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Updates in Aural Rehabilitation for Veteran CI Recipients,
in partnership with AVAA
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AuD

- [Christy] It's my great pleasure to introduce today's panelists. They come from a VA hospital out in Connecticut. We have Dr. Cyndi Trueheart, Dr. Jessica Preston, and Dr. Adam Zhitomi. And we welcome them. If you'd like to learn more about the audiologist and speakers from today's course, you can read their bios on the course dissertation page. And this course is brought to you in partnership with the Association of VA Audiologist. And at this time, I hand the mic over to you, Jessica.

- Thank you. Thank you, Christy. We are on behalf of myself, Cyndi and Adam. We are all very excited to have this opportunity to chat with all of you. I'm just gonna start off with displaying our disclosures for a moment, and then I'm going to move into our learning outcomes. So at the conclusion of this course, it is our hope that participants will be able to, one, explain the importance of oral rehabilitation in the veteran population. Two, describe the new tools and apps available from all of the CI manufacturers. And three, discuss how these tools can be customized for each specific patient and incorporated into a cochlear implant program. So there are three of us as you know, doing this presentation, and the three of us are each going to spend some time highlighting one of the three cochlear implant manufacturers and some of their newer oral rehabilitation tools.

And we're going to show you how we've utilized them for our veteran CI recipients. And we hope that this will be helpful to anybody watching this and hope that you are able to incorporate some of this to help with your patients. So we are all very fortunate. I think we can all agree that we're fortunate to work in a time where there's been a multitude of technological advances, and despite these advances in technology, they don't compensate for all of the difficulties that we all know accompany hearing loss. So I have been very fortunate over the last couple of months to have been able to do a little more oral rehab and it's just been so wonderful as an audiologist.

Most of my day is traditionally spent mapping and programming and working with devices, but it's been wonderful to have patients do some oral rehab. I've done some in the clinic and I've also been able to do some remotely via telehealth, and that's been really nice just to be able to connect with my patients in a different manner. So it is such an important component of what we do as audiologists and as speech language pathologists. So as I mentioned, what we are going to chat about today is how we have incorporated some of the newer oral rehabilitation tools from all three of the cochlear implant manufacturers into our adult oral rehabilitation program at the VA here in Connecticut.

And these tools that we're going to chat about, we've used some of them in person in the clinic, we have used some of them as I mentioned, via telehealth, oral rehabilitation sessions, and some of them are apps that are web-based. And we're going to just talk about how we're really able to kind of pick and choose and make a really holistic plan for all of our veterans. So I'm going to be focusing on the resources from MED-EL. These include MED-EL Mondays, the one-on-one support from the MED-EL reps. Their home-based oral rehabilitation lesson kits, some of their web-based resources, which includes their blog and YouTube series. And then lastly, I'll talk about a few of the mobile apps.

So first, I wanted to highlight MED-EL Mondays. So these are Zoom meetings that you can direct your cochlear implant recipients to. We have the website in the bottom right hand corner of the page. Patients can go to that website, they can sign up for any or all four of these. And then on the day, they can sign up in advance and on the day of the session, they will get emailed to Zoom link and instructions on how to log in. And it's a really nice community sort of Zoom. I have been fortunate enough to attend a few of them. Our patients have told us that they really love them, they love the sense of community that these provide.

They're able to connect with other recipients from all across the country. So recipients that without these MED-EL Monday events that they would not have met. So three of the sessions focus on some of the technology. So MED-EL's Audio Link, MED-EL's Audio Stream, those are connectivity devices. For those of you that don't know, those help recipients pair to their cell phone. Their audio key is an app that's downloaded, and then you can use your phone as a remote control for the cochlear implant. So three of the sessions are largely technology based. And then the fourth session, the most interesting session to me, my personal preference is all about oral rehabilitation, what it is and why it's so important.

And like I said, we've gotten great feedback from our veterans about all of these sessions. Another great thing is that I think we all know that repetition is key. So patients can, you know, go to these events over and over again. They can attend the events about the audio link multiple times. So I've had a couple patients attend multiple times and that's perfectly fine. This, we're very excited about the MED-EL one-on-one support. So in the bottom right hand corner, we have a QR code, and this will be in the slides. You can direct your recipients to use that to go to the link to book a one-on-one individualized appointment with the MED-EL rep clinical specialists.

The clinical specialists can go over anything in these one-on-one appointments. They can do trouble device troubleshooting, they can help with connectivity and they can even provide rehabilitation support as well. I personally think this is really great because very often when a patient is struggling with connection to their TV and you're not, you don't know what kind of TV they have, you're not in their home. This one-on-one support, patients can do right from their home. They can show the clinical specialist exactly what they're trying to do. So this, just like MED-EL Mondays, our patients have really, really, really enjoyed, we're in a very, very busy clinical setting as I'm sure all of you are, and as much as you know, we want to have the time to go over things multiple times, realistically, we all know that sometimes we just can't.

