Overcoming Patient-Provider Communication Barriers in Health Care Settings

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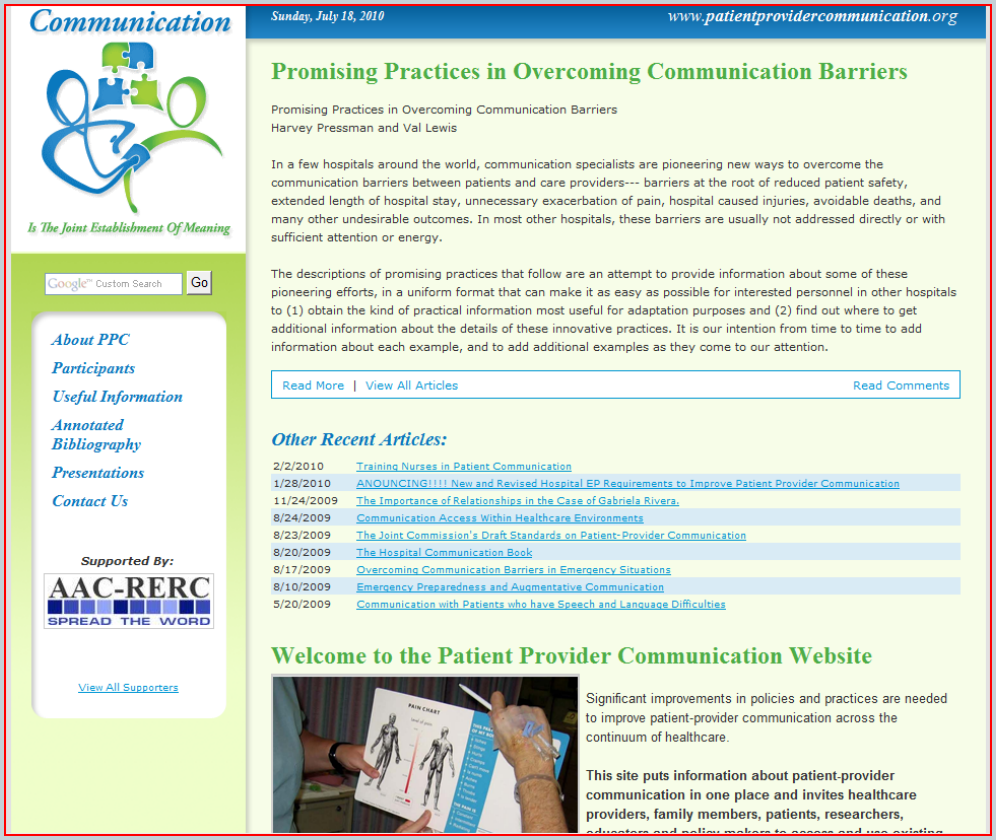
PRESENTED AT ISAAC'S BIENNIAL CONFERENCE IN BARCELONA, SPAIN, JULY 2010

Healthcare Settings

- Dr's Office/Clinic
- First Responders
- Emergency Rooms
- ICU's
- Acute Care Hospital
- Rehab Hospital
- Nursing Home
- Home Health
- Hospice

Patient-provider website

- www.patientprovidercommunication.org
  - Articles
  - Policy statements
  - Examples of materials



Acknowledgements

Thanks to:

United States Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (USSAAC)

Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center on Communication Enhancement- AAC-RERC

Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

Augmentative Communication, Inc.

Central Coast Children's Foundation, Inc.

Take Away Messages

1. Human communication is the ***joint*** *establishment of meaning* using a "socially distributed ecology of public sign systems" (Goodwin, 2003; Wilkins, 2006; Wilkins & Higginbotham, 2005)

2. To be effective, both patients and providers need to be able to participate fully using whatever means enable them to establish meaning.

⟹ Key role for communication enhancement strategies, techniques and technologies.

Take Away Messages

SHIFTING ROLES of AAC COMMUNITY

- Increasing the health literacy skills of people with CCN.
- Understanding and communicating to others the crucial importance of PPC in determining healthcare outcomes.
- Understanding the “added value” that AAC expertise can provide to the treatment of “mainstream” patients.
- Helping to increasing knowledge/skills of health care providers so they can communicate effectively with ALL their patients across healthcare settings using AAC and other communication supports.

Take Away Messages

3. Understanding and communicating to others the crucial importance of P/P communication in determining healthcare outcomes.
4. Understanding the “added value” that AAC expertise can provide to the treatment of “mainstream” patients.

Communication Vulnerable Patients/Patients who can benefit from Communication Supports

- Individuals with
  - Pre-existing hearing, speech, cognitive disabilities who may (may not) have access to communication tools/supports
  - Linguistic differences
  - Cultural differences
  - Limited health literacy
  - Limited ability to read/write
  - Recent communication difficulties occurring as a result of their disease/illness/accident/event
  - Communication difficulties that occur as a result of medical treatment (*e.g.*, intubation, sedation)

Communication Vulnerable Patients

More Likely to	Less Likely to
• Be hospitalized • Experience medical/physical harm, *e.g.*, drug complications • Leave hospital against medical advice • Be intubated if asthmatic • Have increase costs • Delay care • Receive a diagnosis of psychopathology	• Adhere to recommended medication regime • Report abuse • Access and use medical care • Return for follow-up appointments after Emergency Room visits • Be satisfied with care

27 Reasons Hospitals Should Improve Communication Access

- Supportive Evidence (research) in both English and in Spanish

- Razones que los Hospitales deben mejorar el acceso comunicativa para los pacientes vulnerables-con citaciones de reserva
-
- ***Hay una lista cada vez mayor de razones por las que las instituciones del cuidado médico deben dar prioritaria a las acciones que les ayudan para evitar averías de comunicación. Un cuerpo cada vez mayor de los documentos de la evidencia y de la investigación cómo la mejora del acceso de la comunicación para los pacientes vulnerables de la comunicación puede mejorar una variedad de diversos aspectos del cuidado médico. Las razones de la mejora de la comunicación son numerosas y diversas, extendiéndose de reducir errores médicos, la satisfacción paciente cada vez mayor, y la reducción de costes médicos a las averías de comunicación de reducción al mínimo en ajustes de la emergencia, la reducción del número de pruebas innecesarias, y la reducción del índice de reincidencia paciente.***

http://www.patientprovidercommunication.org

Web Essay in Spanish and English

- **Communication Access Within Healthcare Environments.**
  Go to www.patientprovidercommunication.org
- **El Acceso a la Comunicación en el Escenario Medico.**
  Go to www.centralcoastchildrensfoundation.org

Authors: Emily Newman and Harvey Pressman.

