

Working Successfully with Hearing Loss



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From the Executive Director's Desk

So much of our identity and our self-esteem is directly connected to what we do for a living and having a job. Good, bad or indifferent, our jobs are where we spend, on average, one-third of our lives.

In today's modern society, work provides the material wherewithal for life. However, increasingly, scientists and researchers are linking the quality of our work life with the quality of our well-being. In fact, losing a job is commonly understood to be one of the most devastating losses that a person can experience. If you have the additional complication of having a hearing loss, you can be overwhelmed when faced with unemployment.

It doesn't matter if you are just graduating from school and looking for your first job and wondering how to address your hearing loss with new employers, or you have been in the workforce for many years and are now "aging into your hearing loss," there are many strategies and technologies that can help you work successfully with your hearing loss. We know employers are looking for answers to their questions.

For employers, there are challenges as well. More than 65 percent of people with hearing loss are under the age of 65 and a full 60 percent of them are in the workforce. We expect this percentage to expand as older people stay in the workforce longer and the growing number of younger people and veterans with hearing loss enter the workforce.

Hearing loss even has an economic impact, affecting job performance and earning potential. A 2005 study by the Better Hearing Institute found that untreated hearing loss resulted in a loss of income per household of up to \$12,000 per year, depending on the type and severity of the hearing loss.

Recently HLAA sent out an email asking for members' experiences on the job—both challenges and achievements in the workplace around managing their hearing loss. Within 24 hours we had more than 200 responses—all with compelling stories, both good and bad.

All of these are reasons why HLAA has decided to renew our efforts to address solutions for today's dynamic workplace. There are ways to be successful in the workplace with a hearing loss. Landing a good job, fitting into the workplace, and successfully advocating for the right accommodations that will make you a productive and valued employee can all be accomplished. But you need the right tools, need to do your homework, find out what's right for you and for your employer, and find ways to successfully advocate for yourself.

This issue of *Hearing Loss Magazine* which focuses on the workplace is one component of our workplace initiative. We intend to provide additional resources and tools over the coming months.

Resources for Now

Communication Strategies for Surviving the Workplace or Job Market

Please join us for our first workplace webinar on January 15 at 8 p.m. EST with Valerie Stafford-Mallis. If you receive this issue after the webinar date, you can replay the captioned session located in the Archives at www.hearingloss.org/content/webinar-schedule.

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HLAA Website

www.hearingloss.org/content/workplace

Here we focus on the issues that face employees with hearing loss, provide tools to help you overcome obstacles, and give tips to make your life a little easier in the workplace. We've posted some of the responses we received to our questions about your workplace experiences. There is value in knowing what others are going through, what successes people have had, and that you are not alone when it comes to dealing with your hearing loss in the workplace. Please continue to visit the site as we add new tools and resources in the coming months.

