

HEAR HEAR

M A G A Z I N E

INCLUSION

DIVERSITY

EQUITY

SPRING
2024



Hear Entendre
Québec

Table of Contents

A Word from the Executive Director.....	3
BTW.....	4
Community Highlights.....	6
New Technologies.....	8
Membership & Registration.....	10
Programs.....	11
Hearing Journey.....	14
FYI.....	16
Perspectives.....	18



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Alex R. Ehlers	Communications Coordinator
Chandravathana Ilanthirayan	Administrative Coordinator
Faith Gould	Program Coordinator

Canada SummerJobs

Tatiana Povoroznyuk	Google Archivist
Kelsey Brennan	Graphic Designer

In Loving Memory Of

Barney Cons

It is with heavy hearts that we learned about the passing of our esteemed emeritus board member, Barney Cons. After dedicating many years of service to people with hearing loss, Barney played an instrumental role in shaping the trajectory of our organization, that enriched all of our lives. His dedication and leadership have been a beacon of inspiration, guiding us since his retirement from CHIP aka Hear Quebec. His enduring legacy will forever intertwine with the essence of our organization, serving as a powerful testament to the profound influence one individual can wield within a community. We are deeply grateful for the generous donations received in honor of Barney, which further underscore the lasting impact of his contributions.

In loving memory of **Brian Darling**. We cherish the lives of those who have left us.

We deeply appreciate your understanding & support as we remember our members. If we have inadvertently omitted your loved one's name, kindly let us know so that we may include their names in the next tribute.

Let's not forget hearing loss when we think about Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

I am thrilled to share this edition of Hear Hear magazine, witnessing one of my goals come to life. Reflecting on the transformative decade at Hear

Quebec, these years as your Executive Director have been defined by significant growth and meaningful connections with all of you. In addition to a wholehearted commitment to the peer-centered philosophy of “**nothing about us without us**” and the principles of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI). This steadfast dedication has not only shaped our initiatives but has become an integral part of the very essence of our organization, resonating deeply within its core.

This year the Access Comedy Tour, a real jewel in our EDI initiatives, has not only entertained but has become a powerful vehicle for change. Launched with the vision of educating, collaborating and fostering inclusivity, this tour stands as a testament to our shared journey within the hearing loss community.

Our efforts to raise awareness have been a cornerstone of the past decade. Through strategic engagement on social media, impactful content on our website, and various media appearances, we have strived to break down stereotypes and deepen understanding about the importance of hearing health and the needs of people with hearing loss.

Commitment to the peer-centered philosophy of “nothing about us without us” and the principles of Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion

Securing research approval this past winter for our Include **ME** program represents more than just a milestone; it embodies a commitment to deepening our comprehension of how our peer-centered approach and philosophy will positively influence an individual's hearing health and overall management of their hearing loss. This approval underscores our unwavering dedication to providing valuable insights that extend beyond our immediate community, enriching the broader discourse on hearing loss and inclusivity.

As I reflect on these ten years, I express profound gratitude for the connections formed, and I

extend my deepest thanks for the ongoing support and partnership throughout the years. Together, we've achieved remarkable milestones, and it fills me with pride to acknowledge our collective accomplishments. Join me in celebrating a decade of growth, resilience, and a shared commitment to creating a future where Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion are not just principles but the driving force behind a more inclusive and barrier-free community for people affected by hearing loss.

As we embark on the next chapter, I am thrilled to announce the newest addition to our team—Faith, our new Programs Coordinator. With her firsthand experience and genuine passion for addressing hearing loss, she brings a valuable perspective to our mission. I'm excited to see this year's opportunities, and I'm genuinely thrilled about the remarkable experiences and achievements it holds for us. With such an exceptional team, board and all of our volunteers, I am confident that this will indeed be our best year yet and I'm grateful to share this exciting journey with each one of you!





Accessibility in Movies & TV Shows



Faith Wysote Gould is the Program Coordinator at **Hear Quebec** and a MOSD alumnus. Bilaterally deaf, she has used a cochlear implant since age two. She graduated in Social Sciences from Marianopolis, attended Concordia University and is now excited to work at Hear Quebec! She is passionate about community building. In Faith's free time, she reads general fiction and Indigenous non-fiction books, and enjoys beading!

Accessibility in the entertainment field is on the rise, and the positive changes related to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion are noteworthy. Closed captioning has become a standard practice, making media more accessible for everyone. Streaming services like Netflix, Prime, Cable, HBO, and Disney+ now offer captioning for nearly every movie and show. This inclusive approach extends beyond entertainment, reaching various organizations that actively promote inclusivity across different spaces.

Accessibility in the entertainment field is on the rise, and the positive changes related to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion are noteworthy.

