

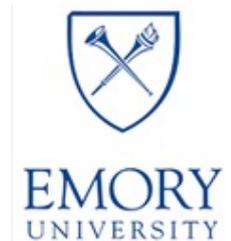
Supported Communication for Individuals with Language Impairment

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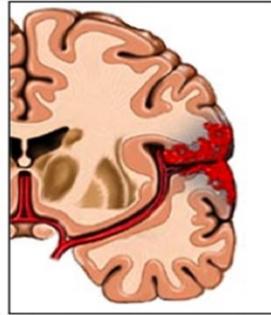
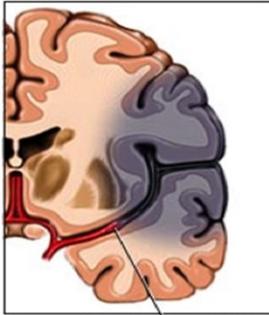
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Atlanta VA Health Care System



Aphasia

- ❖ Language disorder that can affect speaking, understanding, reading and writing

#1 cause: Stroke



Can also result from:

- traumatic brain injury
- brain tumor
- brain infections
- progressive brain disease

- ❖ *Can impact communication, identity and relationships*

Supported Communication for Adults with Aphasia™ (SCA™)

You are the “communication ramp”



<https://www.aphasia.ca/communication-tools-communicative-access-sca/>

SCA™ Goals

❖ Acknowledge Competence

- RESPECT

❖ Reveal Competence

- IN: helping get your message in
- OUT: helping get their message out
- VERIFY: making sure you understand



Acknowledging Competence

- ❖ Acknowledge *your* limitations as a communication partner
- ❖ Deal openly with communication breakdowns
- ❖ Say “I know you know”
- ❖ Be flexible and willing to drop the topic or circle back
- ❖ Be relatable; avoid saying things like “maybe I have aphasia too”
- ❖ Ask the person with language impairment what helps
- ❖ In situations where you are asking question about someone else, ask permission and be inclusive



Revealing Competence (IN)

- ❖ Eliminate distractions
- ❖ Use short, simple sentences
- ❖ Expressive voice
- ❖ Repeat- same message, different way
- ❖ Gestures that are easy to see and understand
- ❖ Write down key words / main ideas
- ❖ Use pictures – one at a time
- ❖ Observe the person for subtle cues



Revealing Competence (OUT)

- ❖ Provide pen and paper
- ❖ Provide pictures
- ❖ Ask yes/no questions (general to specific)
- ❖ Ask fixed choice questions
- ❖ Request clues (e.g., “can you show me?”)
- ❖ Give enough response time (patience)



GETTING INFORMATION IN and OUT

YOU: Do you want to have lunch next week?

CP: Yes, lunch. Monday no but Tuesday, Tuesday, I don't know.

YOU: Where do you want to eat?

CP: I know, that place, me and you before, the name, I can't

YOU: A place we've eaten before? What kind of food?

CP: Cuban

YOU: Oh, Buena Gente?

CP: Yes!

YOU: I loved that restaurant. Let's take a look at your calendar so we can choose a day.

Revealing Competence (VERIFY)

- ❖ Reflect: Repeat the person's message
- ❖ Expand: Add what you think the person is trying to say
- ❖ Summarize: Pull it all together

“The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.”

George Bernard Shaw

REFLECT – EXPAND – SUMMARIZE

YOU: How was your drive here?

CP: The car was long. I turned and the lady said no and then I turned and turned. So late, sorry.

YOU: No problem. It sounds like it was a long drive.

CP: Yeah

YOU: Maybe you made a couple wrong turns?

CP: Yeah

YOU: But your GPS helped you?

CP: Yeah

YOU: I got lost the first time we came here. I'm glad you made it!

Other Good Communication Behaviors

❖ Commenting

- keep it short and relevant

❖ Listening

- actively listen, give eye contact

❖ Maintaining conversation

- introduce new topics, use transitions





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To learn more about aphasia treatment research:

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