So I think this MED-EL one-on-one support is truly a game changer. Next, the aural rehab lesson kits. So we have the link, you can go to that link and download these lesson kits and they're really neat because they each have a targeted situation or theme. So there's one on sports, there's one that's all about families, and they include everything that you as a clinician need to have a whole aural rehabilitation session. So there's handouts for you as a clinician. There's handouts for the recipient. So we have utilized these to structure our in-clinic aural rehabilitation sessions and really takes all of the planning out of all of that planning work out of it.

So we've used them in the clinic, we have used them for our tele aural rehab sessions, and we have also printed them out and given them to our patients with communication partners and just in giving them a little bit of instruction and patients are able to go home and do this on their own with their communication partner. So really, really great for those patients that are a little bit less tech savvy. We have a lot of patients that that like paper. These lesson kits have been wonderful for them. Next, I just wanted to highlight that MED-EL does have a blog. The blog includes articles and it has this tricks and tip page that's broken down into articles about rehab, articles that are specific for parents, for pediatric recipients, and then articles and tips and tricks for adult recipients.

This is great because the recipients can subscribe to the MED-EL blog, and then they get an email every time MED-EL updates the blog. So that's been, you know, kind of exciting for some of our patients to follow along and see what's newly posted in the blog. Next, I wanted to highlight the YouTube series about rehab at home for adults that MED-EL has. This is a series of 12 very short videos. I think they're all under three minutes and they are designed to build sequentially on each other. So you should advise your recipients to watch them in order. But these have just great tips and tricks

and ideas about aural rehab for someone who's very busy and perhaps does not have time to engage in more formal aural rehab.

They can watch this YouTube series completely on their own time. The Amptify mobile app is a newer app that is actually available for any cochlear implant recipients. And this is for somebody who really wants that structured aural rehabilitation that they would typically or historically do in the clinic with a audiovisual therapist or an SLP, but someone who does not have the time, or maybe there's a travel burden and can't get into the clinic, they get this structured oral rehabilitation. They set listening goals. They work with an audiology coach. There is a community page that patients can chat with one another and the page is supervised by the coach. So this Amptify Mobile App, as I mentioned, can be used for any cochlear implant recipient and really even any hearing aid recipient, anybody who wants to engage in more formal oral rehab, it's just that they have partnered with MED-EL.

So for your MED-EL recipients, they can get a little bit of a discount. There is a cost involved with this app, and MED-EL recipients are able to get a little bit of a discount. And lastly, I just wanted to talk about two apps, the i-Angel Sounds app and the ReDi app. The i-Angel Sounds app is an interactive auditory training app that focuses on sequential sound and speech discrimination. So like most of these other, most of these other tools, it starts at the bottom of that auditory hierarchy and then moves up. This is great because patients can do this on their own time if they're pressed for time, if you have somebody who has a really hectic work schedule, this has been really great.

It is currently though only available for Apple users. The ReDi app is a customized language coach. This really is for MED-EL recipients because you do have to have a My MED-EL account to get into it, but recipients can talk into it and it actually provides real-time feedback. Again, the lessons built upon each other sequentially. So we've

gotten great feedback on all of this stuff and I am now going to turn this over to Adam and he is going to chat with you about what Cochlear Americas has.

- Thank you, Jessica. All right, moving on to the resources available through Cochlear of America. So I'm gonna go over all of these different resources that we have listed here. This is just an overview of them all, but we do have some web-based auditory training exercises. They have some adult, they have an adult home-based hearing therapy manual. They have a really amazing phone app called the Cochlear CoPilot App. And then they have a couple other resources here that we'll go over a little bit later. All right, so on Cochlear of America's main website, they have a dedicated area called the Communication Corner. This is a dedicated part of their website with extensive rehab to improve listening and communication skills.

All of the activities and tools that I just mentioned are on that website along with many other activities. So the website breaks it down based on age. So they have resources for adults, for teens, for school age children, and for children, babies, and toddlers. Obviously we'll be talking about the adult information today, but if you know of anyone else who's working with different age populations, this website does provide a lot of different resources specifically for age groups. So based on the adult web-based auditory training modules, these are listening exercises intended to be used either in the clinic virtually via a telehealth appointment, or it can be used with a cochlear implant recipient and their family or friends or another communication partner at home.

