Identifying Communication Strategies for PPA

Becky Khayum, M.S., CCC-SLP

March 24th, 2012
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 and 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 preferences
- 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
- 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
- Try not to interrupt and only supply a word if your help is requested
- 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
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
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

Copyright © 2012 MemoryCare Corporation. All Rights Reserved. Do Not Copy or Distribute Without Permission
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
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
Strategies for Remembering Proper Nouns

1. Make a list of important people and locations
   - Family members, friends, political figures
   - Street names, stores, restaurants

2. Write a description of each person/place on back of card, with key word on front

3. Have individual quiz self using cards every day (should take about 5 minutes)

4. For any names that are missed, write the word down 5 times for practice

5. Can also be used for common nouns
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
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
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.
Writing Strategies

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

## 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
  - Write content down on piece of paper
  - Have individual type into email
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.
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
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
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
Computer Script Program

http://ricaphasiascripts.digitalcontentcenter.com
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
Communication Books

- Can buy pre-made book
- Can buy computer program to help make book
- Can make yourself using Google images and digital photographs
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-ring 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 pictures of family, friends, and personal items with a digital camera.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>food</th>
<th>hamburger</th>
<th>Pizza</th>
<th>Burrito</th>
<th>Spaghetti</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="food" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="hamburger" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Pizza" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Burrito" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Spaghetti" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>bread</th>
<th>cheese</th>
<th>French fries</th>
<th>hot dog</th>
<th>popcorn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="bread" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="cheese" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="French fries" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="hot dog" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="popcorn" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>fruit</th>
<th>banana</th>
<th>ice cream</th>
<th>cookie</th>
<th>candy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="fruit" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="banana" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="ice cream" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="cookie" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="candy" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>drink</th>
<th>water</th>
<th>juice</th>
<th>soft drink</th>
<th>coffee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="drink" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="water" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="juice" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="soft drink" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="coffee" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Generic vs. Personalized
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
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
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.
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 prescribes the SGD.

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
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
- Very comprehensive and complex
- Compared to other applications, this one is the most expensive
- This is the most popular application used by individuals who have PPA
Severe Stages

Proloquo2Go

Copyright © 2012 MemoryCare Corporation. All Rights Reserved. Do Not Copy or Distribute Without Permission
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

Copyright © 2012 MemoryCare Corporation. All Rights Reserved. Do Not Copy or Distribute Without Permission
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
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 Aphasia 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

Copyright © 2012 MemoryCare Corporation. All Rights Reserved. Do Not Copy or Distribute Without Permission
Severe Stages

Lingraphica ($7,500)
Dynavox ($8,000)
Becky Khayum, M.S., CCC-SLP
President, MemoryCare Corporation

Becky.Khayum@memorycarecorp.com

(773) 904-8447