**Peer Learning Groups**

Helen Keller National Center is pleased to announce the following peer collaborative virtual learning opportunities offered through ZOOM videoconferencing. These support groups and/or active discussions are designed to cover a variety of topics with input from the participants at no cost. Group classes will start the week of April 20, 2020.

Come join former HKNC students in an ongoing dialogue to share perspectives, experiences, and to support each other during this challenging time. Classes will be 4-8 weeks long depending on the group, to strengthen your knowledge and skills.

These group discussions will be conducted using ZOOM videoconferencing, and participants are welcome to join by phone or video. The ZOOM link and call-in number will be provided when you register with Laura Benge, HKNC Regional Representative.

You can email Laura at [Laura.Benge@hknc.org](mailto:Laura.Benge@hknc.org) with the subject line: “Peer Learning Groups”. Alternatively, you may call her at:  
Voice: (801) 518-9401  
VP: (385) 355-8392

Please review the peer learning groups listed below and let Laura know which group you are interested in joining. Please note, in an effort to provide participants with attention and accommodations they deserve, group size is limited to 8 participants and no more than 3 groups per person; first come first serve.

**MONDAYS**

**11:00 am - 12:00 pm EST**  
**Braille Buddies**

Braille Buddies is adiscussion group for braille users. Participants will share daily ways they utilize braille, experiences from learning braille, and explore creative ways to develop their braille skills. Additionally, participants will discuss braille resources and how to access them. This peer learning group will be facilitated by the HKNC Communications Learning Center staff: Peggy Costello, Pamela Rothman, Kim Mockler and Garwin Posner.

**1:00 pm - 2:00 pm EST  
Taste of Tech**

Are you curious about the technology other deaf-blind people use in their daily lives? Come join a weekly discussion that will review common technology available, unique ways technology can be used for accessibility, and where to find technology resources. This group will learn about braille displays, screen-readers, Sprint IP Relay and more!  This peer learning group will be facilitated by the HKNC Adaptive Technology Center staff: Megan Dausch, Bill Spagnuolo, Don Horvath and Rob Pena.

**2:00pm - 3:00pm EST  
Understanding Nutrition**

Feeling sluggish?  Understanding nutrition is a great opportunity to learn how to boost your immune system to fight disease, learn healthy habits, and ask questions from our health experts.  This peer learning group will meet once a week for four weeks and will be facilitated by HKNC Medical Director, Peg Herzberg, and HKNC Nurse Manager, Carol Petrilli.

**TUESDAYS**

**11:00am - 12:00pm EST**

**Emergency and Disaster Planning**

Do you feel confident in your ability to respond to an emergency such as a house fire, a flood, an active shooter, or even a pandemic? The HKNC Emergency and Disaster Planning group will review ways to respond in the event of various emergencies, how to set up an emergency bag, how to prepare for communication and navigation in all situations, and how to alert family and/or emergency personnel for help. This peer learning group will meet once a week for four weeks and will be facilitated by Val Chmela and Jamie Schagat.

**1:00pm - 2:30pm EST**

**Usher Syndrome Support Group**

This support group is available for individuals with Usher syndrome (US) who use ASL to communicate. This will be an open ended dialog where participants will lead discussion topics along with identified topics by the facilitator; this style forum will allow the opportunity to discuss the impact US has on you, your family and your life as well as identifying coping strategies.  This support group will be facilitated by HKNC’s Mental Health Coordinator, Lisa Catanzaro.

**WEDNESDAYS**

**11:00am-12:00pm EST**

**Usher Syndrome Support Group**

This support group is available for individuals with Usher syndrome (US) who communicate orally. This will be an open ended dialog where participants will lead discussion topics along with identified topics by the facilitator; this style forum will allow the opportunity to discuss the impact US has on you, your family and your life as well as identifying coping strategies.  This support group will be facilitated by HKNC’s Mental Health Coordinator, Lisa Catanzaro.

**1:00pm - 2:00pm EST**

**TECH TIME: Your Technology Questions Answered!**

During these challenging times, we are all relying on technology more than usual. This peer learning group is an opportunity to ask your most burning questions about braille displays, iPhone navigation, screen readers and more! ‘Tech Time’ will follow a question and answer format and will be facilitated by HKNC’s Adaptive Technology Center staff: Megan Dausch, Bill Spagnuolo, Don Horvath and Robert Pena.

**WEDNESDAYS (continued)**

**2:00pm - 3:00pm EST**

**Covid-19 Live Chat**

Covid-19 Live Chat offers informational sessions to learn ongoing updates about the coronavirus and ways to protect yourself. Come share your experiences and support others with managing these new challenges in our daily lives. This live chat will follow a question and answer format and will be facilitated by HKNC’s Medical Director, Peg Herzberg, Nurse Manager, Carol Petrilli, and Case Manager Valerie Chmela.

Beginning **April 15th** - Every Wednesday

This group will be on-going until there is no longer a need to continue.

**THURSDAYS**

**1:00pm - 2:00pm EST**

**Support Group for People who are Hard-of-Hearing**

This support group is available for individuals who are hard-of-hearing. This is will be an open ended group dialog where participants can lead discussions based on their experiences of living in “a hearing world” and learn effective strategies from their peers. This support group will be facilitated by HKNC’s Mental Health Coordinator, Lisa Catanzaro.

**2:00pm - 3:45pm EST**

**Mobility Support Group**

From the time you get out of bed in the morning until your head hits the pillow at night you are traveling.  You travel within your home, outside around your home, and for most of us to points beyond our home.  Since Covid-19 our travel routes, outside of our home, have been compromised greatly.  These new challenges impact us all and we are longing for a new way to connect.  HKNC is offering a holistic MOBILITY GROUP to discuss your travel challenges, find strength and solutions from deaf-blind peers, and more importantly find a way to MOVE FORWARD TOGETHER.  Join us for a live weekly discussion group with HKNC staff from the following departments: Mobility, Low Vision, Audiology and Creative Arts.  Together we can move mountains but it all starts with the first step in supporting each other.

**FRIDAYS**

**1:00pm - 2:00pm EST**

**‘Appy’ Hour!**

Join the HKNC Technology staff for a lively discussion about our favorite apps. We’ll explore applications that can help in your daily life by identifying that can of food in your kitchen, identifying who is in the room, or keeping you up to date on that latest best seller! This peer learning group will be facilitated by HKNC’s Adaptive Technology Center staff: Megan Dausch, Bill Spagnuolo, Don Horvath and Robert Pena.

**2:00pm - 3:00pm EST**

**Banking and Budgeting**

Money makes the world go round and in this group, tips and strategies will be shared and discussed for practical methods of making payments, finding out how much you need to pay, staying safe at the ATM, and information on debit and credit cards.  Other topics will include strategies for communicating and interacting with the teller at the bank, information about how to open a bank account, and how to plan a budget. This discussion group is facilitated by the Communications Learning Center staff: Peggy Costello, Pam Rothman, Kim Mockler and Garwin Posner.

**(Days and Times TDB)**

**Advocacy in the Deaf-Blind World**

Do you want to develop and enhance your ability and confidence to self-advocate? Advocacy in the Deaf-Blind World (ADBW) virtual classes are being offered over a period of eight weeks. Learn about your rights to communication access as it pertains to interpreting. The ADBW curriculum reflects the additional challenges experienced in many situations related to equal access common among the deaf-blind community. The classes will focus on strategies and opportunities for advocating for equal access to: communication, transportation, print/media and technology. Emphasis is placed on understanding one’s own specific needs, being able to articulate these needs to others, understanding the laws that protect an individual’s rights to equal access, learning strategies for advocating for these rights and learning what steps to take if these rights are being violated. This course is facilitated by instructors who are deaf-blind themselves and are able to share personal experiences about their own self-advocacy.