Translation: Emily Newman

Health Literacy

WHAT CAN AAC COMMUNITY DO TO IMPROVE HEALTH LITERACY OF PEOPLE WITH CCN?

Health Literacy

- *The degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions*
  (*Health People 2010)*
- Poor health literacy:
  - Increase in sentinel events
  - 6% increase in hospital visits
  - 2-day longer hospital stays
  - 4x higher annual health care costs
- People with CCN at risk for low health literacy rates
  - Increase in sentinel events, prolonged hospital stays, increased costs, decrease in patient "adherence", negatively affecting follow-up care.

Expectations

Typical PP Interview

- Between general practitioner and person without a disability
  - 20 minutes in length (Mann et al., 2001).
- Patient typically has 23 seconds to communicate concerns before being interrupted by the doctor.
  - Marvel *et al.* (1999)

Preparing individuals with CCN

- Introduce oneself and one's communication system;
- Make use of appropriate vocabulary and language to communicate concerns and needs;
- Make use of appropriate communication strategies to ensure that previous health care and current health concerns are understood by the health professional.

Introduce self and communication system: Communication Passport

Transportation

It is important that I do not miss my transportation ride.

I will make every effort to be ready for the pick up time but in a situation where either the pick up is earlier than planned, please tell the driver to wait for me.

If I am late for my pick up, please contact me immediately and inform the driver to wait for me.

Telephone number for the transportation dispatcher:

My transport registration number is

Thank you

Please do the following things when I am communicating with you:

Item	Yes	No
Say the item that I point to out loud		
Do not guess what I mean until I am finished		
Guess if you think you know what I mean		
Give me time to think about what I want to say		
Write down what I am pointing to		
Do not interrupt me		

Developed by ACC

www.accpc.ca

HOW I COMMUNICATE

My name is[1]

I have difficulty speaking but I can hear and understand what you say.

LET'S COMMUNICATE

THINGS TO KNOW WHEN COMMUNICATING WITH ME

- Talk to me like an adult
- Speak directly to me, not to the person who may be accompanying me
- Do not speak loudly, slowly or in a condescending manner
- Ask me if I want someone to help me communicate my messages to you – see list of facilitators.
- Give me time to communicate

REMEMBER

- I can make my own decisions
- I need you to respect my privacy at all times. Please do not discuss issues regarding me with other people unless I give you permission.
- I need you to keep me informed of everything that is going on.
-
-

Emergency Contacts	
Contact	Tel #

Communication Facilitators	
Contact	Tel #

IF YOU THINK I NEED ASSISTANCE, ASK ME:

- Is this an emergency?

If yes, find out if I need you to call someone in my emergency list, my transportation, an ambulance, or the police?

- Is there a problem with your wheelchair?

If yes, follow these instructions:

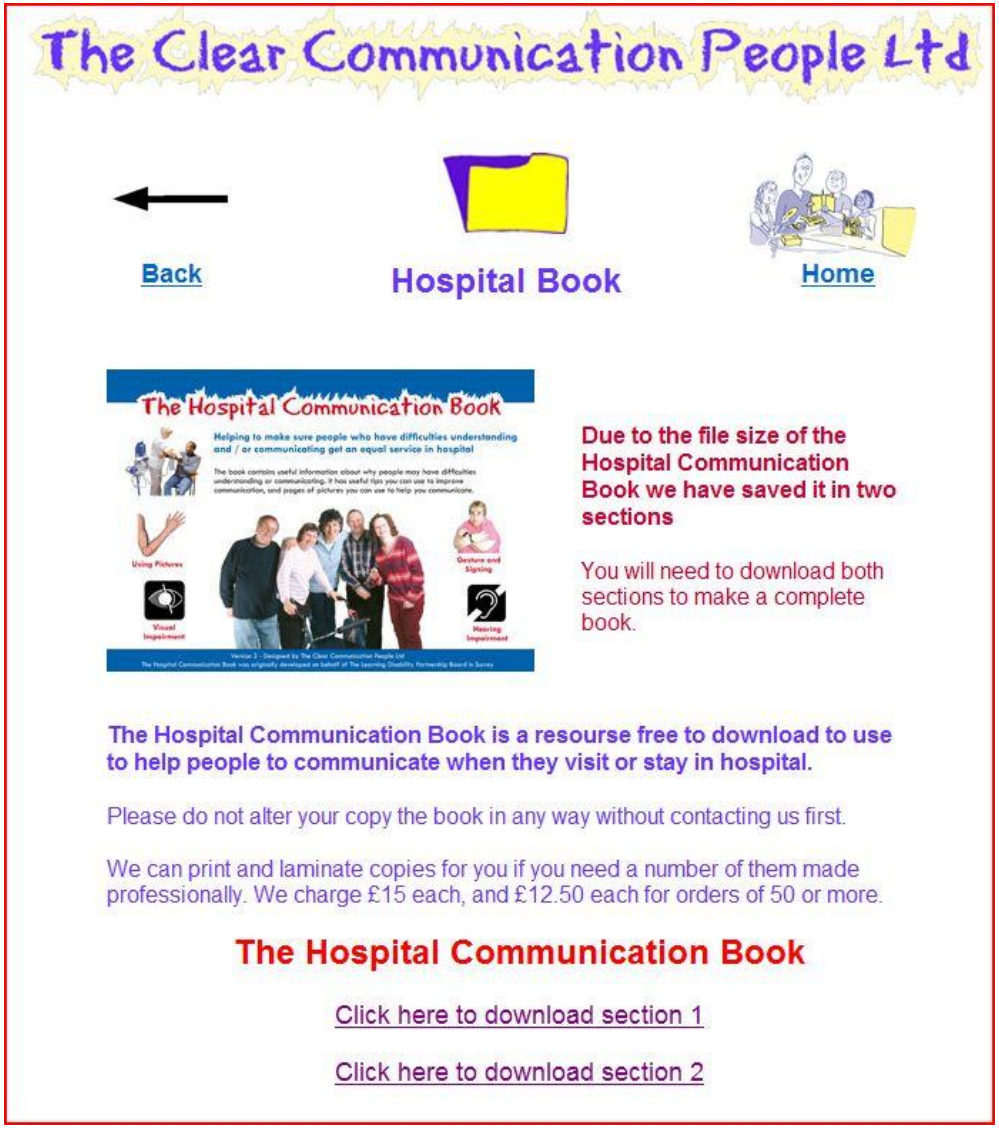
-
-
-
-

Do you need some personal assistance?

If yes, it could be:

-
-
-
-

http://www.accpc.ca/pdfs/passport.pdf



www.patientprovidercommunication.org/index.cfm/article_6.htm

Making use of appropriate communication strategies

Talkback Health Passport

a Poet..... Health Passport Project inspires a Po

Home Health Passport For You For Carers For Health Professionals Survey Health Passport C
Other Health Projects Contact Us

Hello

Welcome to the Health Passport website.

In Buckinghamshire, people with a learning disability have been using **Health Passports** since 2005.

The **Health Passport** was made for and with people with a learning disability.

On this website you will be able to find out more about the **Health Passport** and how you can get one.

talkback@talkback-uk.com

A summary **for professionals** can be found at the back

NHS Health Passp

This Health Passport contains private information and belongs to:

please stick a picture of yourself here

I need to have my Health Passport when I visit:
a doctor
a nurse
a hospital
or have other health appointments

1. Important information
2. Support
3. Tablets and Medicine
4. Body (physical health)
5. Thinking and feeling (mental & emotional health)
6. Communication
7. More about me
8. Hospital information
9. Getting around
10. Health diary
11. Health Action Plan
12. About this Health Passport
13. New pages
14. Professionals summary

What can AAC community do to influence use of AAC strategies/tools in Healthcare

INCREASE ABILITY OF PROVIDERS TO COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY WITH ALL PEOPLE WHO EXPERIENCE COMMUNICATION PROBLEMS BY INCREASING THEIR USE OF AAC TOOLS AND STRATEGIES ACROSS SETTINGS

Adaptive Equipment Tool Kit

(www.aactechconnect.com)

- Pocket Talker & Hearing Aid Trouble Shooting Guide
- Magnification Glass
- Modified Call Bell & "How To" instructions
- Vidatek Communication Board
- English & Spanish
- Letter/ Picture Boards
- English & Spanish
- Clipboard & Dry Erase Board with Writing Strategies

On The Spot

Debby McBride & Juli Pearson

Table II. Some items from the On The Spot Communication Tool Kit

PocketTalker & accessories	**Magnifier page**	**Clip board**	**Dry erase board**
			
Amplified sound increases hearing ability. Useful when hearing aids are unavailable.	Enlarges text so patient can read if glasses are unavailable.	Holds paper, communication displays, forms, instructions, *etc.* Has helpful tips on the back.	Write/draw messages. Supports comprehension and expression. Has helpful tips on the back (shown above).
Picture communication boards: English/Spanish	**English/Spanish cards**	**Health care communication board tablet**	**Vidatak EZ communication boards**
			
Point to messages, symbols, words, pain scale and alphabet.	16 cards with useful words and phrases in English and Spanish, *e.g.*, comfort, orientation, pain, *etc.*	Point to messages, symbols, words, pain scale and alphabet. English only.	Point to specific messages. Has pain scale, alphabet and words. Available in 17 languages and a picture board.

Kit de Communication

by Elisabeth Negre

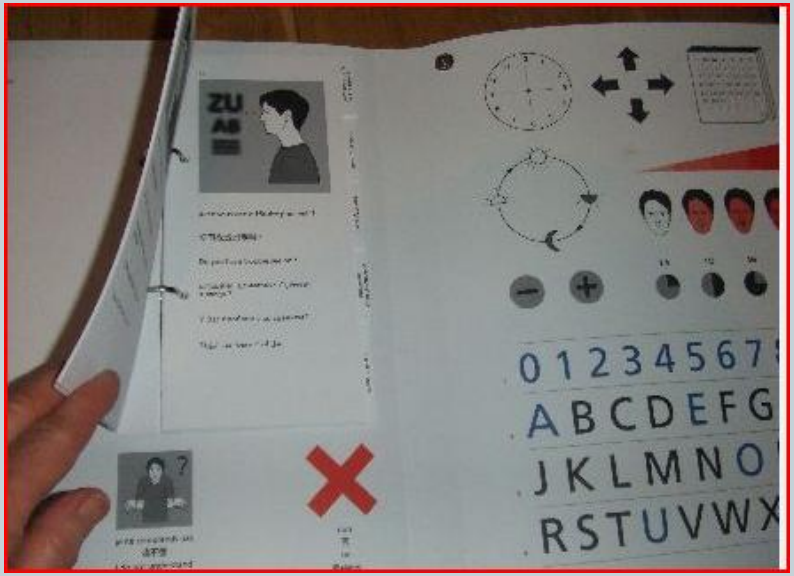
Kit de communication

Mieux communiquer pour mieux soigner :
« le Kit de communication de l'AP-HP »

L'Assistance Publique –Hôpitaux de Paris annonce le 11 fevrier 2010 (date anniversaire de la loi du 11 fevrier 2005 !) la publication d'un kit de communication permettant d'améliorer la communication et ainsi la prise en charge des personnes ayant des difficultés d'expression et /ou de compréhension de manière définitive ou transitoire, dans la situation de consultation hospitalière.