They are nice easy PDF files that you can download. They could be printed, they could be shared, and each one comes with instructions for the presenter of the information and also instructions for the recipient. So it is broken down into three main categories here, and the website is kind of designed to be done sequentially as it increases in difficulty. But the first one is called Breaking it Down. It then goes into putting it together and then it talks about some communication skills. Breaking it Down is really

the basics of speech and information. It's gonna talk about syllables and phone names and frequency. It's gonna help with text following. So these are really the most, you know, the fundamental basic learning skills for oral rehabilitation.

This is gonna train recipients with help on practicing word length, detecting sentence and phrase length, short versus long vowels, high pitch frequency sounds versus low pitch frequency sounds, manner in place of articulation. So all of those different things are highlighted through these activities. Putting it together takes another step down. So that's a little bit more advanced than that. So the putting it together is going to be using context clues, it's using topics of information, it uses interactive stories and seeking information exercises. So these can be kind of customized based on how the patient is progressing through the breaking it down category. And these can be attempted kind of as needed or as the patient wants to.

Finally, there's the communication skills part of it. So the communication skills is again gonna take that extra step. That's gonna focus on predicting sentences. So trying to determine use context and determine words that are gonna come next in a sentence or a story, answering questions that the presenter gives using auditory visual cues, putting the auditory and the visual signal together. So these are all things that are going to be used through those different exercises. Like I said, these are printable PDFs if you'd like to. They're all different activities. You can really do them in any order in each of these three categories. And it's definitely something that we have been both advertising to our patients to use with either people at home with them, or we have been using part of it to improve our ability to work with our patients via like some oral rehabilitation.

So we use some of these activities as a basis for some of them. These activities can be made more difficult by introducing background noise. We can increase the rate of speech, we can increase the distance between the presenter and the cochlear implant

recipient and which is kind of applicable to all of the different aural rehab resources, but it can just be made more difficult with time if someone is having an, if they find that it's become a little bit too easy for them, they've become a little bit too familiar with them. So moving on, Cochlear of America's has an adult home based hearing therapy manual. So this is a really nice kind of pocket size manual that every single cochlear implant recipient when they first get their device, it comes in the bag with them for obviously Cochlear of America's.

It's a really nice booklet that includes tips for improving success as well as learning outcomes for various different sessions. It's a very similar format to those web-based auditory training exercises, but as Jessica was noting earlier, some of our patients do like having the paper version of it. So if they don't have access to internet, if they don't have a computer or a cell phone, this is something that they can have from day one when they get activated with their cochlear implant. Like the other one, these are sequential models modules that provide exercises. It is intended to go in order, it's just rated in terms of difficulty. And so it's something that they ask to do in order.

Patients can complete this again with us in the clinic here. We could do it virtually or they can just get the ball rolling and do it with their family members at home after their activation. This is a lot of words here, I'm not gonna go through all of this, but this is where the booklet starts. And I think it's really important to note. On the left here, it's showing tips for the person who's speaking, so the training partner, and then on the right it shows tips for people who are taking in the information the lesson or the cochlear implant recipient. So tips for the training partner, the person who's presenting the information. They advertise to try to make it a positive experience, you know, make it a nice quiet place at least to start.

Provide positive feedback to the patient. It can be made more difficult down the road, but it is a good idea to make it a regular routine and to present the material in a nice,

clear and concise manner. Tips for the, you know, the patient who is taking in the information, it's really good to have them concentrate on it, make sure they haven't had a really long day, and if they just are tired, then it's probably not the best thing to focus on right now. So it's good to be nice and fresh. It's advertised for them to just make sure that they keep the processor at a nice volume, a comfortable setting for them. So make sure they set the volume or the program to something that they feel comfortable with.

It is nice, like I was just saying too, to make it a normal routine. If it becomes a routine then they're more likely to wake up and do it on a more regular basis, then just do it maybe once or twice in between our appointments. So I'm just gonna go through a couple of the different aspects of this manual. So here is some information on how you can make a specific hearing therapy plan with your patient. So the left is just how you can customize a plan with your patient. And then the right is just where your patient, you know, our patient can make notes, they can bring in notes for us. If they do a specific lesson, then they can tell us, I had difficulty with this or I particularly noticed a hard time hearing these words on this lesson.

So it's a way for us to really customize and adapt the way that we're able to program the cochlear implants. If someone is having a difficult time with specific words or sounds or activities in this booklet, it's something that we can look at and make a more specific adjustment. So these are some examples of some activities that are found in the book. This is just a brief overview of some of them. The book does have quite a lot. This is one of the first lessons that it does show. It's intended for right when someone gets activated. So this is, you know, the following days or weeks right after their activation. So these are actually checklists that the booklet provides where it's encouraging our cochlear implant recipient to go around and find these different sounds so that they can begin to, you know, discriminate these different environmental sounds that they may find in their house or out in the real world.

