

## Identifying Communication Strategies for PPA

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## Purpose of this session

### Practical strategies

- Offer concrete, practical suggestions on how to improve communication at all stages of the disease

### Empowerment

- These strategies and tools will help you to have more control over what is happening to your loved one

### Hope

- Make the most out of every day
- Focus on the positives



## Review of PPA Symptoms

- Primary symptom: Loss of language
- Difficulties with reading and writing
- Difficulties with comprehension
- As disease progresses, may have difficulty with:
  - Memory
  - Attention
  - Judgment
  - Changes in behavior and personality
- Symptoms don't occur in stages
  - Existing symptoms worsen and new symptoms may appear in unpredictable manner

## Individualized Approach

- Disease progresses differently for everyone
- Every individual has unique set of communication strengths and skills that are preserved
- Goal is to identify and support these strengths
- Every individual will need a different amount of support to use communication strategies



## Accepting PPA

- Adapting to new forms of communication
- Learning to use new communication strategies and tools
  - Communication strategy: alternative ways of communicating that the individual and family can begin to use to help them compensate for the loss
  - Communication tool: high tech or low tech devices that assist the individual in communicating with others

## Some general concepts to remember...

- **Goal is communication, not perfection**
- Avoid stress: makes the communication challenges more difficult
- Continue social activities (gatherings with friends/family)
- Be aware of signs of depression
- There will be good days and bad days. Do your best to provide additional support on the more difficult days



### Strategies to Facilitate Comprehension

- Face the individual when speaking and making sure you have his/her full attention before starting to speak
- Speak slowly, and allow enough time for the individual to respond to questions
- Use gestures to help communicate your message
- Increase use of nonverbal cues: facial expressions, tone of voice, touch (for those who have difficulty interpreting facial expressions, focus on tone of voice and touch)
- If a response is incomplete or not clear, ask for clarification; repeat back what you heard. Do not pretend to understand if you do not
- Manage the environment (background noise, number of people present)

### Strategies to Facilitate Comprehension

- Give one direction at a time
- Use simple grammatical structure
- Replace complex words with more common vocabulary words
- Try asking questions that require a choice between two items or possibilities
- Try asking questions that can be answered with YES/NO
- Try using pictures to supplement your speech (should be personal pictures for semantic variant)

### Mild Stages

#### Self-cueing strategies

Help the individual use strategies to either retrieve the missing word or to communicate the message

- Talking around the word
- Thinking of the first letter of the word
- Trying to write the word
- Visualizing the word
- Using gestures



### Mild Stages

#### Self-cueing Strategies:

##### Talking around the word

- Cue the individual to talk around the word he/she is trying to say by encouraging, "Tell me about it..."
  - Describe its purpose or function
  - General category (fruit, clothing, sport)
  - Physical description (size, shape, color)
  - Location
  - Synonym or antonym for the word
- Fun game to practice this strategy
  - Write different words on index cards; have individual describe word to you without saying the word itself; then you do the same and have individual guess the word



### Mild Stages

#### Self-cueing Strategies:

##### Thinking of the first letter

- Ask the individual: "Can you think of what it starts with?"
  - If so, ask him to repeat the sound a few times to help retrieve the word



### Mild Stages

#### Self-cueing Strategies:

##### Writing it down

- Can be used when reading and writing are relatively well preserved
- If the individual has difficulty pronouncing longer words, may benefit from writing out the word first and then using the written cues to say the word
- Communication partner can write out choices



## Mild Stages

**Self-cueing Strategies:**Visualizing the word

- Ask the individual to try to picture the word they are trying to say

Gestures

- Ask the individual to try to make a gesture for the word they are trying to say



## Mild Stages

**Should I fill in the word?**

- It is up to the individual with PPA!
- Discuss the issue and determine a signal that indicates they would like your help
- Filling in the word may allow the conversation to move forward more quickly
- Filling in the word will NOT result in language deteriorating more quickly

## Mild Stages

**Rehearsal of Personally Relevant Words**

**Theory:** Constant practice of frequently used words will result in easier retrieval during conversation. These words may be easier to retrieve even as the disease progresses.

