



**ON WITH LIFE**  
BRAIN INJURY + STROKE + NEURO

## Filling Your Toolbox: Strategies for Communication and Cognition

SMALL STEPS. GIANT STRIDES.

1

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### What is On With Life

- Brain Injury
- Stroke
- Other Neuro
- Abi
  - SLP
  - 5 years
- Jess
  - COTA
  - 11 years

CONFIDENTIAL



2

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Course Objectives

- Gain knowledge with common language and cognition challenges present following neurological incident.
- Learn the top strategies for communicating effectively with a person served with the tools needed to modify in the moment for the greatest communication outcome.
- Increase your ability to engage your person served through motivation and engagement despite cognition and language challenges.
- Collaborative discussion regarding a variety of scenarios with video examples and the best way to help the people you serve.

3

---

---

---

---

---


---

---

---

**Language Challenges**

- Aphasia
  - Expression
    - Writing
    - Verbal
  - Comprehension
    - Reading
    - Auditory
- Apraxia of Speech
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SfPBdzBKl8w>
  - Speech sound errors
- Dysarthria
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xB9NgPZSQFA>
  - Reduced speech intelligibility



4

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---


**Things to Keep In Mind**

**Ways to help them understand you.**

- Know the person before you meet them
- Write it down!
- Keep it simple
- Ask yes/no questions
- Have pictures
- Give models
- Low tech

**Ways to help them communicate**

- Can they:
  - Verbally tell you
  - Write
  - Point- to pictures, words, or objects
  - Thumbs up/down
  - Head nods
  - Eye gaze
  - Gestures
  - Number options on fingers
  - Typing/texting



5

---

---

---

---

---


---

---

---

**Transdisciplinary**

- Why is this important for everyone, not just speech.
  - Therapy- you give them directions for standing, transfers, ADL's, etc. so you need to know how they understand and how they communicate
  - Nursing- you are going to be asking about pain, if they need toileting cares, etc. so again you need to know how they communicate
    - For example: you might ask someone if they are in pain and they say "yes" but if this person is stuck on saying "yes" you need to know because that is not a reliable response
  - How OWL shares their communication level by first completing a yes/no reliability test and sharing their score and how they responded, what support, etc.



6

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### The Best Starter Questions to Use

- If you know about the PS.
  - What was your injury?
  - Where are you from?
  - What is your birthday?
  - Tell me about your family.
  - What day is it?
  - Where were you at before here?
  - What year is it?
- If you don't know much about them.
  - Hobbies
  - Work
  - Likes/dislikes
  - Goals
  - Personal routine preferences



7

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### First Time Interaction Video



8

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Get To Know Mo



9

---

---

---

---


---


---

---

---

Get To Know Mo Continued..



 ON WITH LIFE  
BRAIN INJURY • STROKE • NEURO

10

---

---

---

---

---


---

---

---

Interaction Strategies

- If you feel like your failing, what do you do?
- Acknowledge the elephant in the room :)
- Reassure them
- Can be frustrating but don't give up
- Clarifying what you can
- Sometimes you'll need to circle back later

 ON WITH LIFE  
BRAIN INJURY • STROKE • NEURO

11

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Communication tips to use with all the people you work with

Address the PS, not talking about them in front of them

Always talk to them like they understand

12

---

---

---

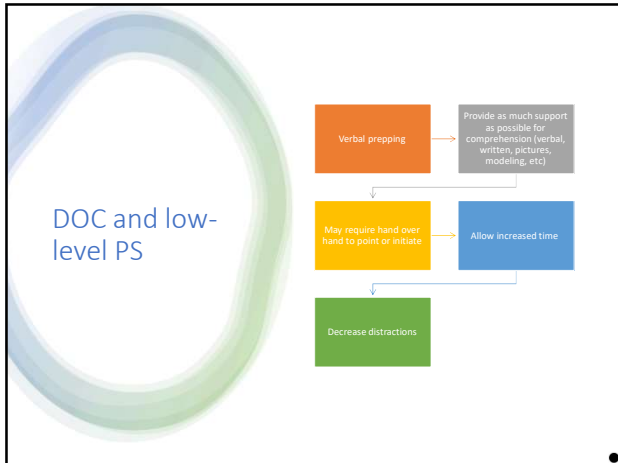
---

---

---

---

---



13

---

---

---

---

---


---

---

---

### Cognitive Challenges

- Awareness to deficits
- Big picture- cause/effect
- Memory/attention
- Slow processing



14

---

---

---

---

---


---

---

---

### Challenges with these impairments

- Refusals
- Rigidity
- Lower frustration tolerance
- These PS thrive on structure and predictability
- Neurobehavioral challenges
- Over helping or jumping in too much (as clinician)



15

---

---

---

---

---

---


---

---

### Refusals or poor participation

- Don't ask, tell
- Offer options
- Provide the why
- Redirection
- Change plan
- Don't get offended
- Be empathetic

- What is causing the refusal
  - Are they not understanding you?
  - Are they trying to tell you something else?
  - Do they not get the purpose?



16

---

---

---

---

---


---

---

---

### Motivation and Engagement

- Get info from families
- What makes them excited?
- WHO makes them excited
- What brings them joy?



17

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Motivation and Engagement Video



18

---

---

---

---

---



---

---

---

## Big take aways

- Carry a whiteboard with you
- Grade communication trials appropriately
- Confirm answers
- Provide as much support as possible
- It will be challenging-don't give up
- Building rapport is SO important
- Collaborate with your team, including nursing
- No silo, just because you are PT/OT doesn't mean you shouldn't have the skills that SP does

19

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Please Reach Out!

- Abi
  - SLP
  - [abi.fortsch@onwithlife.org](mailto:abi.fortsch@onwithlife.org)
- Jess
  - COTA
  - [jessica.blough@onwithlife.org](mailto:jessica.blough@onwithlife.org)

Happy to answer any and all questions!




CONFIDENTIAL

20

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---