

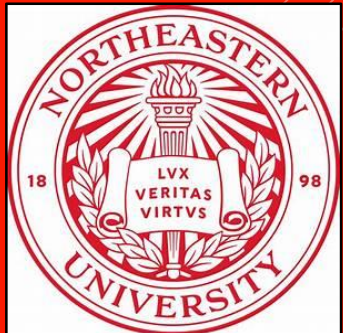
**NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY**

# **Let NU Help U**

**Hearing Better = Feeling Better**

**Tips for Managing Hearing Loss during COVID-19**

**Dr. Nicole Laffan**



# Stand Up For What You Need

- You deserve it!
- Hearing is different than listening. Let your communication partner know that you want to listen to them, but that your hearing difficulties make it hard
- If you are afraid to admit that you have hearing loss, please be aware that others most likely already know. Hearing loss is not easily hidden
- Others can't help you, if you don't tell them how



# Suggestions for when Hearing is Hard

- Tell your communication partner that you have hearing loss
- State that you may have more difficulty hearing because they are wearing a mask
- Masks restrict the ability to read lips and decreases the speaker's volume
- Ask them to repeat the message
- Be as specific as possible regarding what you missed (e.g., I heard you up until the word, "movie"; What did you say before the word "cookie", Did you say, "tall" or "fall"; Can you repeat the information before....)
- Ask them to speak louder since their voice is softer due to the mask
- Ask them if they could write down what they are saying for you to read
- Tell them that you are going to turn on an app on your phone (more info on next slide) which will change their speech into a text message for you to read. Activate the app and then ask them to repeat what they said
- Ask them if they would be comfortable taking their mask off if you agree to stay 6ft away from them and keep your mask on



# **You Do Have Control ... Create the Best Listening Situation Possible**

- Use amplification that was recommended and fit by an audiologist
- Insist that Real Ear Measurements are conducted to provide evidence that the amplification was fit according to your loss and anatomy
- Use assistive listening devices such as remote microphones to help you when listening at a distance or in noisy situations
- Request that the speaker talks to you in the same room and faces you. The closer the speaker is, the better b/c the volume of speech decreases as the distance increases. Also being close allows the listener to read the lips and body language of the speaker. This provides additional information to help the listener interpret the message
- Reduce background noise when communicating such as turning the radio, TV, and AC off and closing the windows until the conversation is over



# Use a Free Captioned Telephone at Home

Captioning companies provide you with a phone and or an app for your iPad and train you how to use it. This is a complimentary service for individuals with documented hearing loss. After a service provider confirms that you have hearing loss, he/she can complete the online form, and the company will contact you to schedule a time to install it in your home. Below is a list of captioning companies:

- CaptionCall
- CapTel
- Clarity
- ClearCaptions
- Hamilton
- Sprint CapTel





# Apps to Add Captioning to Your Cell Phone Conversations

- CaptionCall (iOS)
- Clarity
- Clear Captions (iOS)
- InnoCaption (iOS and Android)
- Hamilton (Android)
- CapTel (web page)
- Live Caption - 60 seconds is free, year subscription is ~ \$36
- AVA - 5 hrs/mon is free, year subscription is ~ \$180



Please be aware that product and pricing info was retrieved from manufacturers' websites and may have changed



# Apps that Turn Your Smart Phone into an Amplifier

- Petralex
- EarMachine
- ListenApp
  
- LiveListen – Option on Apple devices that turns the device (iPhone, iPad, iPod Touch) into a remote microphone and sends the auditory signal directly to your hearing aids. Aids must be paired with the device first.

[Link to LiveListen by Apple](#)



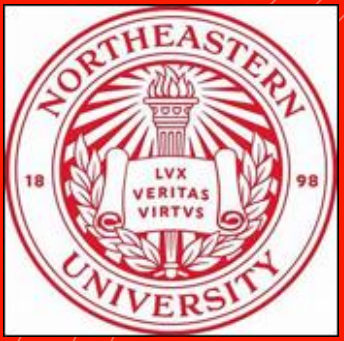
# Apps That Turn Speech-to-Text on your Smart Phone

These apps change spoken language into a text message for the listener to read. Be aware that they may not work as well outdoors due to possible background noise and poor Wi-Fi. Captioning may occur by either an AI speech recognition software called Automated Speech Recognition (ASR) or by a live stenographer.