In the last few years, bigger-name movies being shown in ASL have become available to everyone. Barbie, a high-grossing and popular movie released in 2023, is now streaming on HBO Max and Crave where anyone including the d/Deaf community can stream it with American Sign Language.

4

In April 2023, Disney made available an ASL version of Antman, a popular Marvel movie released in 2015, and this can be found in "Extras." This makes the experience more accessible and especially enjoyable for Deaf adults and children who wish to watch the movie in their first language.

Another great piece of information to know is the free-of-charge Sign Up Captions Chrome extension. Once installed on the desktop or laptop, the audience will be able to overlay sign language captions on selected movies and TV shows on Disney+ and Netflix. About 110 movies on Disney have this option including the new Percy Jackson show, Marvel movies, childhood classics like Home Alone, Monsters Inc, Hocus Pocus, Narnia, and as well popular animation movies like Frozen, Moana, The Incredibles, Toy Story, Inside Out and many more! Netflix has 22 movies that are also available with ASL captions.

Tip: For a group or immersive experience, you can stream your laptop/desktop to your TV if you have an HDMI cable. If you have a Firestick, smart TV, or Google Cast, you can mirror your laptop to your TV.

We hope to see many more added to the list and this is great progress towards better accessibility for all.



Check out Sign Up Captions for the full list.



Not only are we seeing more ASL accessibility in the entertainment space, we are also seeing more Deaf representation in d/Deaf actors, movies with d/Deaf characters, and American Sign Language between characters in movies and TV shows. Marvel released a show, Echo, that features a Deaf character named Maya and she communicates the whole show in ASL with people around her. Alaqua Cox, the actress who plays this character, is Deaf and an ASL user as well and it is great that we are seeing this kind of representation in bigger movies. More of this is shown in movies like Creed 3 in which the boxer communicates through ASL to his Deaf daughter and has a Hard-of-Hearing

wife. The Marvel movie Eternals features Makkari who is a Deaf character using ASL and is played by Lauren Ridloff who also shows up in The Walking Dead.

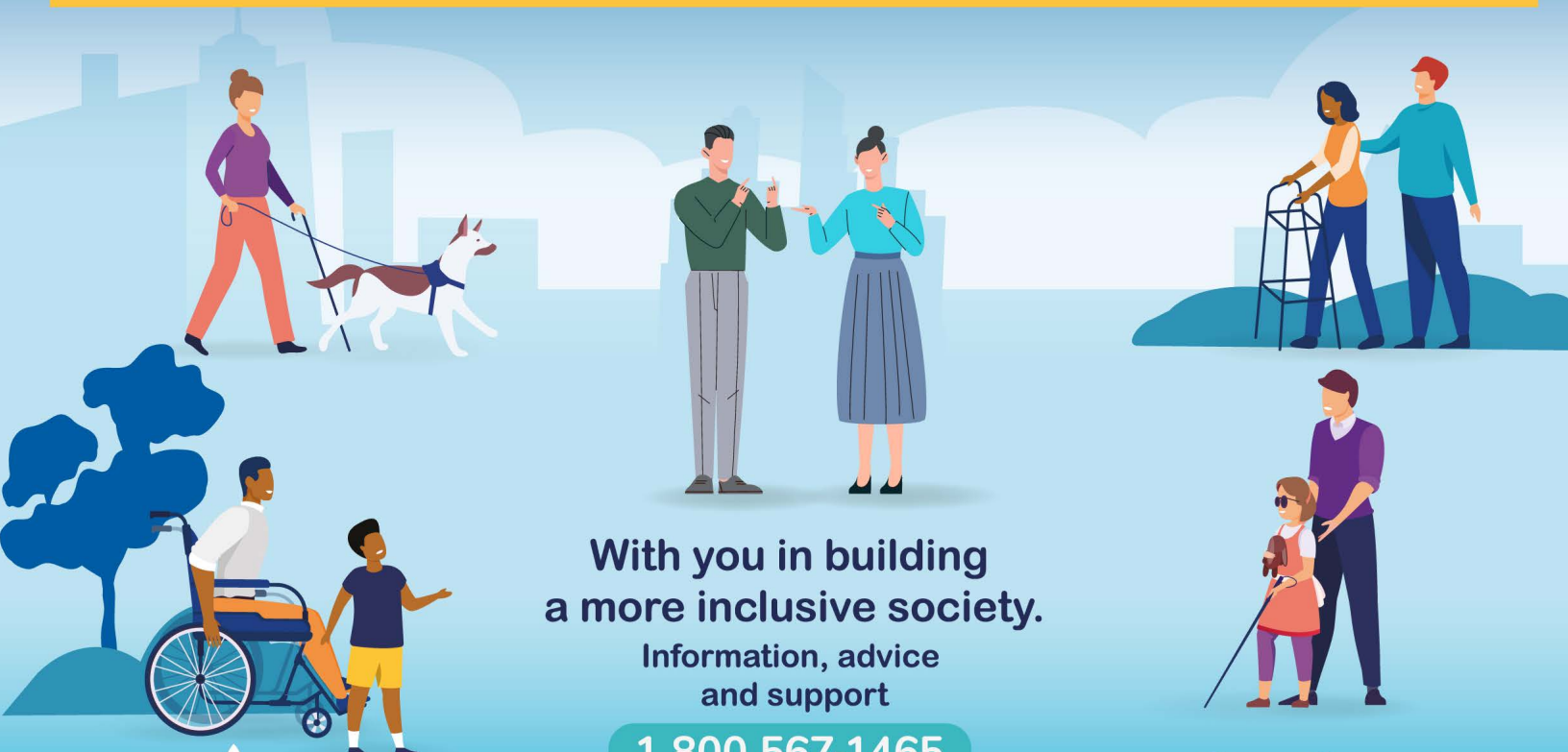
Since closed captioning became standard in the media, more people are able to enjoy watching movies and TV. By adding ASL interpreting to accessibility measures is taking a step further in better accessibility for everyone. With the rise of technology, it is good to see companies are including accessibility improvement and using technology for better measures like Sign Up Captions and standardized captioning.