Ce kit est le fruit d'un groupe de travail conduit par la Mission Handicap de l'AP-HP et constitué de médecins urgentistes (c'était leur demande initialement), de professionnels du secteur sanitaire et médico-social travaillant auprès des personnes handicapées et d'associations. L'association des paralysés de France avec la présence d'Elisabeth Negre, conseillère technique en Communication Alternative, a grandement participé à l'élaboration et aux nombreux débats qui ont abouti à cette création.

Les domaines de la surdité, de la déficience intellectuelle, de l'autisme, du polyhandicap étaient également participants.

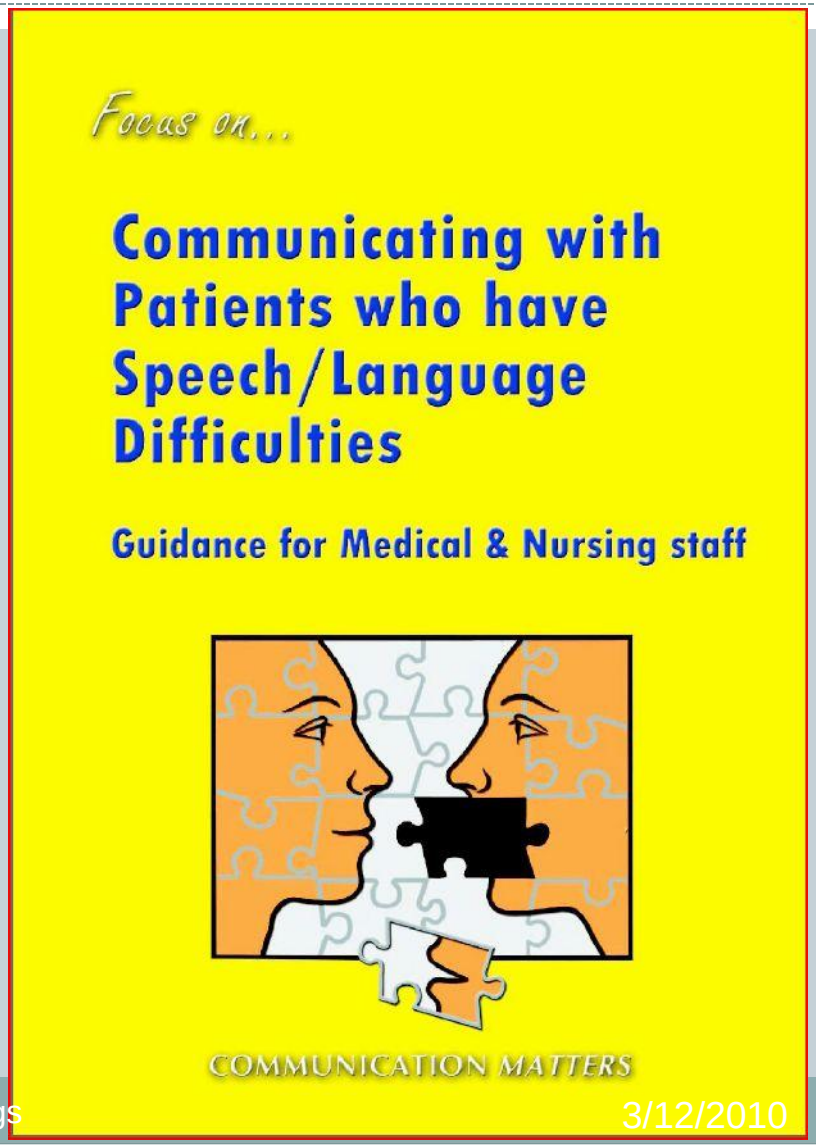


- 20 pictograms
- Loose-leaf sheets or dialogue, reflecting questions most often asked during a medical examination
- Ring-binder that invites carers to offer other forms of communication
- Tools to complete questions or elicit responses (yes-no, ABC, pain scale).

