

Strategies to Aid in Effective Communication in Stroke – Quick Tips

What is aphasia? An acquired language impairment that can affect *speaking, understanding, reading and writing*

Stroke survivors are less able to take an equal role in communication, HCPs may need to *take more responsibility in communicating* with people with stroke.

5 Key Strategies to Improve Communication with a Stroke Survivor

- 1) Develop a communication relationship
 - Show understanding for the other person's situation
 - "I know you know more than you can say right now"
- 2) Use effective communication strategies:
 - Use pictures, gestures, yes/no questions, repeat phrases, give choices and verify information
 - Acknowledge and reveal competencies and always verify that you have properly understood the message
- 3) Get the survivor's attention
 - Patient's may have visual neglect so approach from appropriate side
- 4) Set the stage & reduce distractions
 - Turn off radio, TV, close curtains
 - Ensure patient has hearing aids, dentures in place
 - Give the patient time to respond – avoid interrupting
- 5) Give one message at a time
 - Keep the conversation simple and avoid abrupt changes in conversation
 - Ensure the patient has finished talking about a specific topic before moving on
 - "so far we have talked about A, B, C, D... now we are going to talk about E"

Communication Breakdown

- Its okay to admit your frustrated and take a break – *but always ensure you go back and try again*