- Google Live Transcribe App
  - Offers unlimited service for free
- InnoCaption
  - No charge for registered users with hearing loss
- Otter App
  - Basic version offers 600 free minutes every 31 days
  - Premium version is \$9.99/mon or \$99.00/yr for over 6,000 min/mon
- Otter.ai App
  - Free version works with Zoom meetings, but it uses a separate window
  - Paid version called Otter Teams can be incorporated into Zoom account
- MyEar app
  - Only for iPhones, has a one time fee of \$10

Please be aware that product and pricing info was retrieved from manufacturers' websites and may have changed





# Store Large Printed Messages on Your Smart Phone to Help Communicate

- Create frequently used phrases and store them on your phone to show to others like a message written on an index card (e.g., "I have a hard time understanding people wearing masks, please talk louder", "I would like a medium regular coffee")
- BuzzCards by Sorenson -
  - [Link to BuzzCards for Apple and Android](#)
- Cardzilla by Ink & Salt -
  - [Link to Cardzilla](#)





# Video Conferencing Platforms and Captioning Options

## ■ Zoom

- Pro, Business, and Enterprise plans allow a participant to type the captioning in real-time or a captioning company (e.g., Cart Remote, Otter, Vitac) can be hired to do it. Zoom just came out with their own captioning option called Streamer-Zoom. It is free for the first month and then subscriptions are \$9.99/month, \$99/yr, or \$399 for a never-ending one. Subscriptions allow for unlimited users. The "closed captioning" option must be activated in the advanced setting section prior to the start of the meeting.

## ■ Microsoft Teams

- Paid version is excellent, but free version does not offer captioning. A typed transcription which can be printed or shared shortly after recording is finished is also offered.

Please be aware that product and pricing info was retrieved from manufacturers' websites and may have changed



# More Video Conferencing Platforms and Captioning Options

- Google Hangouts/Meet
  - AI-generated free transcriptions activated by selecting the 3 dots on the right and then selecting "Turn on captioning"
- Skype
  - Add subtitles by going to settings, selecting "calling", then selecting "call subtitles"
- FaceTime
  - No subtitles available
- Adobe Connect
- Lifesize
- GoToMeeting



# Important Points to Consider when Using Video Captioning

- Ensure that the interpreters or real-time captions are visible
- Platforms that split the screen between the presenter and the interpreter are easier to view
- Check that the chat window doesn't block captioning. If it does block the captioning, ask that participants be told not to use the chat window or the raised hand option, but instead be instructed to use the Q&A section
- Platforms that sync real-time captioning on screen are best, however, some offer a transcription to print or share after the recording is complete or a transcription company can be hired to add captioning to a video
- Ensure a strong internet connection to avoid freezing and lag time. The closer you are to the modem, the stronger the internet connection is. The connection will become weaker as the load increases when more devices are streaming at the same time (e.g., streaming Netflix, playing Xbox, shopping online)



# **Masks with Clear Windows Help Everyone Communicate Easier**

- Lip Reading is used by ALL Listeners
- It especially helps individuals who present with hearing loss and young children who are learning spoken language
- The challenging issue is that they fog up easily. To reduce this, it has been suggested to wipe a small amount of dish soap on the inside portion of the clear mask and wipe it dry with a paper towel.
- Resources for purchasing these masks can be found on the next slides

# Resources for Purchasing Clear Masks & Shields



[The Clear Mask](http://www.theclearmask.com/)  
[www.theclearmask.com/](http://www.theclearmask.com/)



[Rapid Response PPE](http://www.rapidresponseppe.com/)  
[www.rapidresponseppe.com/](http://www.rapidresponseppe.com/)



