

PAVA

Pan American Vocology Association

InFormant

Volume 1, Issue 2

Kristen Sullivan, Editor

In the midst of this challenging time, during which our physical and mental health and livelihoods are threatened, PAVA would like to provide our members with resources to thrive.



Successful Telepractice: Optimizing Your Online Services for Voice

Kristie Knickerbocker, MS, Cara Bryan, MA, and Aaron Ziegler, PhD
Founding Members, Confident Clinician Cooperative

We are under considerable pressure to deliver effective voice care as we distance physically and connect virtually. In 2018, Grillo published evidence in support of telepractice to successfully prevent and manage voice disorders. Though use of telepractice may at first seem to be a road-block to quality voice care, it does not have to be. Consider these recommendations to optimize your delivery of telepractice services for voice. Exploring creative options to gather acoustic data can facilitate outcomes measurement when evaluating the voice during telepractice. Acoustic analysis software is available, however, real-time acquisition of the patient's voice signal through videoconferencing is not readily available. Instead, have the patient make voice recordings on their computer using free recording software (e.g., Audacity or Praat). Patients can email or upload their voice recordings as .wav files for analysis in Praat with Phonanium plugins. Patients also can send voice recordings for free through smartphone and tablet applications such as VoiceEvalu8, which provides its paid clinician subscribers with multidimensional voice outcomes data. Other free or paid Android or iPhone apps such as Vocal Pitch Monitor and Voice Analyst are available for limited acoustic analysis. Ensuring everyone hears a clear vocal signal can improve cohesiveness when treating the voice during telepractice. According to Maryn & Weenick (2014), lowering external/environmental noise and optimizing the signal-to-noise ratio is ideal. The vocal signal your patient hears as you demonstrate will improve with a USB or headset cardioid condenser microphone with audio interface. The microphone should have a flat frequency response curve within a 2dB variation and be sensitive to between 50- 8,000Hz with a 3% dynamic range. Encouraging your patient or client to get an external microphone will improve your ability to listen critically to their voice. During telepractice for voice, providing visual cues in addition to verbal cues is key. Enabling "original sound" in software like Zoom can optimize singing training during telepractice. Due to time lags in videoconferencing apps and device software, completing real-time accompaniment on one end while singing on the other is challenging. Issues also may occur with the patient playing a track on their computer while singing along. A solution is to play a starting note and have the patient sing entirely a cappella or have the patient play tracks in headphones that only they can hear and sing 'a cappella.' Alternatively, the patient can sing while playing their accompaniment track on a device other than their computer and placed away from their microphone. Indeed we can help our patients with their voice through telepractice, and patience is key.

.....

References:

Grillo, Elizabeth (2018) SIG3 Perspectives Voice and Upper Airway Disorders. Volume 4, 100-110. Doi: 10.1044/2018?PERS-SIG3-2018-0014.

Maryn, Yuri & Weenick, David. (2014) Journal of Voice Jan;29(1):35-43.
doi: 10.1016/j.jvoice.2014.06.015



When The Voice Clinician Needs A Voice Therapist

Melanie Tapson, MSc SLP (C) CCC-SLP Reg CASLPO
PAVA Canadian Governor

Vocal strain and fatigue is proving to be an unexpected side effect of social distancing as many of us find ourselves taking our voice practices online, particularly if we've had to shift from all in-person to all online sessions almost overnight and with limited preparation! The vocal, physical, and mental fatigue of conducting our voice work with others entirely online is real, and it's one of many challenges we are experiencing in these unusual times.

On top of this, we're also finding ourselves using our voices more trying to stay connected; whether that's having late night Zoom board games with friends and family to socialize, collaborating with colleagues virtually, or cramming in online education, we can find ourselves as both facilitators and consumers of online voice work. Our brains and bodies are under more stress than usual from a variety of sources, and many of us are simultaneously trying to wrangle small children or care for others while trying to continue to show up online. We may notice ourselves relying on our voices even more than we usually do to make up for the lack of physical content and visual cues we'd normally get from an in-person interaction.

We know how to help our clients with vocal strain and fatigue, but isn't it just so hard to do therapy on yourself?! Here are some of the strategies I use and love when I'm faced with a long day trying to bring it all online.