Subtitled in English, Russian, Mandarin Chinese and Arabic languages,

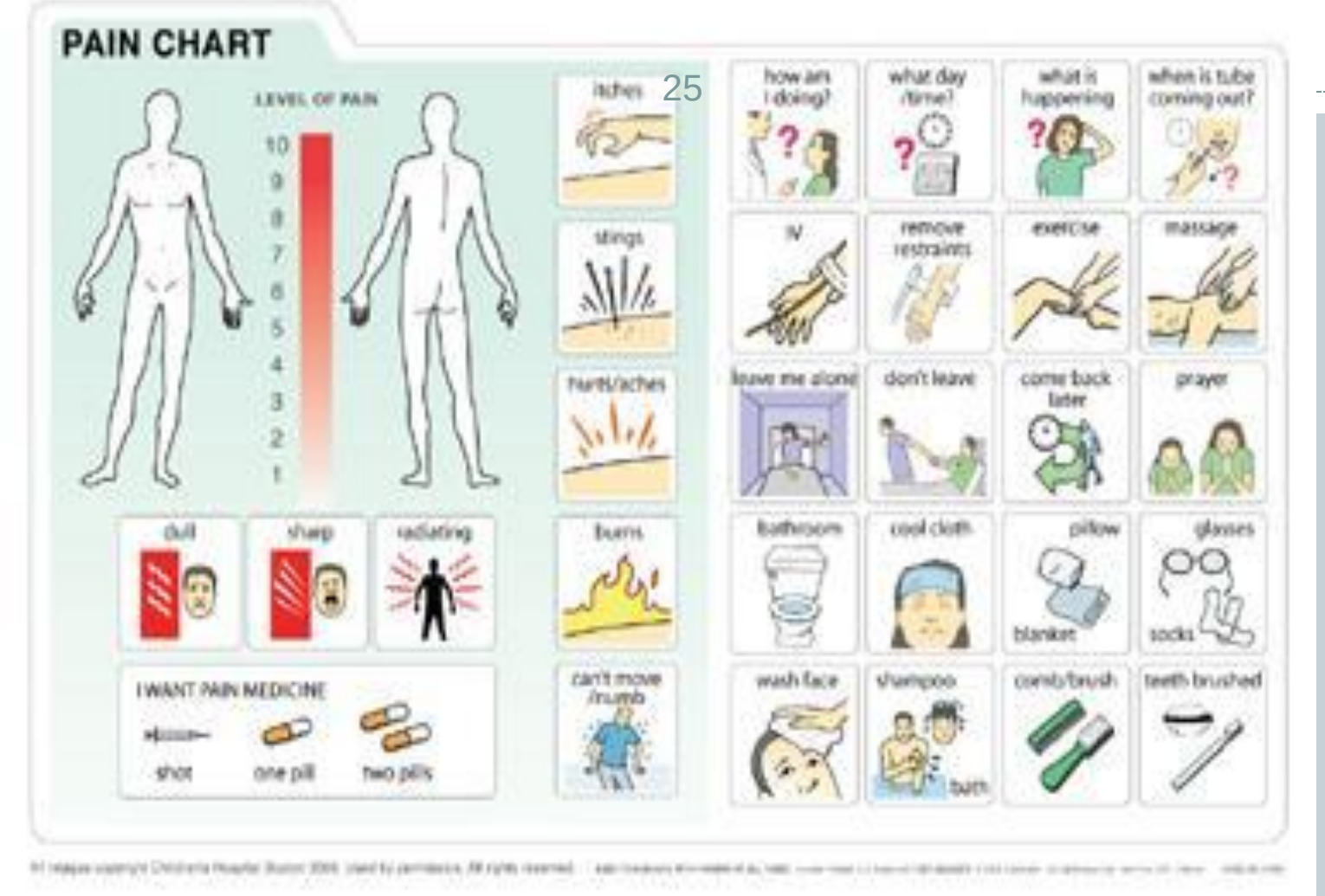
Communication Matters

- To download
  - www.communicationmatters.org.uk/page/focus-on-leaflets
  - www.patientprovidercommunication.org/index.cfm/article_2.htm

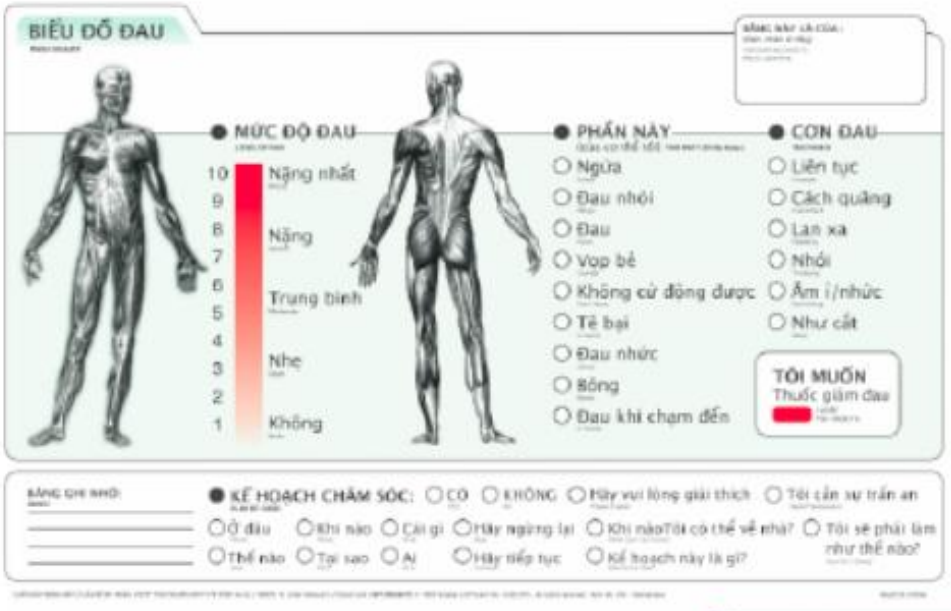


Making use of appropriate vocabulary to communicate concerns and needs

http://www.vidatak.com



http://www.vidatak.com



Vietnamese

Spanish

http://www.vidatak.com/

Letter Cue Board

THE WORD BEGINS WITH….

