

Patients As Teachers

Collaborating With Consumers To Enhance The Communication Skills Of Health Professionals

Ruth Townsend, Senior Speech Pathologist and Stream Leader
Emma Burns, Senior Speech Pathologist

Continuing Care Clinical Service Unit



BACKGROUND Acquired communication disabilities like aphasia affect at least 30% of stroke survivors, which can lead to difficulties with, talking, reading, listening and writing (SCOPE, 2016). A person's experience of healthcare and subsequent healthcare outcomes therefore depend on the effective communication skills of the staff they interact with (Burns, et al 2012).

AIM Conduct staff training workshops in collaboration with people with aphasia (PWA) to:

- Improve the skills and confidence of allied health and nursing staff to communicate with people with communication disability

METHOD Training was organised with the assistance of Nursing and Allied Health Clinical Education Coordinators and delivered in November 2016 and February 2017.

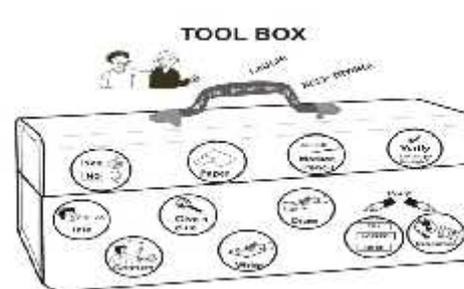
Participants:

60 Rehabilitation and Aged Care Staff	Six People with Aphasia
33 Nurses	5 male
17 Allied Health Staff	1 female
10 Nurse Educators	6mths – 5 years post stroke

Training Program:

1 day workshop program "Supported Conversation for Adults with Aphasia" SCA™ (Aphasia Institute Canada)

Part one: direct training from a speech pathologist to teach the use of a 'toolbox' of strategies such as gesture, drawing, pictures and key words to support people with aphasia to feel respected and participate in conversation more successfully. Use of video vignettes and role plays provided examples and practice.



Part two: Six PWA co-facilitated a conversation practice session that provided opportunity to learn directly from someone living with aphasia and practice using SCA™ communication strategies in context.

Evaluation and Analysis:

Pre and post training questionnaires completed and analysed.

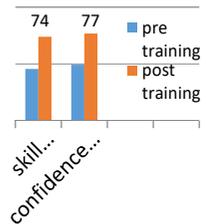
- Self rated measures of skill and confidence (sliding Leichardt scale)
- Listed communication strategies categorised into 11 key areas (and triangulation analysis completed).
- Follow-up survey monkey was completed 1-3 months post training to capture retention of learning.

RESULTS

- Average Perceived Skill Rating: 28% increase
- Average Perceived Confidence Rating: 27% increase
- No significant increase in strategy identification
- Evident shift to more targeted strategies inline with SCA™ teachings

Change in clinical practice

- At 1-3 month post training (*Completed by one third of November workshop participants. February results pending*).
- 100% retention of SCA™ knowledge.
- 90% of respondents indicated that their clinical practice had changed as a result of SCA™ workshop.



Feedback has universally commended the training, in particular the opportunity to learn from patients and consolidate skills within training.

CONCLUSIONS

SCA™ training, including conversational practice with people with aphasia, improves staff self perceived skill and confidence levels. Post training evaluation also points to retention of knowledge over time and self reported change to clinical practice.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Continue roll out of training across continuing care sector. Further research to evaluate knowledge retention and clinical practice change, as well as exploration of different training delivery models

REFERENCES

Burns, M. I., Baylor, C. R., Morris, M. A., McNalley, T. E., & Yorkston, K. M. (2012). Training healthcare providers in patient-provider communication, *Aphasiology*, 26(5), 673-688. doi: 10.1080/02687038.2012.676864 SCOPE website, 2016