Apraxia of Movement

• Most frequently affects individuals after stroke but can be seen with other diagnoses
• Its impact on daily life can vary from a small inconvenience to completely interfering in an individual’s ability to live independently
• Apraxia makes doing simple day-to-day activities difficult either because:
  – The individual has lost the concept or idea of what to do, particularly with what to do with objects – or –
  – The individual knows what to do but is unable to figure out how to do it
• Apraxia is most typically observed during activities that involve several steps – usually during personal care activities (eating, grooming, bathing, dressing) or home management or independent living activities (meal preparation, laundry, cleaning activities, telephone use)
• Examples of what may be observed in an individual with apraxia include:
  – Objects may be used inappropriately
    Example: a toothbrush may be used to shave or a spoon may be used to butter bread
  – Activities are done in the wrong order or omitted
    Example: bread is buttered before toasting it or a tea kettle is put on without water in it
  – Actions remain incomplete
    Example: shampoo is placed on the head and person does not begin to wash
  – Person may appear to be stuck on same action
    Example: after putting on a shirt, individual may then attempt to place pants over their arms and head in same manner
  – Initiation and timing errors
    Example: Movements may appear rushed, abnormally slow or with too much force. Objects may be grasped in awkward or clumsy manner even though the person has object correctly

Talk with your therapist to better understand when and how apraxia most affects you or your family member.

Strategies to manage apraxia in daily life
• Understand that apraxia can be very frustrating
• It is not due to an individual being uncooperative, lazy or unmotivated
• Be aware that an individual’s abilities will likely be better in a familiar environment than in new or unfamiliar situations
• Keep environments simple and as well-organized as possible
• Daily practice of day-to-day skills at home is critical – this means practicing personal care activities, transfer skills, home management skills or any other activities determined to be safe and appropriate by your therapist
• Use the prompting methods taught by your therapist to have the best outcome. Remember that excessive talking can be more confusing to an individual with apraxia.
• Specific strategies recommended:

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