

# COMMUNICATION DISORDERS POST STROKE

MERRIAM-WEBSTER:

“The act or process of using words, sounds, signs, or behaviors to express or exchange information or to express your ideas, thoughts, feelings, etc., to someone else”

Approximately 38% of stroke survivors will have **communication deficits**.

## COMMUNICATION DEFICITS INCLUDE:



### APHASIA

What you say and understand

- Talking
- Understanding
- Reading
- Writing



### COGNITIVE COMMUNICATION DISORDERS

Difficulties with listening, reading, writing, speaking because of underlying cognitive deficits such as:

- Problem Solving
- Abstract Reasoning
- Organizing
- Memory
- Information Processing



### MOTOR SPEECH DISORDERS

How you say things/pronunciation

- Dysarthria
- Apraxia

## IDENTIFICATION

Please refer to a Speech Language Pathologist if the stroke survivor has difficulties with any of the following (CASLPO, 2002):

- **Understanding** conversations, instructions, presentations or media
- **Expressing themselves** verbally and engaging in conversation in an efficient, appropriate and effective manner (e.g. finding the right words and putting them together to form a sentence)
- **Making themselves understood** clearly and intelligibly
- **Remembering** the contents of a conversation or experience
- **Interacting** in a socially acceptable manner
- **Reading and/or writing** for work, pleasure, community independence or school
- **Reasoning and decision making** while communicating
- **Academic** or vocational performance
- **Responding** in a timely fashion in a conversation

## RECOMMENDATIONS



Anyone working with/caring for people with aphasia should be familiar with conversation support techniques, such as Supported Conversation for Adults with Aphasia (SCA™)



You can register with the Aphasia Institute for free resources such as the Working Together Series

## STRATEGIES TO HELP YOU COMMUNICATE WITH THE PERSON WITH APHASIA

### DO

- Slow down
- Ask YES/NO questions
- Assume they understand more than they can tell you
- Check to make sure you understand
- Give them your full attention
- Match your verbal and non-verbal
- Give the person with aphasia support
- Be respectful
- Be honest if you don't understand
- Be patient
- Give them the time they need to communicate

### DON'T

- Don't "talk down" to the person
- Don't talk too fast
- Don't yell
- Don't pretend you understand if you don't
- Don't talk for the person with aphasia

### TOOLS

- Use a pen and paper
- Use a communication board
- Use gestures (pointing/charades)

## THERAPY

Once a stroke survivor has been identified with a communication disorder, speech and language therapy is available in the following locations:

- Inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation
- Community rehabilitation
- Private practice

