



# 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 may 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 – the person has difficulty understanding, not necessarily hearing

Stand over a person who is seated.

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

Ask open-ended questions (e.g. "What do you want to drink?").

Rush communication.

Jump into a topic or move quickly from one topic to another.

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

Get frustrated with the person.

Ask many unrelated questions.

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 expression and body language to support your message.

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

Be patient. Allow extra time for a response.

Make each individual topic clear and all topic changes clear (e.g. "Now we're going to talk about your pills").

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

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

Establish the general topic then get more specific with questions.

Use phrases such as: "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