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Does Your Client Need Someone Else Besides You?

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You are a wonderful audiologist.

I can say this because, even if I don't know you, you are an audiology school graduate who cares about what you do – or you wouldn't be reading *Canadian Audiologist.* And if you're anything like 99% of the audiologists I have known and loved, then you're not only good at what you do, you also love doing it.

But – perhaps you want to be a *great* audiologist? Not just good or wonderful, but a *great* hearing health professional?

Of course, who gets to decide what 'great' means in this case? Wouldn't the deciding vote go to the people whose opinion means the most to you – your clients?

You do everything you can to help your clients live more successfully with their hearing loss. You listen to them, you paint the big picture of optimal communication and the hearing loss journey, you discuss options *with* them, and introduce a wide array of necessary communication strategies, both technical and non-technical, introduced on a timely basis.

But many of your clients would benefit from something more – *someone* more, such as another person with hearing loss.

In her book *Tiny Beautiful Things,* the brilliant author Cheryl Strayed wrote, "The healing power of even the most microscopic exchange with someone who knows in a flash precisely what you're talking about because they experienced the same things too, cannot be overestimated."

In my previous life with hearing loss, I was just getting by with ineffective and *self-taught* coping

strategies. This world was blown apart and beautifully reassembled when I connected with other people like me for the first time. Life was better and *I* was better.

Not every person with hearing loss (PWHL) wants to go to a meeting or a conference, even virtually, with a lot of other peeps who can't hear well. This is understandable, because in spite of the best hearing aids and wonderful audiologists, many hold their hearing loss close to the chest as something private they have to deal with on their own.

But what if your struggling client had the opportunity to connect with *just one* person who was like them, who was already walking the same journey, who was ready to listen and to help? This could be a powerful start to your client would walking more confidently with their hearing loss.

CHHA (Canadian Hard of Hearing Association) has an online mentoring program that offers this very support service. Mentors connect with mentees who may want to talk to someone, who is ethically committed to confidentiality, just once or twice or on a longer-term basis. The mentor program works – and I know it works, because I have experienced its success from both sides of the relationship. I have learned from other PWHL and I have been a mentor and seen exciting and positive results.



Ask yourself this: I can't hold my client's hand in their daily life, but don't I owe it to my client to offer them additional resources that will them succeed with their hearing loss?

You are a great audiologist.