You'll take a look that there's more lower pitch sounds, high pitch sounds loud and soft sounds. So it's really a very exhaustive list of different things that we can encourage them to go out and learn and hear again so that they can train themselves on what they sound like as they're learning to hear with their processor. If I head to the next activity here. So here on the left, this is just an example of some of the consonant identifications. So you'll see right at the top, there's a level one. So it's a little bit of an easier distinguishment between the words. So, for example, rip and rib, the difference there is a little bit of a lower pitched frequency difference, so it's gonna be a little bit easier for the patient to hear.

Whereas if you drop down to that level three, chew and shoe, that's gonna be that really high pitch frequency information. So that's going to be a little bit more challenging for the patient to distinguish between the two. So there are plenty of different activities like this. And then as the booklet progresses, you still have some even more difficult ones over here on the right where this is breaking down the sentence into different categories and it's really asking the the patient to make different sentences, use context, use the different parts of the sentence and to basically hear what they're trying to say and then develop those sentences from there. If you have a patient who's really into it and gets through all of those sentences, they can even make their own one.

So you can make a personalized one with your patient. So we could do something like where it's using either a patient's grandchildren or family members, so we can make it really customized for them to make this experience as good as possible for them. Like I said, this comes with all the cochlear implant kits, so it's a really nice resource for all of our patients to have because it's already there for them. We use a lot of these strategies in clinic. We really highlight this booklet for them and go over it at our initial activation just so that they can use with their family members at home. It's also

something that we use a lot of these activities to develop our other oral rehabilitation programs because as you can see, some of these activities are nice and straightforward and they really, they get to the point of, you know, really providing the best sources and information for our patients.

So moving on, as we discussed earlier, we are gonna talk about some apps. So one of the biggest apps that Cochlear has is called the Cochlear CoPilot app. This is an amazing app. It's interactive with activities, articles, tips, and other educational information to improve and maximize the performance and to build communication skills. As of today, as of right now, it's only available for Apple phones or for iOS operating software. If a veteran or a patient doesn't have an iPhone, they could always use this on an iPad or a tablet. So that is also an option if they don't have a smartphone. A cochlear account is required to use this app. So we typically have our patients register for the cochlear account when we have the activation.

So this is something, this app is definitely something that we walk through with our patients and we give them, you know, all of this information and if needed we can help them log in and get all of their access to this app. This app has, as I was saying, several different aspects, and I'll go through a couple different categories that are found throughout this app. This app does show, it has a tab on my devices, so it has lots of information for the patient, for the recipient to use with access to pairing their cochlear implant to their phone. It shows ways to connect to different apps and accessories. It shows the controls of their processors, troubleshooting, and even we'll give them information on upgrading their technology.

So again, all of these can be found in the form of either an article, so it's an article written for this specific topic. It can be a tip where it's like a step-by-step tip where it shows them how to break it down and go through it or it's like an educational little memo. There's also a category on music. So for patients who are really interested in

focusing on their music, there's some articles that are specifically written from people in the field of music that can help with those strategies. There's a section on my hearing in others. This really focuses on the family and, you know, your support system. So this will give cats activities and articles on how to maximize your ability to communicate with your family, your friends, and different things like that.

There's a part that focuses on listening in the real world. So that's, you know, listening and background noise, traveling, going to different activities. We have patients who are active in sports or they go to church or they go to the community center and they do events. So this is a part of the app that we like to highlight with them as it will show different areas where they can expand on their knowledge on how to improve their ability to hear in those certain situations. Expanding on that a little bit, there's a big section on conversations. This is a huge part of aural rehabilitation with our patients with cochlear implants. The communication, the conversations part of it goes over conversations at home, at work, in your social life, on the phone.

These are all really important aspects of all of our lives and a lot of our patients' lives. So again, it goes over some of those really important activities and tips. It shows you how to, you know, kind of use your phone to improve your hearing the best in those situations. Finally, one of my favorite parts of this app is called the Skill Builders. So the Skill Builders are that middle picture down there. It is interactive apps, interactive activities that we can have our patients do where they through the app can distinguish different words, they can practice listening on the phone and make sure that they were able to hear and understand exactly what was said. And my favorite part of it is you can actually have the, you can go on the app and you could record different environmental sounds in your environment.

And this is something that we really have our patients try to do because you can record the microwave or the dog barking or the refrigerator humming and it allows them to

keep playing that recording. It saves it and they can, they can help to distinguish those different sounds later on so that when they're home and they can hear that microwave or they can hear the dog bark, they can more accurately discriminate between those two sounds. But yes, so great, that's the Cochlear CoPilot app. The really good thing about that app, one more thing is if they have an iPhone, the sounds, the Skill Builders will stream directly to their processor. So this is something that will stream directly there.