Scan the QR code and check out Sign Up ASL Captions

What else could be done going forward? One common request many of the d/Deaf community including myself wish for is open captioning to be available in movie theaters. I believe it should be added to our list of standard accessibility measures and one day, it will.

The Office des personnes handicapées du Québec



With you in building
a more inclusive society.

Information, advice
and support

1 800 567-1465
AIDE@OPHQ.GOUV.QC.CA

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Community Highlights

Accessibility & Comedy: A Long Overdue Collaboration



Arienne Auger has been working in the event industry for nearly 7 years. Since 2022, she has held the position of **Director of Operations for the Zoofest festival**, a not-to-be-missed gathering for comedy enthusiasts in Montreal. For her, a successful event is one that places the participants experience at the heart of its objectives. What she finds inspiring about her work is the human aspect that turns events into powerful communication tools.

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion are words that resonate strongly at Zoofest. After all, our mission is to make comedy accessible to everyone! And yet, just a year ago, we were not aware of the incredible impact we could have in terms of accessibility...

In the fall of 2022, I attended Access Comedy organized by Hear Entendre Québec for the first time. It's a Sunday like any other for me, as I'm used to seeing comedy shows as part of my job. From the beginning of the show, I realize that what I'm about to experience is out of the ordinary and that my perception of what an accessible show should be has just changed. I left the show saying to myself that we have a lot of work to do if we want to offer a more accessible and inclusive festival, but more importantly, that we have a duty to do so because of our proximity to our industry and our audience.

Shortly after, my team and I contacted Heidi and Layne, who generously offered us their knowledge on hearing loss and how to be a change agent in the entertainment industry in terms of accessibility. This led to a collaboration that resulted in producing our very first show 100% accessible to people living with hearing loss as part of the 2023 edition of the festival.



This event did not happen overnight. We had to rethink certain logistical aspects of a traditional comedy show, inform all stakeholders of the necessary improvements for an inclusive experience, and, most importantly, learn and

Accessibility is for everyone, and what emerges from it is a true demonstration of respect and empathy. It makes us a better organization, but mostly, better humans.



accept that we cannot do everything at once. There are no small actions. All are important and bring significant and lasting changes. I think this had to be the biggest lesson we learned.

Also, we realized that communication is a key ingredient of a successful accessible event. Not only is it important to communicate the accessibility measures available to those who need them, but it's also relevant to inform everyone that these measures enhanced the experience whether you need them or not! Our hope is that accessibility becomes an integrated part of the production process for other organizations and festivals so that it can systematically be offered at every show.

The impact of our learnings is significant and marks a turning point for our organization. Through our ongoing collaboration with Hear Entendre Quebec, we hope to influence our industry to undertake changes that will have a positive and durable impact on our communities. More than ever, we're determined to pass on all this knowledge to our colleagues and, together, make the entertainment

industry more accessible. We look forward to continuing our learning process and gradually integrating more accessibility measures in our organization and festival.

Accessibility is for everyone, and what emerges from it is a true demonstration of respect and empathy. It makes us a better organization, but mostly, better humans.



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1,2,3 You're hired!



Alex Reveles Ehlers has served as the **Communications Coordinator** at **Hear Quebec** for over a year. She graduated as a graphic and web designer from John Abbott College. Passionate about photography, she organizes two language exchange events that take place around the city, and she also runs a book club. During the summer, you'll find her hiking and running on Mount Royal every weekend.

