

# Post Stroke Communication

Communication impairments after stroke are very common. The most commonly seen difficulties involve slurred speech (Dysarthria) and language Disorders (Aphasia).

\* *Talk to your Doctor about a referral to be evaluated by a Language Specialist*

## Dysarthria

**If you are a person struggling with SLURRED speech:**

Be mindful to speak slowly and clearly, emphasizing each word (over-articulation or *exaggerated* speech)

Try to speak a little louder and be mindful of taking more frequent deep breaths while speaking.

## Aphasia

**If you are a person struggling with Aphasia:**

Take your time: it may take a while to get the words out

Let people know what works best for you: do you want questions asked in multiple ways? Does it help if the person writes key words down?

Use Assistive devices if they help: bring photos, pen/paper, diagrams, picture boards, etc.

REMEMBER: Getting frustrated is okay. Don't blame yourself if you get stuck or cannot find the right words. Be patient with yourself. Admit you're struggling and try recapping what you have discussed so far or decide whether to carry on or come back to the topic later.

If you have not already worked with a speech therapist, talk to your Doctor about a referral to be evaluated by a Language Specialist.

**If you are communicating with someone who has aphasia:**

Keep it simple: speak in short, simple sentences (but please don't speak down to the person as you might a child)

Be patient: allow plenty of time for the person to respond. Talk WITH him or her, not FOR him or her.

Limit Distractions: turn off TV/radio, close doors or curtains if needed

Confirm what you are hearing, repeat back what you think he or she is saying.

Be creative: try writing, gesturing, pictures and communication tools such as an iPad if you are able.

## Meet the Authors

Jeff Hodgson, ST, and Maggie Lamb, ST, were the contributing authors.

Jeff is a Speech Therapist located in Sacramento and Maggie Lamb, is a Speech Therapist located in Roseville. Both authors have over 20 years each of Hospital based Speech Pathology.



Visit Kaiser Permanente Comprehensive Stroke Community Resource Website: <http://kp.org/sac-valley-stroke-center> . For more information, please contact : Cindy at [Cindy.Centerwall@kp.org](mailto:Cindy.Centerwall@kp.org)