So it cuts down on that signal to noise ratio and it really focuses solely on that processor. Great. So the last couple resources that we have here for Cochlear of Americas. This first one is called Telephone With Confidence. So this is something for our patients who might not have a smartphone, might not have a computer if they have a, you know, a home phone or a landline. This is something where they can call this phone number, they follow the prompts and there is a daily word list, a daily short passage, and a daily long passage. This is offered in both English and Spanish. So this is an amazing resource for people who just want that extra little bit of information and that extra little bit of help.

And it's definitely something that we refer to our patients who aren't really familiar with the technology or they don't have a smartphone, obviously a Cochlear app is not needed for this. And then finally, we have Bring Back the Beat. This is a dedicated app that can be used for Apple and Android. This is something that is really for our patients who are focused on music and wanna focus on improving their ability to detect sounds and specific instruments. It's a really fun app. You do need a Cochlear account, but it's really easy to make a Cochlear account and it's something that we offer to some of our patients, especially some of our maybe younger patients who are really into music or podcasts, things like that, where they wanna help to distinguish those different sounds and it has different activities where they can build on that music discrimination. And

yeah, so that's a really good specific one for patients who might wanna focus on music. And now I will pass it on to Cyndi Trueheart.

- Thank you, Adam. All right. So welcome to the third and final section of this presentation today where I will be focusing on the HearingSuccess portal. The HearingSuccess portal is brought to you from Advanced Bionics as well as their sister company, Phonak. So the HearingSuccess portal, one of the things we love about this is that it's a constant reminder that these resources, all of the resources we're talking about are really not just for cochlear implant recipients, but are hearing aid patients as well. And I think one of the things that I always try to focus on is that oral rehab is for everyone we work with in audiology and speech pathology. And so many of our patients start out with being hearing aid users and these resources are so important for them as well as our cochlear implant recipients.

And they may become our cochlear implant recipients down the road. So they're already using some of these resources if they use it as a hearing aid recipient. So the HearingSuccess portal allows you to have all these resources in one place. And the ones that I'm gonna focus on today are SoundSuccess, WordSuccess in the ListeningRoom. There's a couple of other things I'm gonna point out. This is not a comprehensive review of the HearingSuccess portal. There's so many resources in the portal and our hope is that you take a look at the portal after this presentation and just play around in there, set up an account as a professional so that you can demo it for your patients or just use some of the resources in there for all of your hearing impaired patients.

Okay, so I'm gonna start with the SoundSuccess section of the HearingSuccess portal. So you wanna go into hearingsuccess.com. When you get into that portal, there's a lot of different areas that you can look at. So to keep it simple for my patients, I usually demo it in the session in the live session, whether it's a face-to-face or a telehealth

session with them before they start using it on their own. So I introduce it and I say go to hearingsuccess.com and then from there you wanna go to SoundSuccess.

SoundSuccess is where they can basically have me, not me, but a person, so they can do some Speechreading exercises. There's video, I always like them to start out with using everything they have at their disposal.

So if they are a hearing aid and a cochlear implant user, so a bimodal user, they can go there. And I always say, you know, start out easy, wear both your hearing aid and your cochlear implant. Go to the SoundSuccess portal, go to the tab that says getting started. So it starts out really easy and they can pick the speaker, they can pick whether they want only a few sentences to try. They can pick if they want noise or no noise. So I'd like to start out easy, start with using your hearing aid as well as your cochlear implant. If you have both, start out with a male speaker and start out with no noise and just try a couple of the exercises and start out with the video too.

So you can get that Speechreading skills down and then you can progress from there. So then I tell them, you know, once you feel comfortable with that, and once you do well with that, maybe you wanna try it with just audio and take away the video. So take away the Speechreading cues, maybe you wanna try it without your hearing aid and just focus on your cochlear implant. So we talk about how they can progress with using some of these tools. The SoundSuccess portal or the SoundSuccess section of the HearingSuccess portal. This works on a computer, it works on an iPad, tablet, or a cell phone. It's interactive. It's a web-based listening program and like I said, it's for both hearing aid users and cochlear implant users.

We focus on adult recipients here at the VA. We only work with adults, but there are tools in the HearingSuccess portal that you can use with pediatrics and kids as well. And like I said, there's a whole bunch of different resources in there to use with different speakers, noise, no noise, and you can also track your progress in there. And

then there's also different languages. So you could include Spanish for our Spanish speaking recipients. So really simple, easy, there's a couple of handouts that are attached to this presentation. So take a look at those and you can use those for yourself if you're wondering, okay, where do I go? How do I get started with this portal?