HLAA Employment Toolkit

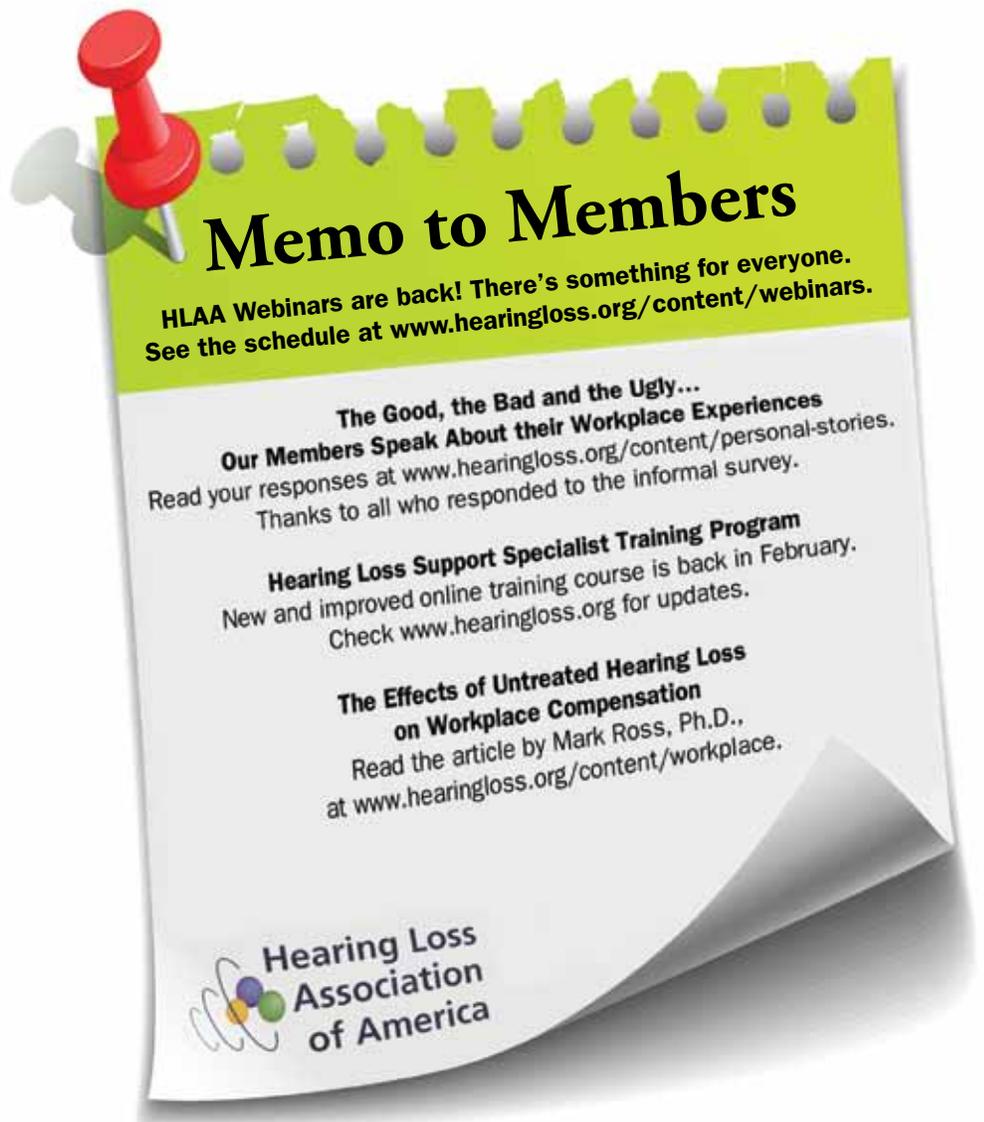
HLAA has also updated our Employment Toolkit with more information on applying for jobs, interviewing, communication tips and employment law and regulations. Read more about it on page 34.

HLAA Chapters

Many of our chapters around the country are also excellent sources of support and information. Find an HLAA Chapter near you at www.hearingloss.org, click on Support, then click on Chapters and State Orgs.

HLAA is here for you whether it is at home or in the workplace. If there are other tools and resources you believe would be helpful to you and/or your employer, please contact HLAA and let us know your ideas or join me for more discussions on my blog at <http://hlaaexecutivedirector.blogspot.com/>. **HLM**

Anna Gilmore Hall is executive director of HLAA. She can be reached at agilmorehall@hearingloss.org.



Memo to Members

HLAA Webinars are back! There's something for everyone.
See the schedule at www.hearingloss.org/content/webinars.

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly...
Our Members Speak About their Workplace Experiences
Read your responses at www.hearingloss.org/content/personal-stories.
Thanks to all who responded to the informal survey.

Hearing Loss Support Specialist Training Program
New and improved online training course is back in February.
Check www.hearingloss.org for updates.

**The Effects of Untreated Hearing Loss
on Workplace Compensation**
Read the article by Mark Ross, Ph.D.,
at www.hearingloss.org/content/workplace.

 **Hearing Loss
Association
of America**

Sophie's Tales: Overcoming Obstacles

By Melanie Paticoff / \$19.95 plus shipping
www.sophiestales.com

Sophie is a little dog with big tales to tell. She loves sharing her stories and thinking up fun ways to spread awareness about hearing loss and showing off her cochlear implants.

Overcoming Obstacles is Sophie's newest tale about her day at the agility course. There she meets Champ the Labradoodle, a glasses-wearing dog who's out to win. Who will be today's winner? Children will enjoy reading this endearing story of friendship again and again! This is a perfect book for a child with a hearing loss, and especially one who wears a cochlear implant.

About the Author—Mel Paticoff is a graduate of Fontbonne University in St. Louis, Missouri where she received her bachelor's degree in deaf education in 2011. She is now a student at Washington University School of Medicine's Program in Audiology and Communication Sciences. Mel grew up on Long Island with a tight-knit family that includes her cousin, Julie, who wears bilateral cochlear implants. By combining her knowledge of living with hearing loss with her background in education and the silly spunk of her Maltipoo puppy, Sophie, Mel created Sophie's Tales, a website full of resources for children with hearing loss. Each product is designed to engage children but also lend itself to language-learning. Mel has created a full complement of hearing loss resources such as the first-place winning YouTube video, That's Just the Way We Hear, and an award-winning picture book for children with cochlear implants, Sophie's Tales: Learning to Listen.

