

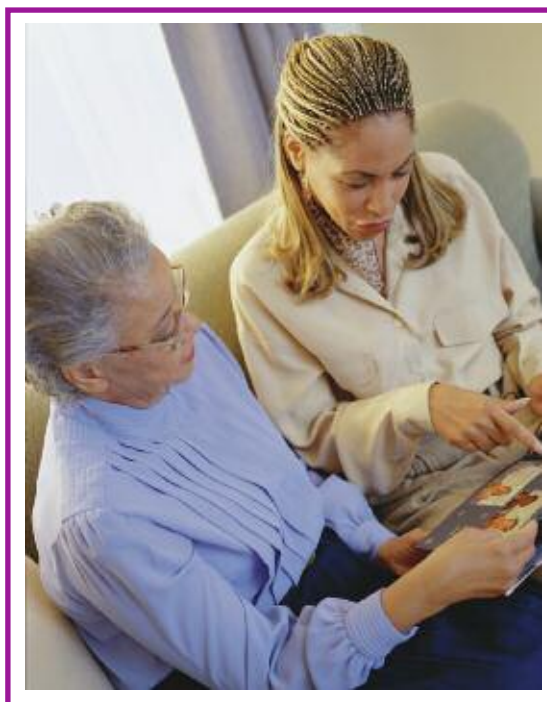
HELPING COMMUNICATION AFTER A STROKE

Having a conversation with someone who has communication problems is just as much a two-way experience as for anyone else.

You both share responsibility for making the conversation successful.

Your communication skills can make a difference.

Here are some things that can be helpful.



General Information

- Do be prepared to **give** the person you want to converse with your full **attention**.
- **Minimise** distractions and background **noise**.
- Position yourself where your face is clearly visible.
- **Reassure** the person you will give them the **time** they need.
- Remember that a person may have **more difficulty** on some days than others, particularly if they are **over tired, upset or under pressure**. If so, offer support and be prepared to wait.
- Remember the other person has **opinions** and **thoughts** which are important and **valid**.
- Difficulty in communicating does not mean the person has impaired intellect – treat them as you would like to be treated.
- Remember that communication is much more than just words; **WATCH** and **LISTEN** to how something is being communicated; it's not **WHAT** you say, it's the **WAY** you say it!!

HEAD OFFICE

3rd Floor, Rosebery House, 9 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh, EH12 5EZ

Tel: 0131 225 6963 Fax: 0131 220 6313 Advice Line: 0845 077 6000

E-mail: admin@chss.org.uk Website: www.chss.org.uk

Scottish Charity No. SC018761

Having a Conversation

- Try to establish a reliable **yes, no** and **maybe** between you. Remember **gesture** may be more reliable than speech.
- Speak **slowly** and **clearly** and at **normal volume**.
- Use short sentences keeping **language simple** and offering **choices** when asking questions.
- Encourage the use of simple **gestures**, thumbs up or down, pointing, miming – such as feeling hot, cold, tired, and hungry for example. Be prepared to support your **own** speech with the use of simple gestures too.
- **Writing** and **drawing** may be helpful.
 - Keep a **pen & paper** handy for both you and the other person to use.
 - Write down **important words** to help focus the conversation.
 - Write down **choices** to help someone pick the right word.
 - Encourage the person to try and write – even a couple of **letters** may help you find the word they are searching for.
 - Write down words which summarise the conversation; the person can then agree/disagree with what **YOU** think has been said.
- Encourage the use of other **resources** such as maps, pictures or photos, diaries, newspapers and calendars. Be prepared to use resources to support your own conversation too.
- Ask for **repetition** – especially if someone's speech is slurred or indistinct.
- Clearly indicate when you have understood – use **facial expressions** and **intonation** to support your speech when conveying meaning, understanding and encouragement.

Remember: *the person with the communication difficulty is usually trying their best to communicate; the person who can make the difference may be **YOU** and how you change **YOUR** communication.*



Things not to do

- **Don't pretend** to understand if you do not. **SAY** you have not been able to understand and **go back** to a point in the conversation where you were both clear.
- **Don't ask other people** for information that the person could provide.
- **Don't speak FOR** the person, presuming that they can't respond / understand.
- **Don't** turn a conversation into therapy or a test by making someone say a word over and over.

**Chest Heart &
Stroke Scotland
supports people
with aphasia**



Where to get more help

- The CHSS Advice Line can be contacted by email, fax and text message as well as by phone:

Email: adviceline@chss.org.uk | Fax: 0131 220 6313

Text: Text 'chss' followed by your message and send to 07766404142

CHSS has a three part aphasia-friendly series 'Your Stroke Journey' which may be useful.

The CHSS Conversation Support Book is also available free to individuals with aphasia. It is an A5 laminated book using pictures and images to assist conversation and communication.



- Ask a Speech and Language Therapist for more specific individual advice.

- **Connect**

16-18 Marshalsea Road, London SE1 1HL

Tel: 020 7367 0840 | Website: www.ukconnect.org.uk

Connect is a charity for people living with aphasia. Their aim is to improve the lives of people living with aphasia and communication disability, equipping them to re-connect with life.

- **Speakability**

1 Royal Street, London SE1 7LL

Tel: 020 7261 9572 | Fax: 020 7928 9542

Email: speakability@speakability.org.uk | Website: www.speakability.org.uk

Speakability is a national charity that supports and empowers people with Aphasia to overcome the barriers they face.

If you would like to speak to one of our nurses in confidence, please call the

Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland Advice Line

Monday – Friday 9.30am – 4.00pm

0845 077 6000