[ADCO Communicator Window Mask](http://www.adcohearing.com/)  
[www.adcohearing.com/](http://www.adcohearing.com/)



[Safe 'N Clear Mask](http://www.safenclear.com/clearmask/)  
[www.safenclear.com/clearmask/](http://www.safenclear.com/clearmask/)



[The Hearing Spot](http://www.thehearingspot.com)  
[www.thehearingspot.com](http://www.thehearingspot.com)



[Face View Mask](http://www.faceviewmask.com/)  
[www.faceviewmask.com/](http://www.faceviewmask.com/)



# Resources for Purchasing Hand-Made Masks with Clear Windows

## The Tailor Pro in Sutton, MA

- Contact at 508-917-8776 or The Tailor Pro on FaceBook
- \$15/mask plus shipping, adult and child sizes available



## Smile Masks by Monica Patrick

- Contact by email at [monpatrick1@gmail.com](mailto:monpatrick1@gmail.com)
- \$15/mask plus shipping, minimum of 2 masks per order





## Solutions for Wearing Hearing Aids or Cochlear Implants and Masks

- It is challenging when one needs to wear the mask strings and a behind-the-ear style hearing aid or a cochlear implant processor
- Users need to be careful that their device does not fall off their ear as they take the mask on and off
- These photos offer solutions to avoid having to wear the mask strings behind the ear. Simply sew a button on to a hat, visor, headband, etc.







# Free Virtual Aural Rehabilitation Sessions

- Northeastern University's Speech Language and Hearing Center provides complimentary virtual training sessions to individuals with hearing loss and their family members
- Sessions focus on techniques such as lip/speech reading skills, anticipatory strategies, environmental modifications, technological supports, and repair strategies
- Trainings are tailored to each participant's needs
- Participants join 2 sessions lasting 1.5 - 2 hours on either Monday afternoons or Friday mornings. Sessions are conducted by two speech pathology graduate students and Dr. Nicole Laffan
- To register or learn more about this free program, contact Angela at 617-373-2492 or [A.King@northeastern.edu](mailto:A.King@northeastern.edu)
- The flyer containing more information can be viewed on the next slide



Northeastern  
University

# HEARING LOSS PROGRAM



**COVID-19 is making hearing even more challenging.**

Learn how to listen better with our complimentary virtual trainings.

Learn techniques such as lip/speech reading skills, anticipatory strategies, environmental modifications, and repair strategies. In addition, information and products to improve virtual communication will be discussed, including:

- assistive listening devices, ● phones with captioning,
- virtual conferencing platforms that utilize captioning,
- smart phone apps that change speech-to-text, and
- techniques to advocate for yourself when social distancing

Join two trainings lasting 1.5 - 2 hours on either Monday afternoons or Friday mornings. Sessions are conducted by two speech pathology graduate students and Dr. Nicole Laffan.

**N** Northeastern  
Bouvé College of Health Sciences

Sign up at 617-373-2492 or  
[a.king@northeastern.edu](mailto:a.king@northeastern.edu).



## Let NU Help U

- Northeastern University's Speech Language and Hearing Center is here to help!
- Please contact Dr. Laffan at [N.Laffan@northeastern.edu](mailto:N.Laffan@northeastern.edu) for additional information regarding these slides, to add or correct information provided within these slides, or to learn more about the services that the Center offers

# References / Resources

- American Academy of Audiology – [www.audiology.org](http://www.audiology.org)
- American Speech-Language-Hearing Association – [www.asha.org](http://www.asha.org)
- Hearing Loss Association of America – [www.hearingloss.org](http://www.hearingloss.org)
- Mass Board of Registration for Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology – [www.mass.gov/dpl/boards](http://www.mass.gov/dpl/boards)
- Mass Speech-Language Hearing Association – [www.mshahearsay.org](http://www.mshahearsay.org)
- National Deaf Center – [www.nationaldeafcenter.org](http://www.nationaldeafcenter.org)