Definitely take a look at the handouts and then you can also print these handouts or email these handouts to your patients as well because sometimes I feel that if I just give them the website or if I didn't get a chance to demo it for some reason, 'cause we are focusing on other things in our live session. They might not know exactly where to go when they get into the portal. So the handouts are really great to give them to just spell it out, this is where I want you to start. So go into hearingsuccess.com, register, log in, go to SoundSuccess box generally over to the right hand side and in here as a professional.

I also like to start with their hearing goals worksheet, and I know my colleagues have also used this worksheet as well. And then there's also a downloadable progress tracker. I have to admit, I haven't been great with the progress tracker. I seem to be scrambling a lot of times in my sessions handwriting out the, you know, their scores. But I keep telling myself I have to use the progress tracker more because it will keep me more organized. So let me show you what I'm talking about here. Okay, the hearing goals worksheet is a great way to keep yourself organized, but also it's a reminder to me to always go back to what are the patient's goals.

I have goals set in my head that I wanna accomplish with my patients based on their hearing test, based on their history. There's certain things that I know as a professional I wanna work on or that I need to accomplish with my patients, but ultimately it comes back to the patient. What is it that this particular patient needs to work on? What is it that they want to work on? And the thing about aural rehab is that it should be fun. And

so if we're focusing on what they want out of the session and what they hope to gain in the long term and always bringing it back to that, I feel that the sessions are a lot of fun.

Aural rehab is fun, and then there's a lot of carryover if we bring it back to their own personal goals. The hearing goals worksheet also reminds me a lot of the COSI. So the COSI, the Client Oriented Scale of Improvement has been around for many years. I think most professionals are familiar with the COSI questionnaire. And what I always loved about the COSI was that the patient would identify their three or four areas that they wanted to work on. So this hearing goals worksheet is similar to that. It helps them to pinpoint their three goals. And then I always bring it back to that. So I have a patient that I was just working on this week.

He identified his goals, which his first goal wasn't, oh, I wanna communicate better with my spouse. His first goal that he articulated was hearing better on the phone. So I thought that was a great example of, you know, we sometimes we focus a lot on, okay, phone is after the fact. Phone is hard, you're not getting the visual cues as you're doing some kind of video with it. But, you know, generally you're missing those visual cues, you're missing some of the audio information that is being cut off on the phone signal. So I thought it was interesting, you know, again, sometimes we have in our mind as a professional what we hope to accomplish with the patient, but his main goal is cell phone use and landline use.

He's still using a landline for some of his phone calls. So that was his first and foremost goal. He did also identify that his second goal was communication with his wife. And his third goal was those more challenging situations. He said him and his wife like to go out to eat once a week if they can. And so that background noise situation was something that was really hard for him. So again, very, very specific goals that we're working towards through our rehab plan. So you see here the goals, the goals sheet, it

starts out with identifying those and then it has some other things on this goals worksheet too. Most of the time I use the hearing goals worksheet to just identify what those goals are.

Outcome measures. Outcome measures are very important as a professional in audiology and speech pathology. So this is where I do need to start using this worksheet a little bit more. So I'm a little bit more organized, I do outcome measures with my patients, but I think that this worksheet, I'm gonna try to embed that in my template, in my note template so that it will keep me on track with my patient instead of just with my little handwritten notes of how they scored on each exercise that I do with them this year. It keeps it all in one place. So it's really nice that the HearingSuccess portal does have these tools that you could print out.

You could embed this into your chart note, whatever you wanna do with it, but nice way to keep that, those outcome measures on target and tracked and you don't forget about them. Okay, so Speechreading and SoundSuccess. Again, I'm just going back to you start out going to the HearingSuccess portal, which is hearingsuccess.com, click on SoundSuccess, click on Getting Started, and then you go right to the videos. The way I use the videos to start out with is that in my in-person sessions, my face-to-face sessions, I just go to this and then I turn my laptop to the patient and let them work through some of those exercises with me there. That way if they have any questions, I'm there to answer those.

I could demo it, I could track what they're doing while they're doing it. We also offer our patients that don't have good internet, as Adam said, or maybe they're just not super tech savvy. They can come in and they can do this in the office. We don't necessarily have to sit there with them, but we can give them a room, give them a computer so that they can do it right there if that's something that they're intimidated by to do it on their own or we can demo it in a telehealth session. So we can talk a lot about it

through our telehealth program and show them how easy it is that they can do this on their own through their mobile device or through their tablet or through their home computer.