Q W E R T Y U I O P

A S D F G H J K L

Z X C V B N M Start again

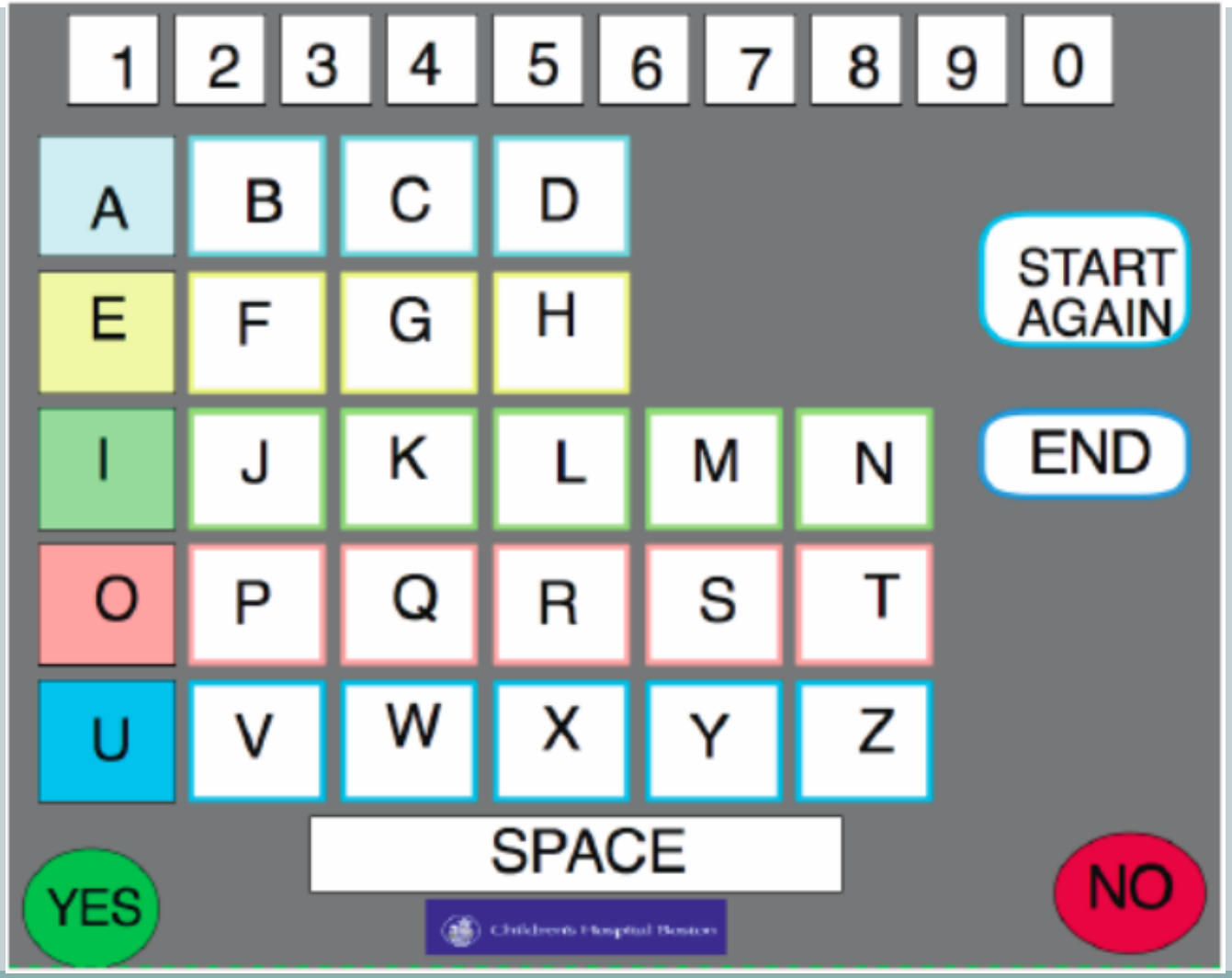
br cr fr gr tr pl str Next word

bl cl fl gl sw dw tw End

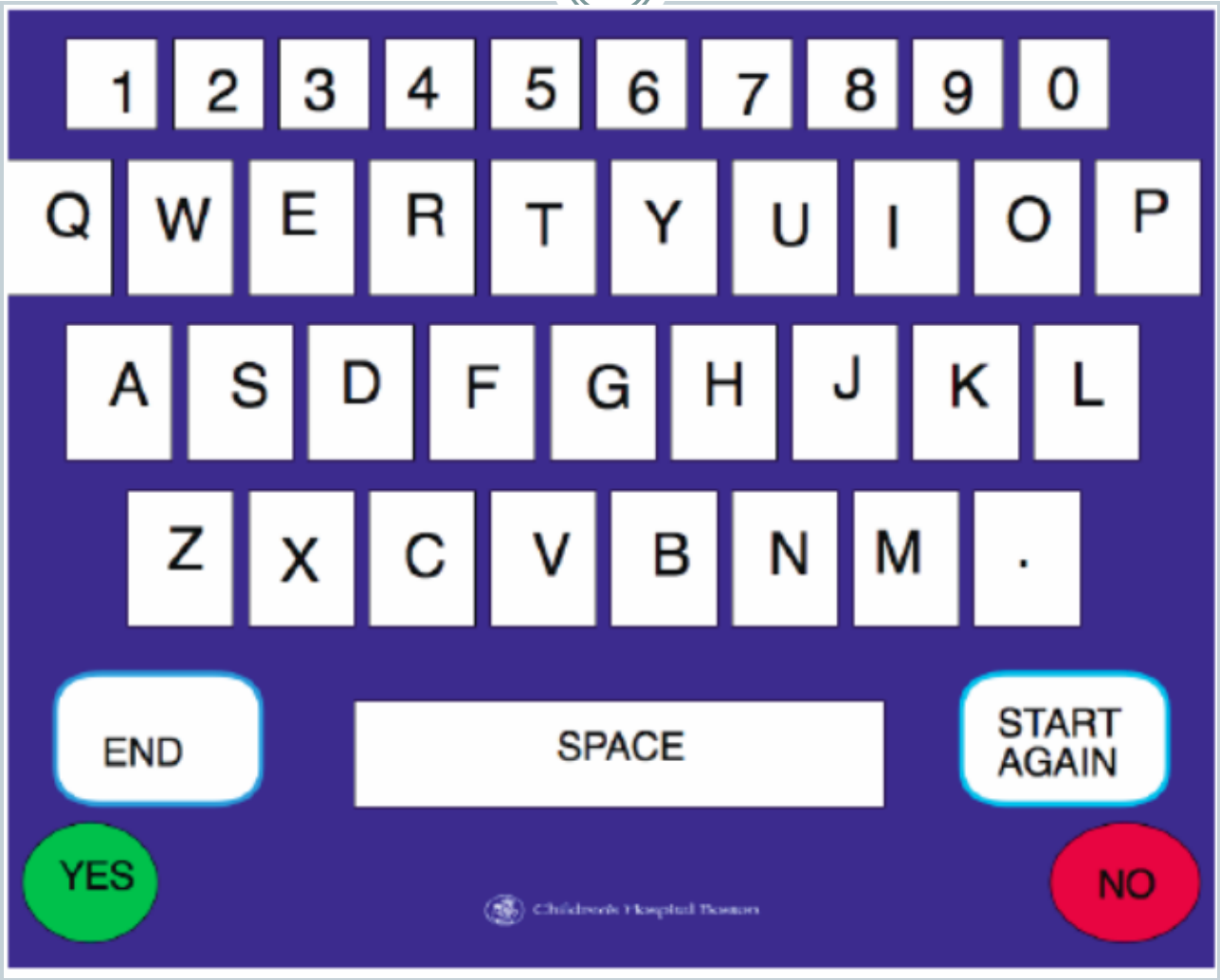
sl sc sk sm sn sp

sw squ spl spr scr

Partner Assisted Scanning Spelling Board



Direct Selection Spelling Board



Name: Date:

Writing Strategies

Writing can be a successful way to communicate when speaking is not possible.
Here are ways to make it easier.