## Mild Stages

**Rehearsal of Personally Relevant Words**

Make a list of words or phrases that are important to your loved one and used on a daily basis, especially those that are difficult for them to retrieve or pronounce

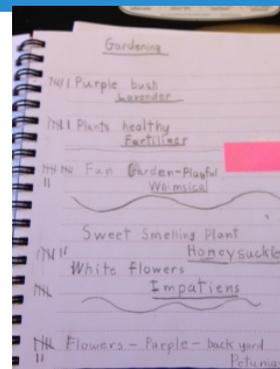
- Family members, friends, political figures
- Street names, stores, restaurants, places traveled
- TV shows, sports terminology
- Words related to their hobbies: gardening, woodwork, exercise, music, theater
- Personal facts: address, phone number, email address, date of birth, last 4 digits of social security number
- Household objects

## Mild Stages

**Rehearsal of Personally Relevant Words**How to rehearse:

1. Use index cards, notebook, or iPhone apps (listed below) to rehearse
2. Write word on one side of card or in notebook
3. Write clue or description of word on other side of card or above the target word in notebook
4. Read definition and try to say word aloud

## Mild Stages



## Mild Stages

**Rehearsal of Personally Relevant Words**Additional rehearsal tips

1. Practice any missed words again
2. Write out missed words 5 times each
3. *For individuals who have trouble pronouncing longer words:* segment the words and tap out syllables as you say them
  - (e.g., "LA-VEN-DER")
4. *For individuals who have difficulty recognizing people or objects:* use personal photographs along with words whenever possible

## Mild Stages

I-Phone app: Quizlet (free)

\*Automatic audio, can't add photos

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eC-v9aY7iTO>

## Mild Stages

**I-phone apps: FlipCards Pro (\$3.99)**

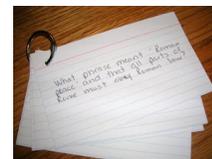
**\*Can add pictures; audio not automatic**

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VX\\_uOMLynxM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VX_uOMLynxM)

## Mild Stages

**Communication Wallet**

- Materials: Cut index cards down to wallet size **or** type up, print, and laminate wallet-sized cards
- Punch hole in corner of each card
- Place on keyring
- Keep in pocket or purse



## Mild Stages

**Communication Wallet**

- Determine appropriate font size
  - Can individual easily read the information?
- Determine how much information to include on each page
- Decide on content
  - Should be words, phrases, or sentences that individual may need to frequently communicate in conversation

Font 10  
Font 16  
Font 22  
Font 28  
Font 34  
Font 40

## Mild Stages

**Communication Wallet**Ideas for Content

- Name, address, phone number
- Name and contact info for emergency contact
- Description of condition and what helps
- Names and contact info of family members, friends, doctors, bank, pharmacy
- List of important locations: stores, restaurants, street names
- Frequently asked questions
- Pictures of family members and friends with names
- For those who have difficulty recognizing objects: pictures of objects with names
- Description of PPA condition

## Mild Stages

**Communication Wallet****How to use**

- Individual can use for reference during conversation when unable to think of a word or question.
- Individual can study particular names before going to a social event
- Communication partner can remind individual to pull out wallet to help find missing word

## Mild Stages

**Simple 8x11 Communication Aid**

- Non-portable version of communication wallet
- Copy and paste information from wallet onto both sides of 8x11 sheet of paper
- Make multiple copies
- Laminate for durability
- Keep copies throughout the house for easy reference during conversation

## Mild Stages

**Writing Strategies**

- Spell each word aloud as they are writing it
- Use word prediction feature when typing on a computer
- Use spell-check feature on computer
- Use pocket dictionary to look up word



## Mild Stages

**Writing Strategies: Emails**

- **If speech is fairly intact:** Use speech recognition software, such as Dragon or vBox, to dictate emails
- **Spouse/Caregiver:** Type up template for email
  - Help individual cater template for each friend or family member
- **Spouse/Caregiver:** Talk with individual about what he/she wants to write in email
  - Type content and read back to individual so he/she can give feedback



## Mild Stages

**Writing Strategies: Calendar**

- Make written aid
  - Spouse/Caregiver: Write or type names of frequent appointments that are entered onto calendar. Place aid next to calendar
  - Individual with PPA can refer to aid when needing to write a name or location on the calendar
- Use smartphone app to spell the word:
  - “ABC Speller” by Transcreative Software

## Mild Stages

**Writing Strategies: “To Do” lists**

- Spouse/Caregiver can make written aid, containing words and phrases that are frequently included on “To Do” list. Individual can copy to daily list
- If speech is fairly intact: Individual can use smartphone app to dictate list:
  - “Personal Assistant” (free)

## Moderate Stages

## Conversation Scripts

What is a script?

