



# Making Communication A Success

**Communication problems** are common after a stroke and with other conditions that affect the brain.

**Communication can include difficulty with:**

- talking
- understanding
- reading
- writing



**How might you feel if you couldn't communicate?**

**You might experience:**

- loneliness
- sadness, depression
- low self-esteem
- misunderstandings, frustration and anger

**Did you know:**

**There are two types of communication problems:**

- Receptive - trouble taking messages **IN** through listening or reading
- Expressive – trouble getting messages **OUT** through talking or writing

**People with communication problems:**

- do not lose their intelligence or ability to make decisions
- may understand even if they cannot talk
- may have physical or emotional outbursts due to frustration







# Helping Paul Communicate



## DON'T

Raise your voice. Do not assume the person has a hearing problem.

Stand over a seated person.

Frown, cross your arms, or use non-verbal cues that indicate frustration or impatience.

Ask open-ended questions.

Rush communication.

Jump into a topic or move quickly from one topic to another. Don't ask many unrelated questions.

Feel like there are no options if words don't work.

Get frustrated with the person.

Forget to acknowledge the person's intelligence.

Assume that you understood the message.

## DO

Use short, simple sentences in a normal tone of voice.

Position yourself at eye-level.

Use positive facial expressions and body language to support your message.

Ask simple yes/no questions (e.g., "Would you like orange juice?").

Be patient. Allow time for a response.

Make each individual topic clear and all topic changes clear (e.g., "Now, let's talk about your pills"). Then get more specific with questions.

Print key words, use pictures, specific gestures, simple drawings, and facial expressions.

Acknowledge the difficulty, take a break and come back later (e.g., "Can we please try again later?").

Use phrases like: "I know you know".

Always confirm and summarize the response (e.g., "Yes, you want to go to the bathroom.").







# Tips for Successful Communication

## Important tips to remember:

- ensure hearing aids and glasses are in place
- reduce noise & distractions (e.g., turn off TV)
- ensure adequate lighting
- one person should speak at a time



IN

OUT

### MESSAGE IN

### MESSAGE OUT

- ✓ Position face-to-face
- ✓ Use gestures & facial expressions
- ✓ Establish topic
- ✓ One topic at a time
- ✓ Use short sentences
- ✓ Print key words
- ✓ Use simple drawings & pictures
- ✓ Watch for body language to ensure understanding
- ✓ Ask YES/NO questions

- ✓ Allow extra time
- ✓ Use support & encouragement
- ✓ Identify general topic first
- ✓ Encourage gestures & pointing
- ✓ Ask YES/NO questions
- ✓ Use picture/word boards
- ✓ Encourage writing
- ✓ Verify the message

**For More Information Go To:** Heart & Stroke Foundation of Canada (2015) Taking Action for Optimal Community and Long Term Stroke Care (TACLS) [Link](#)

**STROKE NETWORK**  
*of Southeastern Ontario*