Over the past years, we have seen amazing and rather scary improvements in technology, especially in the development of artificial intelligence. When people first heard the term "Artificial Intelligence", the only thing some of us could think of was "Skynet". I know, I know! I am a little bit of a geek; "Terminator 1 & 2" was one of the love languages between my dad and me. So, as you can imagine, I was hands on when I heard about this thing called "Chat GPT".

At first, I was really excited. Some part of my geeky brain really thought we would be having human-robots that looked like Arnold Schwarzenegger with his lovely accent helping us with different daily tasks. (Hey, no judging on the accents, I have one. I'm latina!). But then, after a couple of articles got released about this "machine" approving business and law school exams, I understood that reality surpassed fiction.

One of the "wow" things I learned about the bot was that Chat GPT can help pass the ATS (Applicants Tracking Softwares) filters. Companies use these filters in order to help them with the hiring process. The fact that companies are using ATS to filter candidates is a blessing in disguise. If you think about it, those filters could help us have more equal opportunities

for all candidates. This is crucial when trying to bring diversity and inclusion into the workforce.

The machine seeks specific information, skills, keywords that could get you the one-on-one interview that makes the difference between getting hired and continuing to search for a job. At least, the AI can get you a phone call, like the one I got from Layne Turner when applying to Hear Quebec. And no, back at that time, AI wasn't ready yet.

People tend to think that bringing equity, diversity and inclusion is "what's happening now". But I don't think we all understand the impact that having these values guiding our relationships with our members, clients

Good luck with finding your dream job. Don't settle for less than a safe space. Good luck!

and co-workers has had. As a Mexican immigrant, I have been able to communicate with some of our new members, who don't know English or French, getting them

the right information that they need at the right time. To me, having this experience has made me feel beyond just being efficient, but being truly helpful to another human who is in need. This feeling is something we should feel at least once in our lives. Like Einstein said: **"Only a life lived for others is a life worthwhile."**

So, please let me show you how to build a CV that could pass the ATS filters. This could help you apply

to that perfect job, providing not only professional experience but also the opportunity to have a safe space – a place where you feel appreciated, cared for, and, why not, find amazing people with whom you can share tacos, berries and read daily horoscopes.

Ok, the first thing is to adapt your CV to the different job offers that interest you. Search “chat gpt” on Google. Click on the first link that says: “Open AI-Introducing Chat GPT”. It will show a psychedelic website: that’s the one! There’s a button on the top right corner that says “Try ChatGPT”.

If you already have a CV, just skip these steps. For you, my friend, who wants to start from scratch, what we’ll do first is we’ll say hi to the bot, because when they become the rulers of humanity, we’ll need them to be nice to us.

Ok. Start typing something like: “Hi beautiful chat GPT, could you please help me build my resume in a CV format (this is very important, mention that you want “CV format”). These are my skills...” Use this part to mention all the skills that are relevant to your sector, such as: hard skills, soft skills and interpersonal skills.



Before hitting enter, share your relevant experiences. Copy the template the bot generates, paste it into a word or google doc, and add your name and missing information in the brackets “[]”.

Now, let’s go to the job offer that interests you. Copy the job offer and go back to the chat screen. You’ll need to thank the bot for creating your CV. Say something like: “Thanks for your help Chat GPT, now please tailor my CV for the following job offer, emphasizing my skills to match the keywords and ensuring compatibility with ATS filters.”

After obtaining your tailored CV, visit [jobscan.co](https://www.jobscan.co) (remember it’s “.co,” not “.com”). Drop your CV and the job offer into the respective boxes. The site will provide a match rate between your CV and the job offer, providing insights into how well it aligns with ATS requirements. Adjust your CV as needed to improve the score, and if issues arise, don’t hesitate to return to ChatGPT for further assistance.



Good luck with finding your dream job. Don’t settle for less than a safe space.



Good luck!

A testimonial from our new Program Coordinator, Faith Gould on why it is important to have a job that allows equal opportunities and embraces diversity:

About two days after I joined LinkedIn, Hear Quebec posted their Program Coordinator position and I thought, “Oh my god, why didn’t I think of working at an organization like that before? This seems perfect” I was so used to seeing myself as the recipient of these services then I started thinking more about the job and I realized this was a chance for me to get closer to my community while having that accessibility in the workplace and to also play a role in that support system.

I made the right decision in applying. The first question as I walked in for the interview was “Do you need a FM or a Mini Mic before we get started?” I knew then that I wanted to work here and I wanted other people to have that relief when they walked into a job interview. They then discussed the importance of the needs of the Hear Quebec Community. That was the final hook - connecting to my community as a deaf person, getting that accessibility at work (they knew some of my needs right away) AND they shared my values of community-building and having a support system. Sold! Going forward, those are now my standards for any company I’d work at.

