Communication and Stroke

Supported Conversation for Adults with Aphasia (SCA TM)

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STROKE STRATEGY of Southeastern Ontario
Ontario Stroke System
Fewer strokes. Better outcomes.
GOALS

- Understanding Communication Impairments following Stroke

- Achieving an “Accessible” Communication Environment

- Supported Conversation for Adults with Aphasia (SCA TM)
Stroke and the Brain

**LEFT SIDE OF BRAIN**
- Right side of body
- Spoken Language
- Written Language
- Reasoning
- Number skills

**RIGHT SIDE OF BRAIN**
- Left side of body
- Spatial orientation
- Creativity
- Artistic awareness
- Music

APHASIA
Motor Problems after Stroke

- **Dysarthria** = speech muscles weak, slow, uncoordinated; slurred SPEECH

- **Dysphagia** = Difficulty swallowing

- **Apraxia** = brain has trouble telling speech muscles how to move; unintelligible SPEECH
What is APHASIA?

- **Language** problem caused by brain injury e.g. STROKE

- **NOT** loss of language
  - Language still there, just difficult to access
What is APHASIA?

- Aphasia may affect:
  - **Speaking**
    - e.g. know word but can’t get it out
  - **Understanding**
  - **Reading**
  - **Writing**
- Can affect all or some areas
FACTS

- **18-38%** of stroke survivors affected by aphasia

- **2X** people with aphasia as Parkinson’s Disease (*The Aphasia Institute*)

- Over **100 000** people affected in Canada

- Over **30 000** people affected in Ontario
Communication Problems Interfere with Service Delivery

- Health Care Providers need to know information about a patient (i.e., pain, address, bathroom, allergies, code status).
  - No one else is present
  - Those present do not have the answers
  - As with any of us, people with aphasia often prefer to give their own personal information
How do you support a conversation?  

- Video clip
Goals of SCA™ for Health Care Professionals

- Get your message **IN**
- Let the patient with Aphasia generate their message **OUT**
- **VERIFY** message
IN

- Slow, simple, short
- Repeat and rephrase
- Write key words
- Use meaningful gestures
- Use pictures
- Give choices
- Quiet (auditory and visual) room
OUT

- Ask **YES/NO** questions and make sure there is a way to respond (verbal, gesture)
- Encourage them to point to objects, pictures or written key words
- Give time for response
- Be patient
• Check accuracy and intention
  • e.g., yes or no (verbal, gesture, picture)

• Summarize the message
  • “Let me make sure I understand …”
Best Practice Goals

- Screen for language difficulties and refer to SLP where suspected
- Communication picture symbols available for patients with Aphasia
- Health Care Professionals able to support communication with patients with Aphasia
- Patients with Aphasia able to efficiently and effectively participate in their own healthcare
Resources

- CMAJ, Dec. 2008, Best Practice Recommendations
- Aphasia Institute, Supported Conversation
- Quinte Health Care, Speech-Language Pathologists:
  - Shirley Williams, SLP, ext. 2576
  - Shawn Allen, SLP, ext. 2117
  - Natalie Rolston Communication Disorder Assistant, ext. 2576
Thank You.

- Questions or Comments?