



Overcoming Communication Challenges

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Hey There!

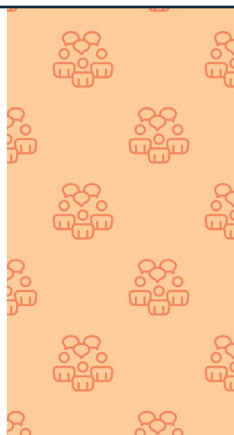
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- Undergrad: Loyola University Maryland
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- 13 years as an SLP working with adult & seniors
- Experience: nursing home, outpatient, memory care unit, behavioral health unit, assisted living, teletherapy, and home health
- Daughter and former caregiver of a dad with Parkinson's & dementia
- Named an ASHA Innovator
- Featured in Lingraphica documentary - Witnessing Their Words

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TODAY'S Agenda

- Introductions (5 min)
- Understanding Communication Challenges & Breakdowns (15 minutes)
- Strategies for Everyday Communication (15 minutes)
- Strategies in Action (10 minutes)
- Emotional Impact (5 minutes)
- Resources and Q&A (10 min)



Learning Objectives

#1

Name common communication challenges.

#2

Use simple strategies to communicate better.

#3

Describe how others can help.

Important Reminders

#1



I am not your speech pathologist and cannot provide direct therapeutic or medical advice. We will discuss general information, practices, and tips.

#2



Please feel free to take pictures of the slides and take notes!

#3



This is a safe space to learn & connect. No question is silly. Ask in the chat or wait until Q&A at the end.

Understanding Communication Challenges & Breakdowns

Common Communication Challenges



Language
Expressive Aphasia
Receptive Aphasia



Speech
Apraxia
Dysarthria



Voice
Dysphonia



Cognitive-Communicative
Attention
Memory
Problem Solving
Organization

(Gillespie et al., 2019; Kelly et al., 2023)

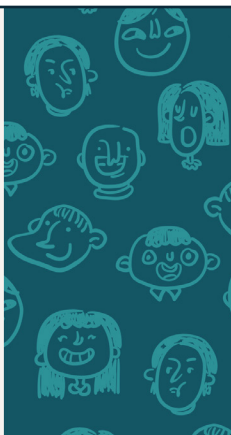
What can happen...

- You don't add to the conversation as much as you'd like.
- You talk to friends & family less.
- You can't get your message out.
- You feel frustrated.



What is a Communication Breakdown?

A communication breakdown occurs when there is a failure in exchanging information, where the message expressed by one person is not understood by the other.



Language

Communication Breakdowns in Aphasia

- Trouble finding words
- Trouble understanding others
- Sentences may be hard
- Trouble following directions
- Trouble reading or writing



Speech

Communication Breakdowns in Apraxia, Dysarthria

- Words may sound unclear
- Speech may be slow or effortful
- Hard to control sounds



Voice

Communication breakdowns in Dysphonia

- Voice may be quiet
- Voice may sound strained
- Voice may be breathy
- Monotone pitch
- Hard to be heard



Cognitive-Communicative

Communication Breakdowns in Thinking and Communication

- Trouble with memory
- Trouble staying on topic
- Trouble organizing thoughts
- Trouble initiating conversation



Meet Caregiver Sam & her Husband Henry with apraxia

The Breakdown

Henry wants eggs for breakfast. He says, "ed"

Sam gets frustrated. Henry is groping for the sounds and she can't understand him. The window is open and grass is being mowed.

Henry is also frustrated. He repeats, "eh, eh, eds!" 

Sam repeats, "What food? I don't understand."

What communication breakdown signs do you see?

- Repeating words
- Looking confused or withdrawing from conversation
- Using filler words
- Difficulty responding to or following conversation
- Frustration or agitation

Meet Caregiver Sam & her Husband Henry with apraxia

The Strategies

Sam closes the window and faces Henry. She says:

"Say it again. I want to understand clearly. Can you go slower and really articulate?"

Henry says, "Ah-ggs"
Sam asks, "Can you show me?"
Henry mimics cracking an egg.

Sam asks, "Do you want eggs?"

Henry smiles and says, "Yes!" 

What does Sam do to improve communication?

