



Northwestern
University

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NUCASLL News

Monthly updates from the Northwestern University Center for Audiology, Speech, Language, and Learning

Supporting Communication and Connection During the Holidays

As we wrap up the year and step into a season filled with connection, celebration, and (let's be honest) a lot of emotions, we're here to support you and your loved ones through it all. December can be joyful and overwhelming at the same time, and that's okay. Our team has a few updates, reminders, and gentle tips to help you navigate the month with a little more patience and a lot more compassion.



CLINICIAN SPOTLIGHT:

Leigh Cohen, M.S., CCC-SLP (she/her/hers)

***Assistant Clinical Professor,
Northwestern University***

Leigh Cohen's journey into speech-language pathology began unexpectedly in college, but it quickly became a career rooted in helping individuals reclaim their voice, confidence, and sense of self. After working in adult neurorehabilitation, including at the Shirley Ryan AbilityLab, Leigh's focus shifted even more deeply toward pediatric care when she became a parent and witnessed her own child navigate a significant language delay.



In 2024, Leigh pursued certification in LSVT LOUD for KIDS, drawn to its structured, evidence-based approach and emphasis on motor learning. Recognizing a need for this specialized therapy in pediatric populations, she helped establish the program at Northwestern in partnership with community organizations.



Within the university clinic, Leigh supports graduate students as they receive LSVT LOUD for KIDS certification through the LSVT organization and integrates play-based, movement-driven activities into therapy sessions. Children engage in activities such as music, gross motor play, and real-time vocal feedback, making therapy both effective and motivating.

Since implementing LSVT LOUD for KIDS, Leigh has witnessed meaningful outcomes, including increased vocal clarity, spontaneous communication, and growing confidence across settings. These changes extend beyond speech, strengthening connection, independence, and participation in everyday life.



Is Hearing Loss Reversible?

Understanding Your Hearing Health

Hearing loss is one of the most common physical conditions in adults, after heart disease and arthritis. It affects an estimated 48 million people in the United States.

If you're dealing with any level of hearing loss, getting answers and the right care is one of the best things you can do for your quality of life and overall well-being.

Some types of hearing loss can improve with treatment, while others are permanent and require long-term management. Understanding the differences and knowing the causes and symptoms can help you take the next step toward better hearing health.

[READ MORE](#)

Supporting Loved Ones With Hearing Loss Around the Holiday Table

- **REDUCE COMPETING NOISE WHEN POSSIBLE.**

Lowering music, turning off the TV, or choosing a quieter room can make it easier for loved ones with hearing loss to follow conversations.

- **BE MINDFUL OF SEATING.**

Placing individuals with hearing loss in well-lit areas or closer to the center of conversation can improve access to visual cues and reduce strain.

- **TAKE TURNS SPEAKING.**

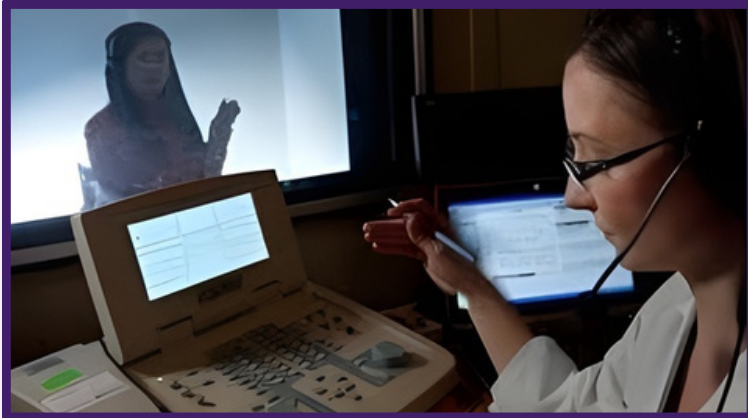
Overlapping conversations can be overwhelming. Pausing and allowing one voice at a time helps everyone stay engaged.

- **CHECK IN GENTLY.**

Asking "Is this pace okay?" or "Can you hear me from here?" conveys support without drawing unwanted attention.

Communication Research Registry

The **Communication Research Registry (CRR)** connects individuals and families with research study opportunities at Northwestern University. The Registry maintains a confidential database of people who are interested in being contacted about studies related to human communication and development



Our goal is to provide individuals and families with access to research opportunities in their community, and to support innovative, evidence-based research across labs at Northwestern University

Research areas supported through the Registry include:

- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Hearing impairments
- Aphasia
- Speech and language impairments
- Child development
- Cognition
- Bilingualism



People of all ages and ability levels are welcome to join. Registration involves a brief survey used to match participants with studies for which they may be eligible, and participation in any study is always optional.

If you are interested in learning more or registering, please contact the Registry Coordinator at commresearchregistry@northwestern.edu or visit [here](#).

LOOKING AHEAD

Break the Blocks Improv Workshop



The Northwestern University Center for Audiology, Speech, Language, and Learning (NUCASLL) is excited to host the 7th series of Break the Blocks, a free, guided improv workshop designed specifically for tweens and teens who stutter.

Since its launch a couple of years ago, Break the Blocks has been a remarkable success, creating a welcoming and supportive environment where stuttering is embraced and communication differences are respected. Through spontaneous improv activities, participants are encouraged to take risks, build flexibility, and reduce avoidance, all while strengthening confidence and connection.

Mistakes are viewed as part of the learning process, helping participants engage without pressure or fear of judgment. Participants always have the freedom to opt out of any activity without explanation, allowing each individual to engage at their own pace while still being part of a strong, supportive community.



Led by **Elisha Boxer Magnifico** (she/her), Speech-Language Pathologist and Clinical Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication Sciences & Disorders, the program continues to grow in response to strong community interest.

Break the Blocks is expanding to include adults who stutter. An **Adult Night workshop** will be held on **March 9th, from 5:30 PM–7:00 PM**, offering adults the opportunity to experience the same supportive, creativity-driven environment.

To register please visit **here**.



As we close 2025, we remain grateful for the families, clients, and community partners who make our work possible.

Thank you for your trust, your engagement, and your commitment to fostering accessible communication for all.

Warm wishes for a peaceful and connected holiday season,
The Northwestern University Center for Audiology, Speech, Language, and Learning

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