Okay, so what else do we have here in the HearingSuccess portal? We have not the apps aren't necessarily in the HearingSuccess portal, but the app that I'm gonna talk about in a second is the instructions for it are in the HearingSuccess portal. So if they are using a cell phone, I do this a lot with my single-sided patients. So my patients that have a fairly normal hearing ear and then they have a cochlear implant on the other side. These are generally the patients that had that sudden hearing loss that did not recover. And so they really need to make sure they're focusing on that single-sided ear and not allowing the good ear to take over or do all the work.

And so the apps are great because they can plug right into their cell phone, they can download the app and get that streaming just to their cochlear implant. They could do this with a hearing aid as well if they're a single-sided user of a hearing aid. But it's nice for those patients to just really focus on that one side because we know that the rehab is even more critical for those patients with single sided deafness so that they can work on that year only through that streaming mechanism. The WordSuccess app is the app that is used and this app is one of my favorite apps because it's extremely simple and I think of it kind of, I try a lot of my tools out on my father-in-law.

My father-in-law is 92 years old, and he is a hearing aid user, bilateral hearing aid user. And so I try a lot of these tools out on him to see, he's like my typical patients. He's a veteran himself. He uses all of these tools at my request and gives me some feedback on it before I introduce it to my patients and get their feedback on it. But the WordSuccess app reminds me of some of the other things that he does for fun. So, you know, everybody's doing word all these days and in different games on their cell

phone. And with the WordSuccess app, I think of it as a game. I think of it as something that our patients, something that my father-in-law can do.

Maybe when he's sitting at the kitchen table eating his breakfast, he's playing on his phone. This is another app that he plays with. Maybe then in the summertime he's sitting out on his own porch and he always has his cell phone with him. He could go in and do some practice, almost like gaming on his cell phone. He could be sitting in the living room in his favorite chair and you know, do it then just for a couple of minutes, just, you know, challenge himself. And so it's an on the go kind of resource with any of these apps. But WordSuccess to me is one of the ones that is not complicated. It doesn't have a whole lot of fancy graphics.

It's more of just a matrix and just the simple tool for our patients to use to get that practice in anywhere, anytime. It's great for our cognitively impaired patients as well because it is so streamlined. Okay, so you could see there a little bit, it's kind of small probably on your screen, but the WordSuccess app, I do demo for my patients as well before they do it on their own. And to start out with, when you log in to the, when you download the app and then log into the app, we pick only 10 items, we pick no noise, you could add noise in later. And then what happens is four words come up on the screen and so they could see the words and then the app would say the word out loud and then the patient has those four choices and they just click on the word and then at the end it scores it for them.

So we can track their progress, they can track their progress in the WordSuccess app. Again, nice streamlined, simple tool that many of my veteran patients like to use as a quick, oh I practice today. And you know, that's what we want. We want something that is not complicated. We want something that is very user friendly. Many of our patients here at the VA do have cognitive issues. They're older veterans, they're geriatric patients. And so something that is streamlined, something that is quick and

simple and easy to use, but also offers so many exercises so they don't get bored is something that I find extremely useful for our patients. Okay, another tool that I have used is the ListeningRoom.

The ListeningRoom is something that the patients can go in there and there's all kinds of exercises in there for them to use. There's that auditory hierarchy. They could start out with just, you know, minimal pairs, they can progress to like a discourse tracking with paragraphs. So there's a whole bunch of exercises in the ListeningRoom. The thing about the ListeningRoom is that I can, when my patient registers in the ListeningRoom, I can assign them different tasks to do and then see how well they're doing or they can just pick the tasks on their own. So it's a nice way to connect with my patients, to keep us going in between our sessions, in between our face-to-face sessions or in between those telehealth sessions to be able to say, oh great, I saw that you've been practicing here.

I'm gonna give you another activity to try. Something that I think you know you're ready for. So the ListeningRoom has a lot of different tools that you can use in that way as well. Okay. ListeningRoom, just some more information there. This can be used again with cochlear implant, hearing aid patients, all kinds of patients, any hearing impaired patient. It's in English and in Spanish. All different levels. Many, many options in the ListeningRoom, which is in the HearingSuccess portal. So just a review here before we wrap up. Our summary of the apps. The apps that we discussed here, again, are not a all inclusive list of apps for our hearing impaired patients. In particular, our cochlear implant patients and in particular our adult patients.

But these are the ones that we have found to be highly successful with our adult patient population. The WordSuccess, the one that comes to you from Advanced Bionics and Phonak, that streamlined one I just talked about. It's available on both iOS systems and Android. So opens it up to many, many users. The Angel Sounds, this one

right now just for those iOS users Again, if they don't necessarily have an iPhone, they might have an iPad at home. So it might be something that you just need to have that conversation with them, if this is something that you wanna use. the ReDi app, again, both available through iOS and Android, that's the one from brought to you from MED-EL, CoPilot is the one from Cochlear Americas.

