiet room with small groups where you can be seated around a table or in a half moon style is helpful. For a little larger group try for a "V shape" with the presenter at the tip.
- Give as much visual information as possible. An overhead projector can provide sermon notes, words to the songs, and other pertinent information. The printed bulletin should list each aspect of the service plus anything that might get announced and provide sermon notes.
- A sermon or lesson outline loaded on a computer prior to delivery can be projected on a large screen during the service or class.
- A white board and/or hand outs are helpful.
- Always face the audience when speaking – not the screen or chalkboard.
- A well lighted room without shadows is also helpful for lip reading. And keep facial hair to a minimum around the mouth to allow for lip reading.
- Speak clearly and slowly. A personal amplifier sometimes known as a "PockeTalker" can help the hard of hearing person if each person speaking uses the mic.
- Use only captioned DVD's and VCR tapes. Let vendors know this is a high priority.

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Hear ye! Hear ye!! (from page 1)

It is important to train leaders, staff and all presenters how to use the microphone.

- Learn to consistently condense and repeat audience questions and comments.
- Repeat Bible text (Book, Chapter and Verse)
- Consistently hold the mic close - but don't cover the mouth. Often people don't speak up, or move the mic to their height to allow the sound to get picked up. Softly spoken prayers, comments or readings will not be heard by participants.
- Adjust the height of the microphone stem to maximize effective usage and to accommodate variations in speaker height.
- Song leaders can post all song numbers and repeat them verbally, and indicate which song verse is being sung next by raising 1, 2, 3 or 4 fingers as they are sung.

Assistive Listening Systems can be a great help in auditoriums and classrooms. Be sure to post a sign and make note in the program about where to check them out and how to use the system.

The batteries need to be checked regularly to be sure they are charged and functioning properly. Headphones are less expensive but they don't work well for people wearing hearing aids or who have a cochlear implant because they only increase the volume of sound. Headphones can cause a person to feel that they are "standing out" and find that embarrassing. Smaller earbuds are less obvious.

Assistive Listening Device (ALD's) can be connected to the public address system and people can tap into the system by using a receiver with a neckloop and turning on their telecoil (aka T-coil) on their hearing aids or cochlear implants. Or they can use a receiver with an earbud if they don't have a telecoil. ALD's are money well spent. A lot of people are excited to be able to finally hear what is being said without being embarrassed. If receivers are loaned out, hold drivers licenses until they are returned.

These simple suggestions will make a big difference in how well people can participate in various meetings.

We encourage you to speak up and let your needs be known. There are other hard of hearing people who will be grateful that you are advocating for their needs as well as your own.

Important Notice about our Website and Electronic Newsletter

Those who have opted to read the electronic version rather than have a printed copy mailed to them will receive an e-mail notifying them that a new issue has been posted to the website along with a link to the specific web page. If you have hearing aids or cochlear implants, those who have not yet made the change are encouraged to do so by emailing your request to info@thechurch.org.

Within Earshot: Ne

Survivor's Manual: Hot Off the Press!

Hearing loss can be traumatic and affects not only the person with the hearing loss but our family, friends and others we come in contact with in our day to day life. It affects our relationships, our ability to be employed, our social life, and our physical and mental health. Because it is invisible, hearing loss is hard for others to understand.

To help we've created and distributed more than 42,000 copies of our 70+ page booklet, "Facing the Challenge: A Survivor's Guide for Hard of Hearing People" all over Oregon. Because we continue to get many requests we've decided to print another 20,000 copies to distribute. We've had wonderful comments from hard of hearing consumers and professionals about previous editions and this new edition will be better than ever!

We are grateful to the following sponsors who have purchased ads in the new edition of this popular and educational book to help us pay for printing and distribution of 20,000 more copies:

Archer Captioning
Cochlear America
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Dr. Allan Mein
Oregon Academy of Audiology
Oregon Communication Association
Oregon Health & Science University
Oregon Hearing Society
Oregon Telecommunications Relay Service (SERVINT)
Salem Audiology
Telecommunication Devices Access Program
Western Oregon Regional Resource Center on Deafness

Distributing Survivor's Manuals in your office is a great way to help your patients or clients by linking them to additional education and resources. The cost is only \$4 each or \$35 for 20 books, including postage and handling.

If you'd like to order one or more copies of the "Survivor's Manual" send your check to Hearing Loss Association of Oregon (PO BOX 22501 Eugene, OR 97402). We'll get them to you right away. Questions? Contact Karen Swezey (email preferred - info@hearinglossOR.org) or call (541.689.7242).