Canadian Audiologist
The Official Publication of the Canadian Academy of Audiology

Message from the President

Published November 19th, 2020

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As I typed my first “President’s Message," never in my wildest dreams could I have imagined that the scene would look like this; me sitting at my computer wearing a surgical mask, trying not to fiddle with the nose piece as my glasses fog up, a monstrous bottle of hand sanitizer next to my keyboard, a dwindling supply of disinfecting wipes at the edge of my desk, a list of prescreening health and travel questions pinned on a bulletin board to my right, an ever-growing pile of infection-control literature on my left. Just a year ago, this scene likely would have raised some of my coworkers' eyebrows, but today it is a commonplace. Dare I say, “normal.”

I have heard that the most critical skill to possess in the COVID era is adaptability. I agree wholeheartedly, as it seems like we turn ourselves inside out daily, trying to adjust to new regulations, learn new skills, and take on new responsibilities. I think we all have surprised ourselves as to just how adaptable we can be when it's required. In addition to adaptability, I would add compassion to the COVID era list of most important skills. I know many of you have picked-up groceries and prescriptions for at-risk neighbours. You had volunteered your time to sew masks when they were in short supply. You stood patiently in the rain to get a COVID test while holding no resentment toward a senior as they are ushered to the front of the line.

When I reflect on our profession's demands, it seems that we were honing the skills of adaptability and compassion well before the onset of COVID. One of the things that drew me, and I'm sure many of you, to audiology was that it was a dynamic profession, growing and changing, very rarely offering one obvious “right” answer. Our profession demands that we adapt to ever-changing technology, implement new procedures based on the current research, and adjust our treatment plans to best serve our patients' evolving needs. Our profession is also a 'helping' profession - we became Audiologists because we wanted to help others. We demonstrate compassion daily as we listen intently to their life experience, we patiently provide support to teach and encourage them to advocate for themselves, and we help our patients and their families make important choices in their care.

As we move forward together this year, I just want to urge all of us to continue to do what comes naturally. Be proud of how well you have adapted so far and stay the course. Continue to demonstrate your compassion for others, and most importantly, remember to be kind and compassionate to yourself. I am confident that even though there are challenges and uncertainty still ahead of us, we will use the skills of adaptability and compassion to continue to grow as both professionals and as people.

Looking forward to sharing the journey this upcoming year with all of you.