- Reduces background noise
- Cues Henry to use slow speech and overarticulation
- Uses simple language
- Uses more than one way

RECAP

- Communication challenges can look different
- Breakdowns happen when messages are not understood
- Challenges may affect language, speech, voice, or thinking
- These experiences are common

Strategies for Everyday Communication

Strategies for Everyday Communication



Make Your
Message Clear



Support
Understanding



Use More
than One Way



Support
Thinking



Practice in
Real Life

(Holland, 2021)

Make Your Message Clear

- Slow down
- Pause between ideas
- Use key words
- Point or gesture



Support Understanding

- Ask simple questions
- Give choices
- Repeat important words
- Reduce background noise



Use More than One Way

- Speak
- Write
- Gesture or Point
- Use pictures
- Use a device

(Ali et al., 2024)



Support Thinking

- Break information into parts
- Give extra time
- Stay on one topic
- Use reminders

(Johnson & Weinberg, 2023)



Practice in Real Life

- Practice daily/weekly
 - In speech therapy
 - At home
 - In the community
 - With family and friends



Strategies for Communication Challenges



Language

- Use key words
- Give choices
- Ask yes/no questions
- Write or draw

ST-ST-ST...

Speech

- Slow down speech
- Take a breath before talking
- Say one word at a time
- Over-articulate sounds



Voice

- Take a breath before speaking
- Speak louder
- Sit or stand upright
- Face your listener



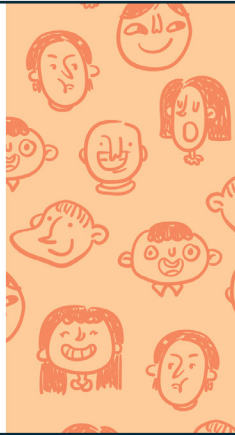
Cognitive-Communicative

- Use a routine
- Reduce distractions
- Write things down
- Take breaks

Communication Partner Role

Communication is a team effort.

- Both people share responsibility
- Support helps communication succeed



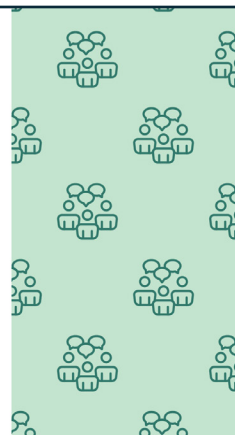
What can caregivers & communication partners do?

- Give time to respond
- Don't interrupt
- Ask simple questions
- Check understanding
- Be patient

Quick Reflection

Let us know in the chat!

- What tip or strategy works for you?
- What is hard right now?



RECAP

- Simple strategies can make communication easier
- Use more than one way to communicate
- Support understanding and thinking
- Communication is a team effort

Strategies in Action

What is AAC?

Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) refers to tools, strategies, or technology that helps someone with a speech or language impairment to communicate.

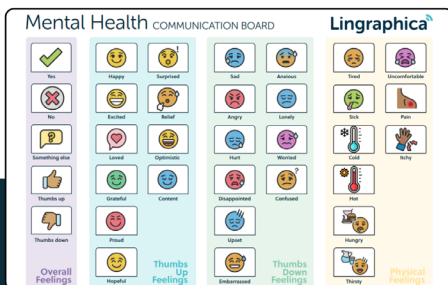


Low-Tech AAC



Communication Board

Low-Tech AAC



Communication Board

Low-Tech AAC



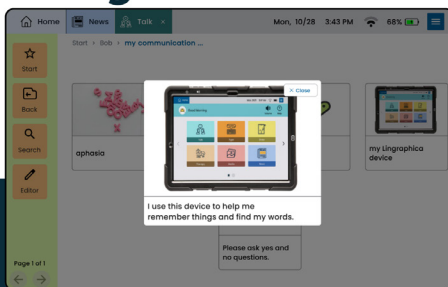
Communication Board

High-Tech AAC



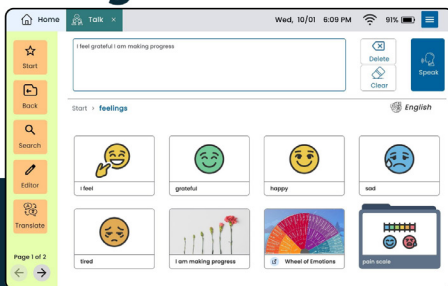
Express yourself in a variety of ways

High Tech AAC



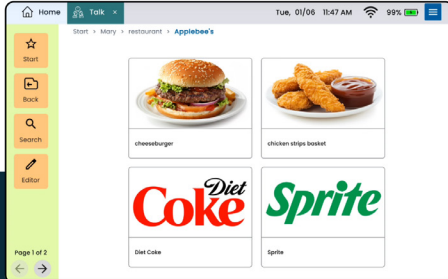
Advocate for yourself in conversation.

High Tech AAC



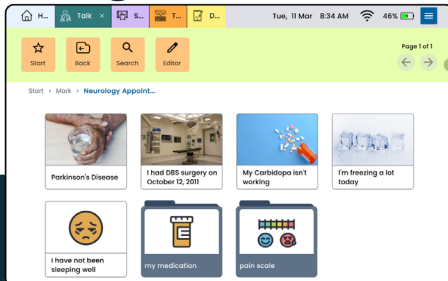
Talk about your feelings.