This is the iOS only. And the CoPilot, just to give you a heads up too, with the CoPilot, you want to make sure, I know sometimes when you go into the CoPilot, when you go to download it, it pulls up, I wanna say like a car feature or something like that. So you wanna wanna make sure they're going to the correct the Cochlear Americas CoPilot app and then Bring Back the Beat is another one brought to you by Cochlear Americas that we found for many of our patients are interested in music. Music is wonderful. Music is challenging for our hearing impaired patients. So this is a great way for them to practice and enjoy music again.

So I hope that you will check out some of these, and definitely feel free to share with us once at work for you and maybe some of these you'll find useful to incorporate into your practice. Here are, our reference is, and thank you to Cochlear Americas' MED-EL Corporation and Advanced Bionics for their support with this presentation. I have to say that all three companies, the reps for the companies, have been wonderful with providing us with support and answering all of our questions to make our users more successful with their resources. So thank you to all of them for that. And there's our contact information. Reach out to any one of us or all three of us, we would love to hear what's working for you and your recipients.

And I am in these last few minutes going to look at the question and answer box and see what we have here. Okay, so the first one from slide number eight, Boothworld 2007, our visual cues still regarded as playing a part in the benefits provided within aural rehab process. Absolutely think visual cues are important. Our patients run the

gamut of being really great users out of the gate and then also not, you know, being those rockstar users. And so we always, always, always, always start out with telling our patients to use everything you have in communication. And that's visual cues are a part of that process. Most of the time I would say we focus on, when you're doing the formal practice, that's when you wanna make it more challenging.

That's when you might just focus on the cochlear implant side and take away the hearing aid. That's when you might start to take away the visual cues. But initially, or just in general communication, I tell my patients and I know my colleagues feel the same way. We tell the patients that you should be using visual cues anytime you have that at your disposal. The next question here is how do you typically incorporate aural rehab in your sessions? I often will show them resources, show a quick sample so they know how to use it, and then encourage them to practice at home. I'd love to incorporate it more in the clinic as well though. When during the appointment do you do in-person practice?

How do you transition into it? Great question. So the way, I mean we're extremely lucky in the VA system in the sense that, you know, we have a lot of flexibility. We are able to incorporate it as much or as little as our patients want. There are some billing codes that we can share with you as well so that you get that workload credit for both audiologists and speech pathologists. I do think this becomes a little bit more challenging in the private sector outside of the VA as far as billing purposes go. But we have some great resources that we can share with you as well. If you wanna reach out to any one of us through email, we can share that.

But as far as how we incorporate it into our sessions, oral rehab for us at the Connecticut VA starts before a cochlear implant is even implanted. We introduce this concept of aural rehab when we are talking about candidacy as far as our cochlear implant patients go. So we introduce that, we tell them this is part of the process, you

know, we want them committed to doing some of that practice on their own as well as with us. So we start introducing that very early on for our cochlear implant patients. And then we, you know, that first session when we're talking about cochlear implant patients, that first session, that initial activation, it's really hard to incorporate there.

There's so much going on in that session. So I would probably advise against it that early on, but we definitely from there focus on it in session two. Anyone that is able to do the telehealth with us, we save the oral rehab for telehealth sessions so that we don't take up the face-to-face sessions with oral rehab. That way when they come in for the appointment, when we're doing those in-person sessions, we could focus on any mapping that needs to be done. We could focus on any booth testing that needs to be done. We could focus on instruction showing them how to use their devices.

And then the other all rehab as far as more of that Speechreading tools or the, you know, auditory training is reserved for those telehealth sessions. Right now our program does for telehealth sessions as far as aural rehab, but that is definitely flexible in terms of what works for you. But we can certainly share that as well. Any other comments, Jess or Adam, you wanna make about that? 'Cause I think that was the last question.

- I think that was great. I think you answered it and I mean, I guess just to piggyback quickly, I think it's really individualized based upon, I have patients who I'll start aural rehab with as Cyndi mentioned very early, like the second or third session. And then I have patients that I really have to spend all of my appointment time mapping and you know, with booth testing and with connectivity and for those patients, I wait. So I think it really, it's really individual based upon the patient needs.

- Agree, thank you. Well, I think that is, we're right at four o'clock, so I think that's all the time we have. We so appreciate everyone for listening today. Download the

handouts and reach out to any one of us. Again, I'm Cyndi Trueheart, Jessica Preston, Adam Zhitomi, we're at the Connecticut VA and we would love to hear from you. Thank you for listening.

- Thank you.

- Thank you.