



## Technology Innovations Promote Safe Listening

By Sheila Serup, President, CHHA - Calgary

World Hearing Day sparks the importance of safe listening and focuses on the prevention of hearing loss. With its 2022 theme, "To hear for life, listen with care," World Hearing Day this past March 3rd creates awareness of how to listen safely. Recently, innovative technology has emerged that support safe listening levels.

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that up to a billion young people worldwide could be at risk for hearing loss due to current listening practices. It believes that among young adults and teens aged 12 to 35 in middle- and high-income families, nearly 50% are exposed to unsafe levels of sound from use of personal audio devices. Around 40% are exposed to potential damaging sound levels at clubs, discos, and bars.

Noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL) is preventable, but once it is incurred, it is irreversible. The Hearing Loss Association of America and the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association notes that one in eight children and teens aged 6-19, and one in four adults aged 20-69 are estimated to have NIHL.

### **Know the Safe Levels for Listening:**

Sounds that are 70 decibels (dBA) or lower are safe to listen to for extended periods of time. Everyday sounds can be grouped at levels such as:

- 70 dBA: Group conversations, alarm clocks.
- 60 dBA: typical conversations, dishwasher, clothes drying.
- 50 dBA: moderate rainfall.
- 40 dBA: a quiet room.
- 30 dBA: a whisper, quiet library.

Sounds that are 80 dBA (for adults) or 75 dBA (for children) for more than eight hours a day may lead to hearing loss. Sounds that would exceed safe listening levels of 70 dBA are:

- 94 dBA: hair dryer, blender, or food processor;

- 106 dBA: snow blower, leaf blower;
- 112 dBA: maximum output of some MP3 players, rock concert; or
- 120 dBA: siren, jet plane taking off.

Suggestions for safe listening are made easier to follow thanks to several technological innovations, now available at little or no cost.

What you can do to protect your hearing:

- Wear hearing protection (earplugs, earmuffs) when exposed to sounds above 70 dBA for prolonged periods of time.
- Keep a distance of 150 metres from loud sounds.
- Download a sound meter app to measure noise levels in public places, your home or workplace. Apps that are available on your phone at little to no cost include DeciBel, Decibel meter sound detector and NIOSH among many others. Some apps, such as DeciBel, provide clear visuals with indicators (similar to that of a thermometer) to illustrate sound levels.
- Use quieter home appliances and products.
- On audio devices, keep volume to half when using earbuds or headphones.
- Consider noise-cancelling earbuds/earphones to reduce the urge to increase the volume.
- Heed warning signs and leave a noisy place if you have any pain, ringing or difficulty hearing. Take short listening breaks to help reduce the overall duration of noise exposure.

### **What parents can do:**

- The WHO recommends that parents play an active role in educating their children about safe listening.
- Monitor their exposure to loud noises.
- Serve as role models of safe listening for their children.

To hear for life, listen with care.

[#safelistening](#)  
[#worldhearingday](#)  
[#hearingcare](#)



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## VAD Membership Drive

VAD's fiscal year starts April 1 and we will be starting our annual membership drive soon. Watch for the membership form to come your way and update any information that may be out of date.

Your membership fees help offset the costs of our advocacy services, assessments, and a movement to full inclusion with individuals in the province of Alberta.

VAD's main services provide assistance to individuals requiring one to one support with filling out government and other application forms, hosting informational disability awareness presentations to schools and businesses, and providing accessibility assessments across the province. We conduct research into disability issues so we can speak provincially with a united and unified voice to improve the quality of life through educational, legislative, and social policy changes.

**ORGANIZATION:** This network is a collaboration of Alberta based non-profit organizations. They use their collective voice to influence the creation of an inclusive and accessible Alberta. Fees for organizations are \$99.

**iVAD:** This network is a pan-disability group of individuals with lived experiences who are interested in increasing awareness of existing barriers to inclusion and developing capacity around solutions to accessibility, accessible and affordable housing, employment, transportation and social isolation. Fees for individuals are \$25; fees may be waived if the fee causes financial hardship.

**CORPORATE:** This is a network of paid businesses that are interested in supporting the disability community through their retail and paid services in the journey to make everywhere accessible to full participation in society. Fees for corporate members are \$150.



Autism, or autism spectrum disorder (ASD), refers to a broad range of conditions characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviors, speech and nonverbal communication.



Autism Awareness Month - April 2022 

## Autism Spectrum Disorder

Autism spectrum disorder is a condition related to brain development that impacts how a person perceives and socializes with others, causing problems in social interaction and communication. The disorder also includes limited and repetitive patterns of behavior. The term "spectrum" in autism spectrum disorder refers to the wide range of symptoms and severity.

Autism spectrum disorder includes conditions that were previously considered separate — autism, Asperger's syndrome, childhood disintegrative disorder and an unspecified form of pervasive developmental disorder. Some people still use the term "Asperger's syndrome," which is generally thought to be at the mild end of autism spectrum disorder.

Autism spectrum disorder begins in early childhood and eventually causes problems functioning in society — socially, in school and at work, for example. Often children show symptoms of autism within the first year. A small number of children appear to develop normally in the first year, and then go through a period of regression between 18 and 24 months of age when they develop autism symptoms.

While there is no cure for autism spectrum disorder, intensive, early treatment can make a big difference in the lives of many children.

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/autism-spectrum-disorder/symptoms-causes/syc-20352928>



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## Parkinson's Disease

Parkinson's disease is a brain disorder that leads to shaking, stiffness, and difficulty with walking, balance, and coordination.