*Written or typed statements that are practiced frequently until individual can say them more fluently and with greater confidence*



## Moderate Stages

## Conversation Scripts

Can be used to:

- Talk to a family member or friend over the telephone and in other environments (e.g. with grandchildren)
- Order food at a favorite restaurant, schedule an appointment, or ask for directions over the telephone
- State personal information or biographical facts
- Explain the condition of "aphasia/PPA" and asking listeners to be patient
- Telling jokes or stories
- Giving a lecture or speech
- Saying prayers

## Moderate Stages

## Conversation Scripts

How to make:

- Put all scripts in page protectors in 3-ringed binder
- Can also laminate and include in Communication Wallet
- Best if typed up and printed out (but can also be handwritten)
- Type up individual's joke, story, or responses
- Try using landscape instead of portrait
- Try to keep one sentence per line.
- Assess most appropriate font size/spacing

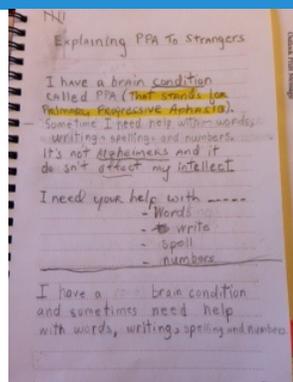
## Moderate Stages

## Conversation Scripts

How to Practice:

- The key to success is repeated practice
- Read through script
- Highlight difficult words/phrases
- Repeat each of these 5 times
- Read through entire script again
- Practice scripts for ~20 minutes daily
- Practice telephone scripts directly before making a call

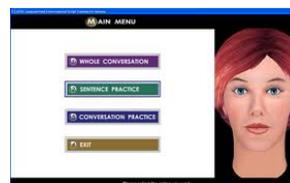
## Moderate Stages



## Moderate Stages

## Computer Script Program

<http://ricaphasiascripts.digitalcontentcenter.com>



Moderate Stages

**Communication Book**

What is it?

- Book full of pictures of commonly used words
- Does NOT replace spoken language – supplements it when needed
- Individual can refer to book to help get message across
- Communication partner may need to prompt use of book during conversation

Moderate Stages

**Communication Books**

- Can buy pre-made book
- Can buy computer program to help make book
- Can make yourself using Google images and/or digital photographs



Moderate Stages

**Personalized Communication Book**

- Includes a collection of pictures of family, friends, activities, and commonly used phrases.
- Pictures are arranged by category in different sections of the books and words and descriptive phrases are attached to each picture.
- Can use a 3-ringed binder with plastic page protectors. Pages can easily be added.
- Can also try binder with velcro to move pictures around if needed
- Try using Google Images to search for pictures that are meaningful to the individual.
- Take digital pictures of family, friends, and personal items

Moderate Stages

|           |               |                  |                |               |
|-----------|---------------|------------------|----------------|---------------|
| food<br>  | hamburger<br> | Pizza<br>        | Burrito<br>    | Spaghetti<br> |
| bread<br> | cheese<br>    | French fries<br> | hot dog<br>    | popcorn<br>   |
| fruit<br> | banana<br>    | ice cream<br>    | cookie<br>     | candy<br>     |
| drink<br> | water<br>     | juice<br>        | soft drink<br> | coffee<br>    |



Moderate Stages



### Moderate Stages

#### Generic vs. Personalized



### Moderate Stages

Website to purchase generic communication aides:

<http://www.givinggreetings.com/olderadults.html>

### Moderate Stages

#### Communication Book Ideas for book sections

- Communicating medical needs
- Favorite foods/beverages
- Frequently visited locations
- Family members/friends
- Household objects
- Articles of clothing
- Career and hobbies
- Places visited
- Politicians, famous people, current events



### Moderate Stages

#### Using smartphone pictures to facilitate communication:

- Encourage individual with PPA to frequently take pictures with smartphone throughout the day
- Individual can use pictures to supplement daily conversation
  - E.g., To help answer question, "What did you do today?"

### Severe Stages

#### Augmentative & Alternative Communication Devices

##### Speech Generating Device (SGD)

- A device featuring pictures or icons that when pressed, say a specific word or phrase
- Can be simple or complex
- Can have computerized voice or record individual's own speech
- Individual can use to supplement own speech
- May use as a main mode of communication in the severe stages

### Severe Stages

#### Considerations for buying SGD:

- Does the individual have experience with computers or high tech devices?
- Does the individual *want* to communicate with a device?
- Does the individual have significant difficulty with comprehension?
- Does the individual have low vision?
- Does the individual have fine motor deficits?
- Does the individual have visuospatial deficits?
- Does the individual have sequencing deficits?
- Is the device portable?
- Is this a device that the individual will most likely be able to use as his/her cognitive skills get worse?

### Severe Stages

#### Will insurance cover SGD's?

- Sometimes, depends on the individual policy. Need to check with your insurance company.



### Severe Stages

#### Criteria for Medicare to Cover a SGD:

1. The beneficiary is enrolled in Medicare Part B;
2. The beneficiary lives in his/her family home, or an assisted living facility (but not in a hospital, skilled nursing facility, or hospice);
3. The beneficiary is determined, following an assessment by a speech-language pathologist, to require an SGD to meet daily functional communication needs; and
4. The beneficiary's physician *needs to see the patient* and then prescribe the SGD

Medicare Implementation Team (2001-2011) Medicare Funding of AAC Technology: Who is Eligible and other basic information. The RESC on Communication Enhancement. Retrieved 2/12/12 from <http://aac-renc.psu.edu/index.php/pages/show/id/17>.

