

The newsletter of the Hearing Loss Association of America, Albuquerque Chapter

WIRED FOR SOUND

Hearing Loss: Definitions of Truth

Olivia Fadul, MS, LPCC, HLAA Albuquerque

Dear HLAA- Albuquerque:

Thank you for this opportunity to be part of this community. I am deeply honored to serve on this executive board and as program chair.

A little bit about me: I am a proud counselor of 11 years. Currently, I am a Counselor Education and Supervision doctoral student at the University of New Mexico. I hope to one day write literature on Deaf and Hard of Hearing/Disability Mental Health (the mental and emotional aspects of disabilities), ableism/audism, Asian American & Pacific Islander, and Black Indigenous People of Color community.

As a part of my hearing loss journey, I am grateful to experience the warm embrace of the hearing loss community. Though we may come from different perspectives of how we define our journey, our community can continue to empower one another through kindness, love, and encouragement.

Earlier this summer, I was asked to write an introductory article about myself for this newsletter. With love, grace, and gratitude, please accept this poem as a testimony of love to our community. This poem serves as my unique way of



introducing myself.

1. The Journey: Awareness of Hearing Loss Identity

Accepting self is one of the hardest things to do. Yet, for many deaf and hard of hearing individuals this is a common reality. I was 5 when I lost my hearing. I threw my hearing aids on the playground. I recall many conversations as a little girl about not wanting to wear the hearing aids. Taking the hearing aids off was my quest to be normal. I have told this story several times. Sometimes I tire of my story. Other times I celebrate myself. Sometimes I beat myself up in my struggles at school. For example, sometimes I see the ableist attitudes. “You can’t do that.” “You don’t belong here.”

“How were you able to practice as a counselor?” You see, I am a counselor with hearing loss in a hearing world. I struggled with this identity. For the most part I love myself. Other times I am in tears. I lived to be perfect. I wanted to be the perfect counselor. I wanted to be the perfect friend, student, and have everything together. Only I’m tired of the word “perfect.” Can I just be me? Can you just



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Hearing Loss Association of
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17 Sep Meeting 10:00 AM - Noon On **Zoom**

We will have a guest speaker. Matthew "Maddie" Hickel is a 63-year-old 2022 University of New Mexico interdisciplinary alumnus. Three years ago, Maddie lost his hearing. He has spent 30 years as a registered nurse. Maddie will share a short documentary and his story.

We then plan an informal Zoom discussion to ask members about meeting in person, topics they would like addressed in the future, and alternate social activities they would enjoy. We want to know what **you** want from **your** HLAA chapter.

Check our Web Page (HearingLossAbq.org) for updates and the link to join the Zoom meeting.

Always check our Home Page for the latest information on upcoming programs.

The HLAA ABQ Chapter is always looking for volunteers. You can man a special project. You can help us out for a few months, or consider a longer-term commitment. "Try us out" for a month or two. We will provide orientation for working on a nonprofit board, share our chapter's mission and goals, and discuss topics we can use your help with. If interested, contact any board member (contact info at left), or use the chapter email hlaabq@gmail.com.

Smith's Community Rewards Shop at Smith's with their Rewards card, and Smith's will make a donation to HLAA Albuquerque chapter. You get your usual rewards points. **Correction:**

1-800-444-8081, opt. 3 to sign up or re-enroll.

The HLAABq NPO number for Smith's is **NC419**.

love me for me?

2. Acculturation: The Process of Assimilating to Hearing Culture.

I learned how to make other people comfortable. I'm good at that. I didn't have a voice. I nodded my head, smiled, and laughed in social settings. I pretended I heard you, but really you talked too fast, and I could not catch what you said. My lip-reading failed, and in K-12 I had no accommodations.

My whole life I learned how to accommodate others. Yet, no one accommodated my needs or learned about me. I was the last kid picked in P.E.

I learned how to take care of others, but not tend to my own emotional needs. When you are hard of hearing, you do what you can to fit in. You do what you can for others to love you. It is like compensating for the hearing you do not have.

I was 14 when my creative writing teacher told me to stop trying so hard to fit in. I did not realize it then, but this was a common lived experience for those living with hearing loss.

I did not have many friends and turned to writing. Writing poetry was a safe haven for me. It was the one thing that did not judge me. I could tell the truth. My words were my light, dance and peace. It was like my hearing loss helped me find my one true love and profession.

I was 13 when I met my school counselor. I was searching for me. I was searching for happiness. I was searching for acceptance.

For a long time, my hearing loss told me "I'm not good enough." "You will never be like the other counselors. They have perfect hearing." "No one

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Go to <http://www.hlaabq.com/amazonsmile.html> for more information and detailed instructions on how to designate HLAA-ABQ Chapter as your charity of choice when you make amazon.com purchases.

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will choose you as their counselor if you openly tell them of your hearing loss."

I almost quit my first year in the doctoral program. Only now I know my story, my truth and my voice matter in this field.

And for the first time in my life, I'm owning that I am a hard of hearing counselor, aspiring counselor educator, 2nd-generation Filipino-American, born in the deep south of Alabama. I'm an implant to New Mexico and hope to stay here.

And I have struggles. Sometimes things do not end up how I want them to be. I've come to the realization I love me and hearing aids. I love that I am a mental health counselor. I have a heart for those living with disability. I want nothing more than to educate and increase mental health services for those living with a disability.

3. Acceptance: An Ongoing Love Journey of My Hearing Loss Identity

It took me time to write this. It took a tough year in my doctoral program to come to terms with the suppressed pain of childhood. You see, I never forgot the pain of wanting to be loved and accepted.

These scars tell stories. They run deep. Yet, the more I got into my identity, the more I found others with hearing loss like me.

The open wounds were open my first semester of my doctoral program when I struggled to hear

Yearly dues are \$15 per household.
They are due in January.

others with masks on. Voices sounded like piano or like mumbling. I almost gave up. Yet, something in me told on myself. My support told me not to give up and to continue to hang on.

My struggles lead me to start a Deaf and Hard of Hearing peer support group for college students. I loved myself and did not want other students to feel like they were alone at the University of New Mexico. I wanted to see them succeed. You see, 1 in 4 Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals do not graduate from college. The higher one goes in higher education the less one will see those living with disabilities graduate from graduate school.

As I dive into my research, I am learning how to love myself. I am learning these hearing aids are strength. I am learning to not judge myself. I am learning the power of telling my story and advocating for others in the same boat. I am learning as Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals that we, too, matter.

Some days are difficult in my doctoral program. Some days I cry. Mostly I cry for others living with similar challenges.

Loop People, Loop Places

Ginevra Ralph

Looping the Great Outdoors!

Sometimes you have to get creative to make an inclusive outdoor sound experience! This summer we have been successfully experimenting with looping three different types of outdoor events where people needed to hear either a speaker or entertainment well. We had been puzzling on different strategies depending on the setup. Each was a temporary loop installation that ultimately had a big impact.

First, we were asked to loop an out-of-town meeting in a city park gazebo for a disability conference. There wasn't time to do a site visit, but we knew that we didn't want to lay the loop out on the ground. It is challenging to protect it from wheels and to prevent tripping. Eugene looper Alan Anttila

I'm coming to terms with these challenges. I'm learning from other counselors in the disability community that it is ok to speak your truth. It is ok to be tired of fighting not only for yourself, but also for others in your community. It is ok to ask people to sit with you when a pity party arises. It is valid. All feelings and thoughts matter. It is ok to get support. It is ok to let others in.

I'm learning my power and that I matter in the counseling world. Maybe I don't see my power, but I know there are people who see it and love me.

Through loving myself, I can teach others living with hearing loss how to navigate the emotional challenges of living in an ableist world.

My name is Olivia. I am a proud Deaf and Hard of Hearing Counselor. I'm owning this truth, my spot in the counseling world and hopefully in academia.

Over-the-Counter Hearing Aids coming in October
Check out HLAA blog at <https://www.-hearingloss.org/over-the-counter-hearing-aids-will-soon-be-available-to-millions-of-americans/>

decided to create a traveling outdoor loop kit. He used 6 PA speaker tripods and strung the copper loop wire around the outside of the gazebo. He attached his driver into the event's sound system and everyone both in the gazebo and standing outside could hear the presentation clearly.

Next we used the same system to loop a 20X40-foot tent for a benefit BBQ and auction. It took an hour to set up. Attendees using telecoils heard all the music and the auctioneer, and raised their paddles generously.

Last night, Alan taped a temporary loop onto the concrete walkways around some seating in an outdoor amphitheater. Bonnie Raitt never sounded better for many attendees! We anticipate that this will lead to a permanent installation.

Looping our lives leads to some creative solutions!

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The Hearing Loss Association of America is a volunteer association of Hard of Hearing people, their relatives and friends. It is a non-profit, non-sectarian educational organization devoted to the welfare and interest of those who cannot hear well. Membership in the national organization is by annual dues, which are separate from the annual Chapter fee paid to your local chapter. National membership includes a subscription to the bi-monthly publication Hearing Life.



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