Parkinson's disease is a progressive nervous system disorder that affects movement. Symptoms start gradually, sometimes starting with a barely noticeable tremor in just one hand. Tremors are common, but the disorder also commonly causes stiffness or slowing of movement.

In the early stages of Parkinson's disease, your face may show little or no expression. Your arms may not swing when you walk. Your speech may become soft or slurred. Parkinson's disease symptoms worsen as your condition progresses over time.

Although Parkinson's disease can't be cured, medications might significantly improve your symptoms. Occasionally, your doctor may suggest surgery to regulate certain regions of your brain and improve your symptoms.

Parkinson's signs and symptoms may include:

- Tremor. A tremor, or shaking, usually begins in a limb, often your hand or fingers. You may rub your thumb and forefinger back and forth, known as a pill-rolling tremor. Your hand may tremble when it's at rest.
- Slowed movement (bradykinesia). Over time, Parkinson's disease may slow your movement, making simple tasks difficult and time-consuming. Your steps may become shorter when you walk. It may be difficult to get out of a chair. You may drag your feet as you try to walk.
- Rigid muscles. Muscle stiffness may occur in any part of your body. The stiff muscles can be painful and limit your range of motion.
- Impaired posture and balance. Your posture may be-

come stooped, or you may have balance problems as a result of Parkinson's disease.

- Loss of automatic movements. You may have a decreased ability to perform unconscious movements, including blinking, smiling or swinging your arms when you walk.
- Speech changes. You may speak softly, quickly, slur or hesitate before talking. Your speech may be more of a monotone rather than have the usual inflections.
- Writing changes. It may become hard to write, and your writing may appear small.

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/parkinsons-disease/symptoms-causes/syc-20376055>

## Volunteer Appreciation

Voice of Albertans with Disabilities would like to thank our volunteer force for their dedication and commitment to supporting VAD in all its endeavours.

VAD has 20 volunteers that work community bingos as fund-raisers for VAD, their time and energy is greatly appreciated by the VAD office and Board of Directors. Our presentation volunteers work with schools, post secondary institutes and businesses to create awareness about disability etiquette and inclusion, we thank these volunteers for their promotion of VAD services and sharing information about their disabilities for learning purposes.

**National Volunteer Week** is an opportunity to celebrate the vibrancy and impact of volunteerism in our communities and across our country. Every April, Volunteer Canada leads the National Volunteer Week (NVW) celebration. It is the perfect time to recognize volunteers and celebrate the power of volunteerism in our communities.

This year, National Volunteer Week is April 24-30, 2022. This year's theme is: "Volunteering Is Empathy In Action."

#NVW2022  
 #EmpathyInAction  
 #VolunteersBringHeart

**3 Ways to Celebrate Volunteer Appreciation**  
 Social distancing has made everyone more creative when it comes to spending time to-

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April is Parkinson's Awareness Month

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gether while physically being apart. Now is the time to use that creativity to unite your volunteers and remind them why they love working with your organization.

So how should you celebrate your volunteers this April? Here are a few volunteer appreciation week ideas to get you started.

### **1. Host a Virtual Celebration During Volunteer Week**

Give back to your volunteers by giving them an opportunity to get social. Free platforms like Zoom and Google Hangouts make hosting digital gatherings quick, easy, and fun!

As we all continue our social distancing efforts, people are craving connections more than ever. That's where your organization can come in. Simply pick a platform, send out an invite, and decide on some topics of conversation to keep participation up.

If you want to get extra creative, feel free to give your celebration a theme or come up with some games that everyone can play together virtually. Here are some ideas:

- Play "Two Truths and a Lie". This popular guessing game can break the ice with your volunteers and help people get to know each other.
- Share Hidden Talents. Give people an opportunity to brag a little!
- Take a Walk Down Memory Lane. Ask volunteers to share a fun story from their time working with your nonprofit.

### **2. Show Recognition**

There are tons of ways to digitally recognize the efforts of your volunteers — and they don't have to cost money!

Remember, your volunteers are your mission's biggest supporters. They're not giving their time in hopes of getting something in return. Simply highlighting their efforts is enough to make them feel appreciated.

Here are a few examples of how you can digitally recognize your volunteers:

- Post a series of volunteer features on your website, blog, or on social.
- Host a "volunteer award show". Give your repeat volunteers special superlatives based on their work with your organization.
- Send handwritten thank you cards. Be sure to spotlight specific endeavors or events that each volunteer has helped with

### **3. Give a Gift to Your Volunteers**

Nothing says "we appreciate you" like a thoughtful gift. Remember, the best gifts are the ones that show you care, not the ones that cost the most money. Here are some examples:

- A virtual photo book with pictures of that volunteer and notes from staff and other volunteers
- A staff and volunteer recipe book
- Yummy treats or baked goods
- Impact report of how many hours they volunteered and the specific impact that their time had on your organization

No matter how much money you spend on the gift, it's important to add personal touches. For example, if your organization works primarily with children, try to include a picture that a child drew to tie the thank you back to the work of your volunteer.

It's the small details that make the biggest difference.

And above all else, say thank you during volunteer appreciation week. It does not matter how you thank and recognize your volunteers; it matters that you do. The most important thing you can do this year for volunteer appreciation week is to say thank you.

<https://neonone.com/resources/blog/volunteer-appreciation/>



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