- Help the patient **sit upright**
- Position a **pillow** or towel under the patient's **writing arm/ elbow** for support
- Place a pillow on the patient's lap to prop up a **clipboard or dry erase board**
- A patient may find it easier to use their **strongest hand** for writing, even if it is not their dominant hand
- Use **white paper** vs. lined paper
- Use a **felt tip pen or thin marker** instead of a ball point pen or pencil, as it may glide easier
- Encourage the patient to **print** rather than use cursive
- Encourage the patient to **print LARGE** and **space out** the letters and words

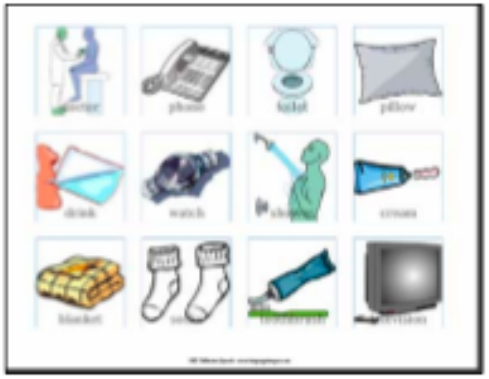
Call_____ for questions/comments.
Speech Therapist

Magnification Glass

A magnification glass can be especially helpful if an individual does not have their glasses with them, and/or if they've had a new diagnosis affecting their visual acuity. For other visual perceptual issues, consult Occupational Therapy.

Modification: Visual Enlargement

Language Images



The website www.languageimages.com allows you to create custom communication boards with "adult-like" images. The boards come in various sizes ranging from 3- 35 images on a page (depending on a patients visual and/or cognitive status). You are able to immediately download and print for use. It doesn't take long to create a custom board, and the website contains many pre-made boards as well. Example boards are above. The text can be customized and/or removed as appropriate for the patient, and you can print in color or black & white.


I need to go


Help me brush
my teeth


I'm cold/ hot


Can I eat/drink


Can you make
a call for me


Can you help
me clean up


doctor
phone
toilet
pillow
drink
watch
shower
cream
blanket
socks
toothbrush
television

Go Talk Overlay Software

This software allows you to create custom communication boards. There are 4000+ images (that include photos and symbols), and you can also paste your own images into the program. The overlay cells can contain an image, text in any language or both. Multiple editing features let you change color, size, background, font or text, and move, enlarge, rotate and crop pictures. There are templates included for the GoTalk (see "Modifications" section).

Ordering Information for the Go Talk Overlay Maker Software

Phone #: 1.800.327.4269
Fax #: 1.800.942.3865

Price: $79.00

Address:
P.O. Box 930160
Verona, Wisconsin 53593-0160

Website: www.attainmentcompany.com

Specifically:
http://www.attainmentcompany.com/xcart/product.php?productid=16134&cat=0&page=1

Critical Communicator (in Spanish too)

The Critical Communicator is a booklet of pictures (e.g. nurse, suction, bathroom), letters and commonly used words. These are available in English and ***Spanish.***

Ordering Information for the Critical Communicator

Phone #: 1.800.253.5111
Fax #: 1.330.923.3030

Price: $23.00

Address:
P.O. Box 1805
Stow, Ohio 44224-0805

Website: http://interactivetherapy.com

Specifically: http://www.interactivetherapy.com/New%20Merchant/communicators.htm

Daily Communicator Pocket Size (in Spanish)

These Pocket Communicators come in a "word" (blue) and "picture" (green) version, and have categorized lists of vocabulary based on topics such as "family", "meals", "action words", "hygiene", etc. These come in both English *and* ***Spanish***, and the "picture" version can be helpful for other non-English speakers as well.

Ordering Information for the Daily Communicator (Pocket Size)
Spanish Version

Phone #: (800) 253-5111
Fax #: 1-330-823-3030

Price: $23.95
Item # W105

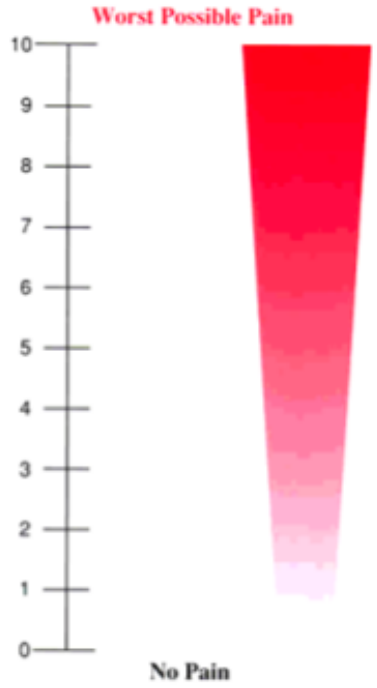
Address:
Interactive Theraputics
P.O. Box 1805
Stow, Ohio 44224-0805

Website: www.interactivetherapy.com

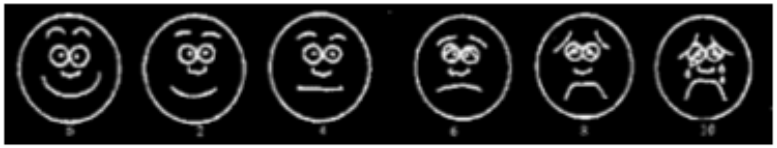
Specifically: http://interactivetherapy.com/New%20Merchant/communicators.htm

