



Heard in Fort Worth

Hearing Loss Association of America – Fort Worth Chapter
September 2026

September 12 Program:



Presented by Patricia Aguirre, director of ARDC

Patricia's presentation will provide an overview of the services offered by the Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC) and how it supports older adults, individuals with disabilities, caregivers, and professionals throughout Tarrant County.

Patricia Aguirre, LMSW, MBA is the Director of the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) at the Area Agency on Aging, a role she has held for the past four years. With more than 16 years of experience in social services, Patricia is dedicated to connecting older adults, individuals with disabilities, and their families to essential resources and support that enhance independence and quality of life.

Throughout her career, Patricia has been passionate about serving vulnerable populations, building strong community partnerships, and improving access to programs and services. Her leadership is driven by a commitment to empowering individuals, strengthening communities, and ensuring that every person has access to the information and assistance they need to thrive.

HLAA - Fort Worth meets on the Second Saturday of each month

in the fellowship hall of Central Christian Church, 3205 Hamilton Avenue, Fort Worth, TX 76107.

We have snacks and mingle at 9:30 a.m. and meet at 10:00. Please join us and bring a friend!

We offer real time captioning and assistive listening systems for communication accessibility.

A Health and Wellness Expo for Seniors and Caregivers

EMPOWERING SENIORS Expo 2026

Thursday, October 1 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Come learn about services available in Tarrant County that will empower seniors, family members, and caregivers to live a healthier lifestyle!

Featuring Free: Admission, Lunch, Parking, Health Screenings, Workshops, Tote Bag, Door Prizes, fun activities, and more!

HLAA Fort Worth will have a booth at this event.

REGISTER NOW: www.empoweringseniors.com

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Joyce's Jargon

Hi, HLAA Friends,

We've begun planning monthly meetings for 2027. What topics would you like to hear about? There's almost a whole year waiting to be planned. Do you have ideas for a topic related to hearing loss? *Please reach out to me:* Fortworthhlaa@gmail.com or 817.966.1947.

The chapter has another opportunity to share about hearing loss and how we support each other, educate, and advocate for those with hearing loss. **Empowering Seniors** is Thursday, Oct. 1st. It's a great event with many vendors, seminar topics, door prizes and lunch are available for those registered. Go to empoweringseniors@tarrantcountytexas.gov for more information and to register. Make sure you stop at the chapter booth while you are there. We will need some help. If you'd like to take a shift, let me know.

See you Saturday for a great presentation from Patricia Aguirre, LMSW, MBA, with the Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC).

Joyfully,

Joyce Parlin
Chapter President

2025 Chapter Board of Directors

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Heard In Fort Worth

This newsletter is published by the
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Hearing Loss Association of America**
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The Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) is the leading voice of the growing number of people with—and at risk of—hearing loss in the U.S. We advocate to increase access to care and treatment, break down stigmas through education and awareness, and empower people with hearing loss through a nationwide community of support.

Our work impacts millions, improving the lives of people with hearing loss, and elevating the importance of hearing health and accessible communication through national legislation and public policy and a

Summary of August 8 Presentation

Communication Breakdowns - Causes & Cures

Presented by Judy Oetting, hearing loss communication specialist

Summarized by Darlene Liesner from the meeting transcript by Carrie Gibson, CSR

Judy Oetting is a Speech Therapist, Lip Reading Teacher, HLAA Fort Worth Chapter Librarian/Historian, and a Chapter founder. She currently works at a rehab hospital and a brain injury clinic. At the August 8 meeting, Judy discussed communication breakdowns and communication strategies to repair them.

Judy based her presentation on the work of psychologist Samuel Trychin, PhD. Hard of hearing himself, Dr. Trychin is the Mental Health and Rehabilitation Advisor to the Hearing Loss Association of America. He has written 15 books, several book chapters and journal articles, and produced DVDs on living better with hearing loss.

Communication is a two-way street affecting both the speaker and the listener. Both share the responsibility for making communication work. It is only successful when both people are fully invested in making it work.

Some distractions common to everyone lead to communication breakdown. If you are very tired, you don't think, hear, or speak as well. Likewise, if you are uncomfortable or in pain, you don't hear or speak as well. Worry pulls our focus from listening. If you are bored or don't have great motivation to listen, you're going to stop listening.

Environmental factors also affect communication. Distance from the speaker or sound source makes a huge difference in understanding. Background noise is a real communication killer. Television, radio, or music can interfere with listening. Hearing occurs in the brain, not in the ears.