### Severe Stages

Lingraphica (\$7,500)

Dynavox (\$8,000)



### Severe Stages

#### GoTalk20+ (\$200)

- Simple device
- Easy to use
- Allows user to record his/her own voice for 100 short utterances.
- 5 levels, with overlays
- Computer software for images



### Severe Stages

#### Proloquo2Go (\$189)

(For the I-Phone and I-Pad)

- Provides high resolution symbols and a default vocabulary of over 7000 items
- This device does not have a voice recording option, so the voice is computer sounding
- Made for children, so requires a great deal of programming and customization for individual communication needs
- Very comprehensive and complex
- Difficult to navigate
- Compared to other applications, this one is the most expensive

### Severe Stages

#### Proloquo2Go



## Severe Stages

**Voice 4 U (\$29.00)***(For the I-Phone, I-Pad, I-Pod touch)*

- Offers icons in nine categories
- Can create as many icons and categories as needed
- Can also use their own pictures and recorded voice on the personalized icons.
- Opening the appropriate category of the word they are looking for may be difficult

## Severe Stages

**Voice 4 U**

## Severe Stages

**I can Speak! (\$29.00)***(For the I-Pad)*

- Has both a static and a dynamic area use to produce short sentences
- Can create thousands of simple sentences
- This application is word focused

## Severe Stages

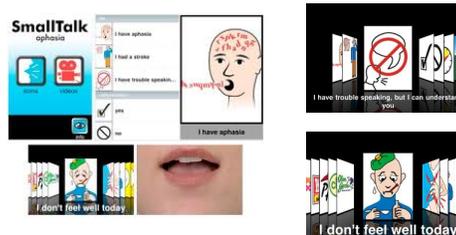
**I Can Speak**

## Severe Stages

**Products by Small Talk (free version available)***(For the I-pod touch or I-Phone)*

- Users can create their own selection of icons, phrases, and videos on the Lingraphica, and SmallTalk Aphasias transfers them to the iPhone or iPod touch
- This application was developed for adults with aphasia (most other devices developed for children)

## Severe Stages

**Lingraphica SmallTalk**

Severe Stages

**Pictello (\$20)**

(for the iPhone & iPad)

- Allows users to create their own photo albums
- Easy to create albums by category
- Can type captions for each picture
- Users can record their own speech for each picture or program read each caption
- Requires some navigation skills to scroll through pictures

*\*\*NEW INFO SINCE CONFERENCE: There is a similar app to Pictello that is free called "Story Creator" by Alligator Apps. You may want to try this one first!*

Severe Stages

**Pictello**



Severe Stages

**Scene&Heard (\$50)**

(for the iPhone and iPad)

- Users can import their own photographs to create scenes
- Users can then record stories and messages to go along with different parts of the picture
- Easy to use and navigate
- Great for customized communication needs

Severe Stages

**Scene&Heard**



Severe Stages

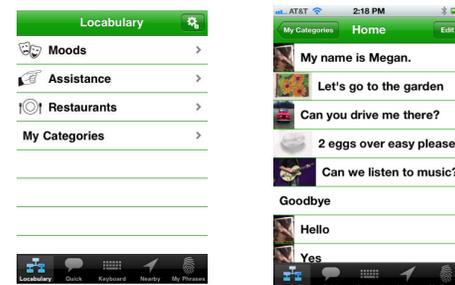
**Locabulary (\$130)**

(for the iPhone & iPad)

- Allows users to combine location and vocabulary to communicate
- Can use current GPS location to associate with a category
- NOT picture based
- **Requires user to construct own sentences**
- Can use pre-stored messages
- Can record own voice

Severe Stages

**Locabulary**



### From the expert...

#### STRATEGIES I USE TO REMEMBER WORDS AND NUMBERS AND TO SPELL WORDS

- 1) Use word cards
- 2) Write the word in upper case when I'm having a hard time remembering it
- 3) Memorize the first letter of a word
- 4) Stop and take time to remember the word
- 5) Close my eyes to help me to concentrate.
- 6) Visualize the word or object
- 7) Trust my intuition
- 8) Take time to think before I speak
- 9) In conversations, practice what I'm going to say in my head before I say it out loud.
- 10) pay attention to the sounds letters make
- 11) Be patient and take my time
- 12) Stop when I'm tired
- 13) When I can't think of a word, I try to think of a sentence the word is used in
- 14) I repeat the words to myself many times
- 15) Carry a small notebook in my purse to make a note of words I'm having a difficult time with
- 16) Use my I phone to learn new means of communicating
- 17) Practice numbers and letters by tracing over them many times
- 18) If all else fails, ask my husband

### Contact Information

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