High Tech AAC



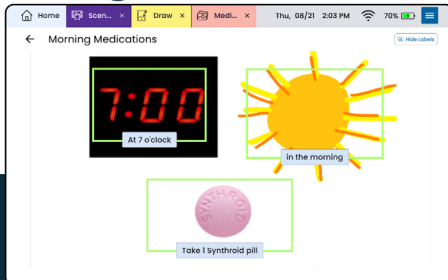
Give your meal preferences.

High Tech AAC



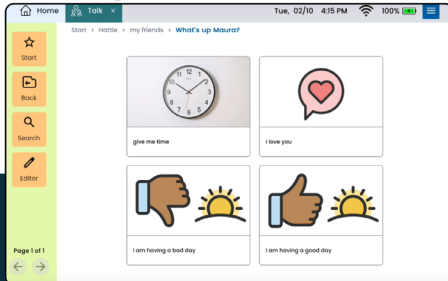
Advocate at the doctor's office.

High Tech AAC



Share your medication routine with family or providers.

High Tech AAC



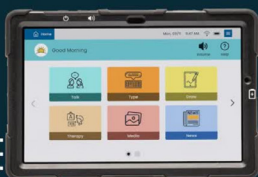
Advocate for yourself in conversation.

Meet Mike

- Has aphasia
- Got a device 2 years after his stroke
- Uses his device to educate first responders on aphasia
- Part of the NAA EMS Taskforce



Honestly,
those years



When I go to the hospital,



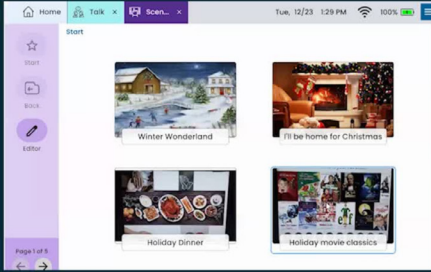


Mike



Mike

Holiday movie classics.



RECAP

- Tools can support communication
- AAC helps share messages in different ways
- Strategies + tools can work together

Emotional Impacts

Communication can feel

- Frustrating
- Tiring
- Embarrassing at times
- Isolating
- These feelings are common



©Charalambous et al., 2024

Emotional Impacts on Daily Life

- Talking with others may feel harder
- You may avoid conversations
- Social activities may decrease
- Confidence may change



©Charalambous et al., 2024

You Are Not Alone

- Many people share these experiences
- Communication can improve
- Support makes a difference
- Small steps matter



(Holland, 2020; Armstrong & Horsh, 2020)

RECAP

- Communication can affect feelings and daily life
- These experiences are common
- Support and strategies can help
- Small steps make a difference

Resources

Download the Ultimate Communication Toolkit



Get all the helpful tips and tricks to navigate communication challenges like a pro with this free downloadable toolkit.

Our toolkit includes:

- 12 Tips for Successful Communication
- Communication ID Card
- Caregiving for a Stroke Survivor
- Communication Boards
- And more!

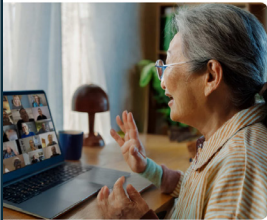
SCAN TO DOWNLOAD



lingraphica.com/ultimate-communication-toolkit/

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joinina
a Lingraphica community



A place for individuals with various communication challenges and their care partners to connect, share, and offer support. The Lingraphica Community consists of multiple, diagnosis-specific online communities.

Each individual community has a separate membership base, live online meetup sessions, and engagement opportunities.

SCAN TO JOIN



lingraphica.com/join-in

Webinar Recording: Building Your Communication Toolbox



In this 1-hr webinar, you'll

- Discover a variety of tools and strategies to help you (or your loved one) communicate
- Feel more confident in daily conversations
- Practice which communication tool is "right" for different situations

SCAN TO WATCH



lingraphica.com/resources/building-your-communication-toolbox/

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Let's Talk!

Schedule time to speak with a Lingraphica team member to discuss communication goals and identify the best resources for your communication journey.

Whether you're interested in our AAC devices, free apps, or our free online community, we'll help answer any questions you may have.

lingraphica.com/consumer-call/



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THANK YOU!

- Communication challenges are common
- Small changes can make a big difference
- Use more than one way to communicate
- Support from others helps
- Practice builds confidence



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Questions? Contact us: lingraphica.com/contact-us/

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Need help getting started with a Lingraphica device?
We're here for you.

Contact us at 888-274-2742 or **lingraphica.com/contact-us/**.