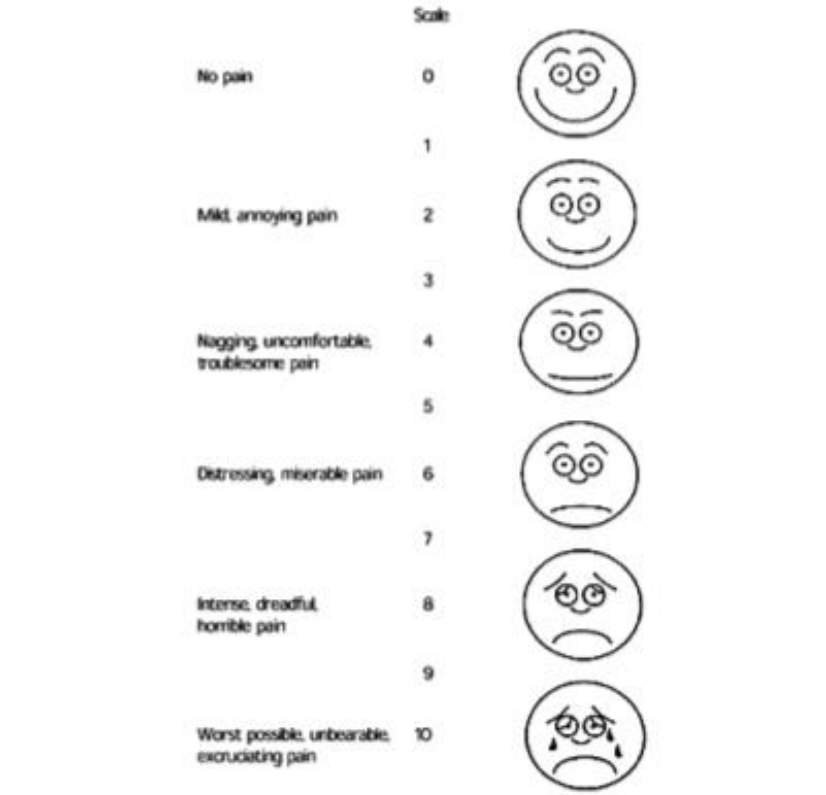
Pain Scales

These are some examples of pain scales that patients can use to indicate their level of pain. The hospital or health care setting may have specific pain scales available as well. The EZ Communicator by Vidatek and the Critical Communicator also have pain scales. Once you find one that works for a patient, you may want to cut it out and put it on a clipboard, or attach it to a file folder, and leave it near the patient for quick access.


Worst Possible Pain
10
9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1
0
No Pain


0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
No Pain
Worst Pain




Scale
No pain
0
1
Mild, annoying pain
2
3
Nagging, uncomfortable, troublesome pain
4
5
Distressing, miserable pain
6
7
Intense, dreadful, horrible pain
8
9
Worst possible, unbearable, excruciating pain
10


0
NO HURT
1
HURTS LITTLE BIT
2
HURTS LITTLE MORE
3
HURTS EVEN MORE
4
HURTS WHOLE LOT
5
HURTS WORST

Pocket Talker

The Pocket Talker is a helpful tool for people with hearing loss, who benefit from amplification. Easy to use instructions: place ear piece in patients ear, turn volume to adequate level, and speak into microphone.

Be sure to suggest an Audiology consult if appropriate.

Warning: If the ear piece gets too close to the speaker there will be loud feedback from the device.

Ordering Information for the Pocket Talker Deluxe Headphone Set

Phone #: 1. 888 432 0874
Fax #: 1. 602 926 2653

Price: $134.00

Address:
P.O. Box 3448
Flagstaff, AZ 86003

Website: www.abbn.com

Specifically: http://www.abbn.com/mm5/merchant.mvc?

Policy and Practice

THIS IS WHERE RUBBER HITS THE ROAD!

POLICY

- The Joint Commission New Standard. Effective January 2011
  Advancing effective communication, cultural competence & patient-centered care

- ***A Roadmap for Hospitals***

  www.jointcommission.org

PRACTICE

- Books
- Newsletters
- Articles
- Presentations
- Ongoing Research
- New and ongoing clinical practice

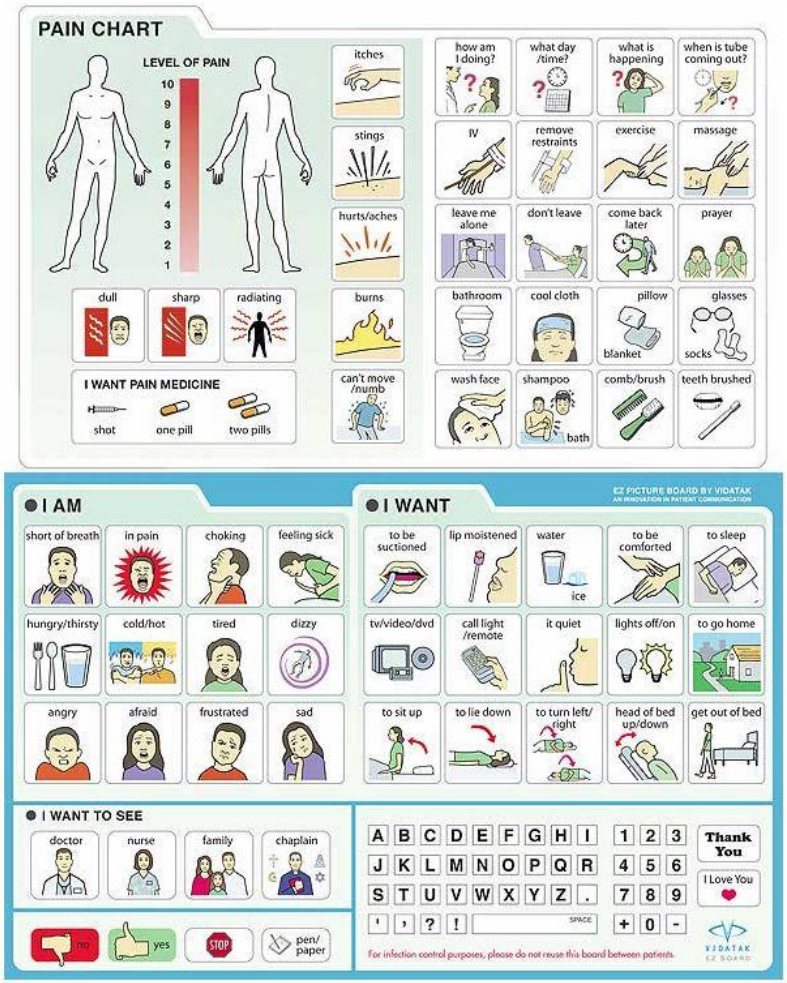
Presentations at this conference

- