

Auditory Comprehension Strategies

Communication Partner

1. Make sure that the listener can see and hear you.
2. Make sure that background noise (TV, radio and other people) is kept to a minimum when you are speaking. A quiet environment is best.
3. Use gestures (pointing or acting out) with your spoken message.
4. Use pictures, objects or communication books to help convey your spoken message.
5. Use concrete words, short phrases and 1-step instructions when speaking with a survivor.
6. Speak slowly and pause frequently within your sentences. Pause before changing the topic of conversation.
7. Emphasize key words when speaking with the survivor.
8. Speak at a normal level of loudness. The survivor's difficulty understanding language is not because of a hearing loss.
9. Watch for signs of understanding. The survivor may indicate confusion by grimacing or inappropriate verbalizations. When this occurs, rephrase or repeat the request. Writing and/or gesturing may also be helpful.

Survivor

1. Be sure that you are looking at the speaker and can hear him/her.
2. Turn off TV, radio, etc. so you are not distracted and the background is quiet.
3. Watch the speaker's gestures and facial expressions. Ask him/her to act it out.
4. Look at pictures and objects that the speaker may use that go with the message. Ask him/her to show you.
5. Ask the speaker to say one thing at a time and then wait for you to understand it.
6. Ask the speaker to slow down and let you know when he/she is changing topics.
7. Pay attention to the main words and ideas of the message.
8. If the speaker is talking too loud, ask him/her to speak more softly.
9. Let the speaker know when you **do not** understand and when you **do** understand.

Continued

Communication Partner

10. Repeat information as needed. Repeat information in a different way. Use different words that mean about the same thing. Write or draw.
11. Remember to **be patient**. If the message is not understood, try again at a different time. The survivor's level of comprehension may fluctuate during the day due to fatigue.

Survivor

10. Ask the speaker to repeat the information as needed. Ask the speaker to say it in a different way.
11. Be patient with yourself. If you cannot understand the message, try again later. Take a break.

From: "What is it like to have aphasia? A series of simulation activities to educate families, friends and caregivers." Interactive Therapeutics, in press 1999.