Membership & Registration

Membership Fee Updates & Savings: Empowering Change at Hear Quebec!



We're excited to share a significant update regarding our membership fees. After a decade, adjustments have been made to better align with our organizational needs and objectives. Your unwavering support over the years has been pivotal, and we deeply appreciate your understanding during this transitional period.

Revised membership fees for the upcoming year & benefits:

- **Individual membership is now at \$20**
- Members facing financial difficulties can request a fee waiver.
- We are championing **Organizational/ Professional Memberships** to support local businesses and enhance community engagement.
- Registered **non-profit organizations** and their **employees: \$20**
- **Other businesses and organizations: \$25**
- Your **membership allows you to unlock potential monthly savings of up to \$20 on your cell phone bills through Accessibility discount.** We're dedicated to assisting members in accessing these discounts from providers.

We're also revamping our membership structure to better serve your needs. Your feedback is valuable, so please share any suggestions or ideas you have.

New Memberships are valid between **April 1 and March 31** of each year and must be renewed annually. Please complete both sides of the **2024-25 membership form** if you are a new member.

Renewal Membership Forms are available for the **2024-25 membership year**. Past members will receive a simplified form by mail. Please complete, sign, and return it with payment for successful renewal.

Renewing your membership not only supports our mission but also opens doors to potential savings up to \$20 each month through the accessibility discount on your cell phone bills.

Registration is obligatory for all activities, events, and services. Please register in advance, indicating your interest and completing payment if required.

For your convenience, membership forms can be downloaded from our website: www.hearhear.org/become-a-member/ and submit them via email. For further details on membership, accessibility discounts, and registration, contact info@hearhear.org or call **514-488-5552 ext 4500**. Your membership plays a vital role in shaping our initiatives. Please renew to help empower the hearing loss community.

Payment Methods:

- Secure online payments at <https://hearhear.nationbuilder.com/donate>. Please use the comment section to express what the payment is for, ie. "membership fee \$20," "donation \$25."
- You may also pay in-person at our office using cash, cheque, credit card, or debit card
- Mail cheques payable to **Hear Québec**.



Support

Our programs are geared to meet the needs of both young adults and seniors and for many to enjoy. Our activities take place in accessible and peer-centered environments and we offer daytime and evenings, virtual or in-person for you to choose from.

◇ Daytime



1. Peer Mentoring: Our peer mentors are volunteers your age that are matched with you who also have hearing loss. They are there to connect with you one-on-one to share tips, tricks and lessons and to help you adapt to your hearing loss

Call or email us to be paired with a peer mentor!

2. Daytime Coffee Breaks: Weekly Coffee meet-ups for those with hearing loss. Sip, share, and engage in thoughtful conversations in a welcoming environment.

Mode: **Hybrid** Dates: **From April 10th to June 12th**
Days: **Wednesdays**
Time: **1:30-3:00pm**

3. Exceptional Lunch League: Join our monthly lunch to connect with others who share hearing loss. Indulge in great food and great company. Carpooling will be available

Mode: **In-person**
Where: **Sarto-Desnoyers Community Center on 1335 Lakeshore Drive in Dorval**

Days: **Wednesdays**
Time: **11:00-1:00pm**
Dates: **April 18th, May 16th & June 20th**



◇ Evening

4. Cocktail Evening: Are you looking for a community to connect with and to have fun? We've got you! As part of the hearing loss community, let's connect, meet up and dive into our evening social activities.

◇ **Indoor Skating at Atrium Le 1000** ◇ **Musee d'Art Contemporain**

When: **April 13th 2024**
Time: **4:45-7:00pm**

"Femmes Volcans Forets Torrents" Guided tour in english

When: **June 6th 2024**
Time: **5:00-6:15pm**

◇ **Latte O'clock**

When: **May 3rd 2024**
Time: **6:00-8:00pm**
Where: **TBD**



5. Thorns & Roses Cochlear Implant Group:

Whether your CI is new or you have had it for a while, you are invited to join us and exchange valuable tips & experiences.

Are you on the waiting list for a CI?

You are welcome to join as well!

Mode: **Virtual**
Time: **7:00pm to 8:00pm**
Dates: **April 23rd, May 7th & May 27th**



Resources & Referrals

Referral Service: Hear Quebec specializes in offering immediate, accurate, reliable and trustworthy information thanks to our strong partnerships and knowledgeable staff. You can email Faith Gould directly for resources and questions. Faith, a staff member with a lived experience in hearing loss, is there to help you get the answers you need



HEARTalks: Stay up to date from our expert panelists on hearing loss information and services!