Space: Don't forget to take the time to set yourself up for success, too! Be thoughtful about posture, ergonomic, and eye gaze when you build your workstation. Consider using headphones or an earplug to allow yourself to hear your own voice better. But my favourite tip? Turn your screen around! We often consider sitting with our backs to a nice wall to create a visually appealing backdrop for the viewer, but rather than feeling like you need to fill the rest of the room with your voice, talk to the wall! Having a small corner to fill or an acoustically reflective surface to bounce back a little extra feedback can help reduce the strain on your own voice.

Time: Build in the time you need to be successful and pace yourself. Give yourself time between sessions to nourish yourself, move your body, and reset as needed. A little sunlight or fresh air will do wonders to pick you up. And don't forget to give yourself time to warm up prior to your sessions as well! Make yourself sticky note reminders for your own screen, or better yet, use a dB meter as a visual to remind you to keep the volume comfortable.

Vocal Warmups: Don't forget to do your own vocal warmup, too! Start the day with your favourite voice exercises, reconnect to your voice prior to online work, and cool down at the end of the day with some gentle humming and steaming to allow your body and breathing to relax and wind down as well. You may also find it beneficial to reset your voice between sessions with some gentle semi-occluded vocal tract exercises as well. If we're feeling like we could use a little vocal reset, chances are the voice users we're working with could, too; interject a little voice care into your sessions to help yourself and your client or colleague to take care of yourselves in these unusual days. Modeling good vocal habits is a wonderful way to encourage others to take care of their voices as well!



Taking Care Of Your Mental Health

Working from home can be stressful. Voice therapist and singing voice teacher **Tom Burke CCC-SLP** offers these tips:

KEEP YOUR ROUTINE: Wake up at the same time, make the bed, wear work clothes, eat meals at regular times, do your workouts at the same time, get to bed on time.

FIND SACRED SPACE: See if you can find a dedicated workspace that is separate from the rest of your family's personal space. This may be the bathroom, bedroom, basement, attic or simply a corner in your shared studio apartment. Encourage whomever is home with you to help respect work time.

PRACTICE MINDFULNESS: Find time to sit by yourself and just notice your breath. This may mean just staying in the bathroom for 2 minutes more by yourself with the lights off.

MAINTAIN BOUNDARIES: Respect each other's time by scheduling meetings with each other. Yes, even with your partner. Ask to talk about a topic before you launch in.

BE GENTLE: Allow an occasional crabby comment to go by. Don't engage any nonsense and presume the best of intents.



Testing Video Conference Platforms

Preliminary study by Dr. Ian Howell, New England Conservatory

[Access the Study Here](#)



Graduate School Prepared Me to Self-Quarantine

Dr. Ariel Sophia Bardi

In this March 2020 article from *The Chronicle*, Dr. Bardi draws on her graduate-school experience to help cope with the challenges of self-isolation.

[Access the Article Here](#)



Join Us for These Upcoming PAVA Forums!

Watch for e-mails with registration information

Wednesday, May 20, 2020 - 8:00pm ET

- Dr. Mara Behlau, "Vocal Rehabilitation: Clinical Practice and the Future"
- Moderated by Melanie Tapson

Thursday, June 11, 2020 - 8:00pm ET

- Dr. Kittie Verdolini, "Confessions in voice therapy and training"
- Moderated by Brian Manternach

July 2020 (Date TBA)

- Dr. Matthias Zaňartu, "Estimating Vocal Fold Contact Pressure from Raw Laryngeal High-Speed Videoendoscopy Using a Hertz Contact Model"
- Moderated by Matthew Schloneger

Wednesday, August 5th, 2020 - 9:00am ET

- Dr. Anne-Maria Laukkanen, "Voice Training and Therapy Using Tubes"
- Moderated by Ana Flavia Zuim

September 2020 (Date TBA)

- Dr. Ingo Titze, "New SOVT Research"
- Moderated by Brian Manternach

October 2020 (Date TBA)

- Dr. Julia Gerhard, "The Extended Voice Team Network"
- Moderated by Rachelle Fleming

From our Friends at Voice Foundation

The Voice Foundation Symposium will be online and completely free!

Opening May 27!

[Register Here](#)



The 2020 PAVA Symposium, originally scheduled to take place in Minnesota, will now be held entirely online. Please visit the [events page](#) of our website for a message from our president, Aaron Johnson, and for further details as they emerge.

[Unsubscribe](#)