

How Communication Partners Can Help

To Aid Understanding

- Introduce topics clearly. Provide background information, & “topic warnings” when shifting from one topic to another
- Slow down! Pause after each point to allow the person time to process what you say
- Repeat the main points using “Respectful Repetition”
- State things directly and avoid the use of abstract language such as humour, sarcasm, short forms, asides, or figures of speech
- Try using visuals and writing of key words
- Encourage the person to write or record information if appropriate
- Summarize the key points of important discussions or meetings and give the summary to the person
- Give the person one activity or task to do at a time
- Use Natural Comprehension Checks (“Ok what have you understood about this so far?”)

To Aid Expression

- Allow time and opportunity for the person to express their ideas, opinions and stories.
- Use scripting to help the person plan what they want to say
- Give clear feedback about the parts you understood e.g. “I understood X and Y. What was the rest?”
- Use Visual Supports – Eye contact, gestures, pointing, labels, scheduling aids, goal sheets, key word writing, graphic organizers, brainstorming aids
- Provide Choice Questions- It may be difficult for the person to generate ideas on the spot. Use specific questions or lists of options the person can choose from.
- Recognize the person might accidentally state their minor point before their major point.
- Assist them in rating their main points and preferences on a scale of 1-10
- When anger or frustration arise, stay calm, give the person silence or “down time” and discuss it later. Try to think of what the “trigger” was. Help them to script out a tactful way of expressing the concern next time.

How Communication Partners Can Help

Overall: Respectful, Collaborative Approach

- Treat the person with respect & remember the person is as intelligent but is perhaps less efficient
- Use a natural, conversational tone of voice
- Minimize distractions (TV, music) & close the door
- Have one person talk at a time
- Check for fatigue or mood before engaging in challenging discussions or decisions
- Ask the person their preference on goals, cues, strategies or feedback methods
- Select only 1 or 2 goals at a time
- Suggest what the person might try next time rather than focusing on what they did wrong



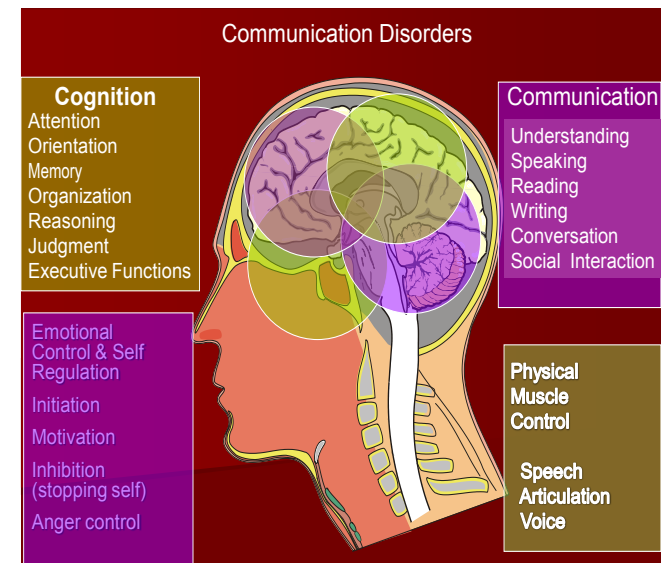
Communication partners make a difference!!

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Let's Talk!!

Helping Those With Communication Challenges After Brain Injury



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Communication Difficulties After Acquired Brain Injury (ABI)

- ◇ Range from mild to severe.
- ◇ Include difficulties with listening, speaking, reading, writing, or social interaction.
- ◇ May be subtle & not obvious in conversation
- ◇ Come from a variety of underlying causes including: speech muscle movement problems (“dysarthria”, “apraxia”), cognitive or thinking deficits (“cognitive-communication disorders”), language problems (“aphasia”), voice disorders, emotional, self-regulation or self-control problems (“social communication”).
- ◇ May be affected by pain or fatigue.
- ◇ Affect no two persons alike. People vary in their profile of communication deficits, needs, priorities, goals, or preferred strategies for intervention.
- ◇ An individualized plan is a must.

Who Can Help with Communication Difficulties?

Speech-language pathologists (SLP’s) are regulated health professionals who are trained to assess & treat all communication disorders.

It is helpful to ask for an SLP who has experience with individuals with brain injuries (ABI, neurological).

To find an SLP Contact:

- Community Care Access Centre
- Local Health Integration Network
- Local Hospital
- Private Practice Registry for SLP’s
www.osla.on.ca

Concern	Communication or Cognitive-Communication Difficulties
Attention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulties focusing on the conversation, especially with background noise, busy environments, or multiple speakers • Difficulties managing shifts in topic or shifts from speaker to speaker
Orientation & Memory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confused conversation or loses train of thought • Problems recalling conversations, things to do, appointments, recent events
Organization Reasoning Problem Solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty describing things or situations in an organized way • Discourse is unclear, disorganized, or does not make the main point • Difficulty participating in problem solving discussions, making decisions, expressing choices, or expressing reasons for a decision.
Comprehension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty understanding instructions, questions, conversations • Difficulty understanding humour, subtleties • Difficulty understanding group discussions or complex information (medical, legal, financial)
Expression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulties speaking clearly to convey personal needs • Difficulties expressing ideas or opinions • Difficulties communicating on the telephone • Difficulties explaining, discussing, conversing, participating in groups
Executive Functions Initiation Regulation Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulties with social communication (initiation, timing, impulsivity, tact, speaking before thinking, turn taking, topic selection, repetition, consideration of the conversation partner) • Difficulties with anger, frustration tolerance, expression of concerns etc. • Difficulties noticing own errors in social communication • Difficulties accepting suggestions and strategies.
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulties reading single words or sentences • Difficulties reading paragraphs, stories, news • Difficulties with retention, interpretation, studying, researching
Written Expression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulties with writing/spelling of words or sentences • Difficulties writing longer text (emails, reports, stories, forms, documents etc.)



Communication difficulties affect one’s participation in life and community!!