Mode: Hybrid- 7000 Sherbrooke St West & Google Meet

Time: 7:00- 8:00pm



- ◇ **How to Save Money with Hear Quebec:** Learn about savings and discounts you get by becoming a member at Hear Quebec

Date: April 9th 2024

- ◇ **Estate Planning:** Join our talk for essential insights on securing your future, writing your will and preserving your assets

When: To be Determined

- ◇ **Taking care of your hearing aids:** Information about hearing aids maintenance, technology and tips

When: To be Determined



Outreach: Our tailored presentations for organizations or schools will provide tips on communication strategies and a greater understanding of hearing loss in general. Book your in person presentation today

How to book a presentation:
Call the office at 514-488-5552 ext. 4500
or email info@hearhear.org



Skills

Speechreading: Our program is back for the Spring! Build your speechreading skills with our instructor in person. **Participants must commit to attend all in person sessions.**

Contact us for more information and register for your spot as space is limited. **Fees apply.**

Mode: In-person
Where: 7000 Sherbrooke St West, Room C 37B
Days: Tuesdays
Time: 1:30-3:30pm
Dates: March 26th to May 28th



Awareness & Accessibility



Great News! **Consult-ME** has launched and we now offer a consultation service to the public on how to implement hearing accessibility at activities and events. This customizable service will enable your organization to reach new markets and increase EDI participation by acquiring Knowledge, Practice and Policy training and coaching to ensure that your inclusive goals are met.

With our 4 module system your organization will better understand hearing loss and accessibility needs, be able to develop an action plan and then implement accessibility measures at an activity or event with the support and coaching from Hear Quebec.

Through this method your organization will be able to make long term hearing accessibility a reality. Contact us today to learn more about the benefits our service can offer you.



Do you have an amplified phone or TV device that is just sitting there gathering dust? Do you wish someone could help you learn how to use it?

For many years Hear Quebec has been a go-to resource for questions and advice on assistive technologies.

Within our network and membership we have access to a wealth of knowledge to share, and we are so pleased that we have made this support official with our Include ME at home service! We have trained volunteer ambassadors to answer questions, provide troubleshooting and basic tech support to our members who need help with their ALD phone and TV devices. The best part is that our volunteers can go to you!

This service works in partnership with Lethbridge Layton Mackay and with funding from the government of Canada. Contact us today to finally get the most out of your Assistive Listening Device.

Funded by the
Government of Canada's
Community Services Recovery Fund



Special Events

Annual General Meeting Don't miss the date! Learn what Hear Quebec has achieved this year and exercise your right to vote. Don't miss your chance to learn about Hear Quebec's special announcement. Dinner provided.

Date: **June 4th 2024**



Hearing Journey

My Undetected Hearing Loss



Connor Quinn has lived in Point Saint Charles since 2019. After studying history at Bishop's, and cultural theory at Groningen (The Netherlands), he continued with Business at McGill and HEC. He worked at Lifestyle Hearing in Ottawa, and presently works for a chain of hearing clinics called Lobe, based in Quebec City. He finds it a pleasure to work closer to home, with his Labrador puppy named Walter.

My hearing loss journey started at the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Airport 10 years ago. I was walking through the corridors of the international terminal after a business trip to the US when my boss looked at me and said, "you should really do something about that." I didn't know what he was talking about, but apparently I was completely oblivious to my phone ringing as I was marching towards a long customs line. "How many calls are you missing a day?" he joked.

The ironic thing is that I was working for a chain of hearing clinics in Ontario at the time. "I know someone who can help you with that," my boss joked again. Access to audiology services and products was not the prohibitor to me realizing my hearing loss. Denial was also not the prohibitor. Financial obstacles then? Nope, my company had a benefits program for employees to subsidize hearing aids and provide hearing care. It was simply pure ignorance that a person in their early thirties could even develop a hearing loss.

We don't often think of getting our hearing tested regularly. We go to the dentist, optometrist, or family doctor regularly. I'm literally in a hearing clinic every day of the week, but me? A new study in management with

hard of hearing researchers from Portland State University and York University sheds light on how hearing loss can impact a person's success in their workplace. The study mentions that employees with a hearing loss use social isolation as a coping mechanism to avoid awkward, anxious, and frustrating communication experiences while on the job. This social isolation relieves the employee from uncomfortable situations at work, but can have damaging long term consequences to their advancement, commitment levels, satisfaction, and salary. In effect, the person becomes more disengaged in their professional life due to their disability, and not their actual dedication. This prohibits them from reaching their full potential.

The researchers recommend that it is important for managers to have a tailored approach to support their employees with hearing loss. An example of this might be to not use a cocktail party or restaurant as a preferred venue to introduce sales executives to potential clients. Instead, support your sales executives with hearing loss by allowing for a catered one-on-one lunch meeting hosted in your quiet office to introduce them.