Poor lighting and not being able to see the speaker's mouth make it hard to hear. Acoustics in a large room are not as good as in a small room. A small room with carpeting and upholstered furniture that absorbs background noise is better. The audio loop system and window shades in our meeting room at Central Christian Church help. Visual distractions pull your attention away from what is being said. Someone coming in the door makes noise. Someone walks by. Room temperature pulls your attention. Is the room too hot or too cold?

Judy distributed two different surveys. The hard of hearing people got one; the hearing people got another. Everyone checked three listed items that make communication break down the most. Dan and Craig tallied the responses. Among the hearing impaired, "The speaker does not face the listener" received the most votes. Second was "A person talks too softly." Among the hearing people, the biggest complaint was "The listener was not paying attention." The next one was "The listener pretending to understand."

Communication repair is letting people know that you did not hear and then telling them how to help you. They do not know what you need. When you are having trouble understanding someone, do an analysis if you can. Why am I having trouble understanding this person? Do they talk too fast? Do they talk too softly? Are they standing somewhere that I can't see them?

Try to give a speaker a specific thing to do, rather than just saying I can't hear you. Say "I understood you until you said...then I lost you." Let them know the part you did not understand. Repeat back to the person what you think you heard, and ask them, "Did I get that right?" Ask them to rephrase. You can say, "You're shouting at me. Please speak softer." Be assertive, but not aggressive.

Judy welcomed audience comments. "Effective communication is the foundational principle that forms all relationships." The way we communicate with others and ourselves ultimately determines the quality of our life.

The Americans with Disabilities Act and Assistive Listening in Places of Public Accommodation

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal law enacted in 1990 that protects the civil rights of people with disabilities, including people with hearing loss. It establishes broad requirements to combat discrimination in employment and ensure greater access by all to goods, services and public places.

The ADA is organized into five titles (a public policy term for sections). One of these, Title III, applies to private businesses and organizations that are open to the public, where people gather or receive goods and services. The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) is the primary federal agency responsible for issuing regulations that explain how Title III applies in different situations. It is also the primary agency responsible for enforcing these requirements.

Examples of places covered by ADA Title III:

- Healthcare offices and pharmacies
- Movie theaters, performing arts venues, convention centers and stadiums
- Restaurants, bars and cafes
- Hotels
- Grocery stores, clothing stores and other retail businesses
- Museums and galleries
- Barber shops, laundromats and other similar service providers
- Senior citizen centers and day care centers

Effective communication under the ADA

Businesses and organizations covered under Title III must provide effective communication. This means people with disabilities must be able to access information and experiences on an equal basis with others. For people with hearing loss, this means communication must be as clear and usable as communication with people without hearing loss.

Effective communication depends in part on what tools or supports people with hearing loss may need. For example, a Deaf person may require a qualified sign language interpreter to provide effective communication. By contrast, a person with hearing loss who relies on hearing aids might need assistive listening technology to access sound in a venue. The ADA uses the term “auxiliary aids and services” to describe tools and supports like qualified sign language interpreters, real-time captioning and assistive listening systems (ALS).

Assistive listening systems

In venues with assembly areas that use an audio amplification system, such as a house sound system or public address (PA) system, ensuring effective communication often requires providing an assistive listening system. This helps people with hearing loss access spoken communication and other audio content of performances, presentations, or guided programs. For example, a concert hall must provide a way for audience members with hearing loss to fully experience the performance.

ALS are technologies that transmit audio directly from the sound source to the listener. They reduce many of the listening challenges caused by distance, background noise, and reverberation in public spaces. These systems typically include transmitters and receivers. The receivers, either built into the hearing device or provided separately with compatible accessories, deliver sound directly to the listener, helping people with hearing loss hear more clearly and reducing listening effort.

For examples of assistive listening systems and much more information on this subject, go to:
<https://www.hearingloss.org/ada-assistive-listening-public-accommodation/>

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We will gratefully acknowledge your donations in each issue of the newsletter.

The list is updated monthly, starting with the new year.

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The Fort Worth Chapter is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization.
All contributions are tax-deductible.

Hearing Loss Association of America - Fort Worth Chapter

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Make checks payable to: **HLAA - Fort Worth Chapter**

Bring donations to the monthly meeting or mail to:

HLAA - Fort Worth, PO Box 1310, Euless TX 76039.

Please take special notice of our mailing address.

DO NOT SEND MAIL TO OUR MEETING LOCATION.

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