It was simply pure ignorance that a person in their early thirties could even develop a hearing loss



In my previous role with the large multinational hearing aid manufacturer, we had an EDI program that had many great initiatives in place based on several goals. However, nothing on helping employees with hearing loss at all, and this is a hearing aid company for crying out loud. This is the case for many different groups that are “invisible,” who tend to be underrepresented

I think it's great that we have studies like this to reference and provide us with some guidance on what to do. But we must ensure that the hearing loss is identified first, and this isn't always automatic like identifying a vision loss. Equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) best practices have become mainstream for many large business settings in the past few years. Companies are starting to realize the value creation being left on the table by not tapping into ALL their employees' full potential with accessibility programs and tools. This is a wonderful trend and gives the hearing loss community the opportunity to confirm when they require support to feel like they have the same access to opportunities as those with normal hearing.



However, as I mentioned previously, I wasn't even aware of my own hearing loss – it was not on my radar for years as the loss increased gradually over time till it was apparent to others and not me. The fact is, even with all the EDI programs that companies are putting in place, hearing loss has the likely potential of being left behind as a priority. It is the “invisibility” of the disability that does this, I believe.

For many companies, recognizing hearing loss as being a legitimate disadvantage that their personnel may experience is not obvious. Companies prefer to focus on more visible populations to include in their EDI programs, for example targeting gender, ethnicity, religious, or people with a physical disability to support with their programs.



without some equality measures put in place, yet don't make the cut for EDI initiatives.

This is all to say that EDI is an encouraging social phenomenon that many organizations are taking very seriously. The hearing loss community cannot sit idly by waiting for EDI initiatives to start having a positive impact for them. People with hearing loss will still need to recognize their disability, communicate it to others, and put their fate in their own hands by asking for help when needed: closed captions, quiet environments, asking others to speak clearly, etc. This is why I am so impressed with all the work Hear Quebec does to educate the population on hearing loss, its impact, and how to overcome it so we can all reach our full potential!

This is why I joined HearQuebec!

The current evidence for cochlear implants in older adults



Dr. Emily Kay-Rivest is an ENT doctor specialized in ear and skull base surgery (neurotology), particularly various ear pathologies; cochlear implants for hearing loss in children and adults; and skull base tumors. She completed her medical studies and residency at McGill University, followed by a two-year fellowship at New York University. Her research interests include studying cochlear implant outcomes and maximizing success and performance of cochlear implants in patients of all ages.

As the world's population ages, an increasing number of individuals are living with hearing loss. The prevalence of hearing loss among persons over the age of 65 is estimated to be around 30 to 60% and increases to approximately 80% in those over 85^{1,2}. Unfortunately, only around 20% of hearing impaired individuals receive adequate hearing rehabilitation³.

Hearing loss in older adults has been linked to a decline in cognition, to social isolation and to diminished autonomy and quality of life^{1,4}. Work by Lin et al. suggests that cognitive decline has a linear association with severity of hearing loss^{4,5}. Indeed, if hearing loss is left untreated, this represents an independent risk factor for progression towards dementia and may be directly linked to Alzheimer's disease⁶. For this reason, the use of hearing aids for hearing loss has been identified as a recommended strategy for dementia risk reduction by the Lancet Commission. However, many people's hearing loss is too severe to be remediated with hearing aids and they may require cochlear implantation (CI).

Although cochlear implant surgery is a relatively short procedure, any patient undergoing surgery is subject to several risks which

need to be weighed against potential benefits. In order to better assess this risk/benefit profile, in 2022 our team performed a scoping review aimed at identifying and mapping the available evidence surrounding CI in older adults⁷.

We reviewed 97 articles which encompassed 7,182 patients over the age of 60 and found very interesting results. First, we did not identify any specific reason which would warrant outright refusal of cochlear implantation candidacy (for example, no specific health problem should result in an "absolute no"). Among the articles reviewed, we found that speech perception outcomes in older adults undergoing CI were excellent, often comparable to younger patients. We found low complication rates and improved quality of life after surgery.



We also reviewed the literature about cognition and cochlear implants. Since 2015, 12 studies prospectively (meaning looking forward in time) evaluated cognitive function after CI. Improvement was

Their results suggest that a CI may potentially reverse cognitive impairment but will not universally prevent decline over time



Another topic we reviewed was dizziness and falls after cochlear implantation. We know that patients of all ages can be dizzy after surgery, but there is some evidence that older patients may be more at risk. Unfortunately, very few studies examined this topic. Mosnier et al. found no notable increase in falls in their patients over 65 after surgery⁸. Wong et al. found that 3.6 to 7.7% of patients experienced dizziness after surgery that lasted more than 30 days⁹. More research identifying risk of falls and subjective dizziness changes before and after surgery would greatly enhance our ability to appropriately guide patients, especially as more and more older adults are interested in both unilateral and bilateral implantation.

noted in all domains of cognition. Among the most notable studies was a report by Mosnier et al., who performed an evaluation of 94 patients over the age of 65 who underwent a CI⁸. Her group noted improvement in cognitive function, as early as 6 months after surgery. They found that among patients with the poorest cognition scores before surgery, 81% improved at their 1-year assessment. Furthermore, the patients with the best cognitive performances before surgery showed stability in cognitive function at 1-year follow-up, although a mild decline was noted in 24% of patients. Their results suggest that a CI may potentially reverse cognitive impairment but will not universally prevent decline over time⁸. Overall, cognitive decline should not be a reason to deny someone cochlear implant consideration, and a more global assessment (often with the help of a neurologist or geriatrician) is needed.



Overall, cochlear implantation in older adults is associated with a substantial number of positive outcomes. No findings in the literature suggest a single patient characteristic that would warrant refusal to consider evaluation for cochlear implantation. As for anyone being considered for a CI, a global evaluation of the patient's goals, expectations and commitment remain of great importance.



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Equity Diversity and Inclusion - A Queer Seniors perspective



Bruce Cameron has dedicated his career to para-public services, focusing on child protection, adult training, and seniors' home care. He provides crucial support to community members in need, including youth in crisis, fragile citizens, and stigmatized & isolated individuals. In 2018, he established **Gay and Grey Montreal**, an Anglo seniors' queer group offering social and intergenerational activities and information and addressing senior issues within the queer community.

Equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) is a conceptual framework that promotes the fair treatment and full participation of all people, especially populations that have historically been underrepresented or subject to discrimination because of their background, identity, disability, etc.

The Canada Research Coordinating Committee (2019) specifically identifies that the LGBTQAI+ (Queer) population has been subjected to systemic discrimination. Research has helped to ensure that possible barriers to equity, promotion of diversity and inclusion can be identified and hopefully addressed. The use of EDI in research development and Human Resource frameworks is

a welcomed and important step in ensuring people of the LGBTQAI+community are less subject to systematic barriers.

The following timeline is an example of how a specific group was able to create change:

- In 1969 homosexuality was decriminalized;
- In 1973 it was declassified by the American Medical Association (AMA) as a mental illness;
- In 1990 the World Health Organisation removes homosexuality as a mental illness;
- In 1995 The Canadian Human Rights constitution includes homosexuality as a protection (18 years after Quebec did same thing); Same sex marriage, right to adoption, protecting trans rights as well as banning conversion therapy all followed suit –all very welcomed and important measures.



“If we could just come from a place of kindness so much could be achieved”

Despite all these “protections”, members of the senior queer community often express fear about moving into residential care, about receiving home



I know when I go to a community centre, a medical environment or a social service center I look for signs that are positive for my community – rainbow flags, ally stickers, posters declaring non discriminatory practices. I notice how forms are set up, what kind of questions are asked (or not), who's in the space with me. These kinds of things allow me to decide if I am in the right space. It might be superficial but at least it's there.

The goal or objective of implementing EDI practices should be more than checking off a form that has no practice or weight into the future. Ongoing sensitization training, client / staff evaluation, and continuous improvement strategies should form part of that framework that true inclusion can be achieved.

care and about accessing social and medical services. How will I be received? What are the ethics of those who are providing my care? Does the doctor or nurse understand the issues I have had to deal with? Will I have to hide my sexual identity? Do people in the residential setting carry homophobic values? Currently there is a host of research on identifying issues but little on solutions. Queer informed community groups work hard to sensitize community professionals to the issues queer elders face and offer solutions to provide more welcoming spaces. How can the medical and legal community better understand their patient or client?



In advocating for the queer senior community, I have always held that the queer individual must find safe spaces in order to fully express themselves and to participate in the community (from recreation to medical services). But I have realized the concept of “safe” is determined by the individual – Do I feel safe here? vs Welcome to our safe space. No institution or organisation can make that decision for the individual. So, what to do?

I would argue that in developing EDI frameworks we focus on inclusion. Inclusionary practices and frameworks encompass equity and diversity. What can we do to remove languages and barriers that promote exclusion? What does the organisation's environment look like? How can we better welcome people into our environment?

Having lived through significant societal changes it is my hope that we continue to move in a positive direction. Events of late call that into question. The lessons learned by my generation can be taught to those who are now taking up the challenge. Changing the ways in which we do things is a monumental task. Developing frameworks of inclusion is an important part of implementing change but only one part of the process. We must continue to ensure that the work of sensitization and inclusion are at the forefront of our Issues. A member of my group says “If we could just come from a place of kindness so much could be achieved” So simple yet so true.



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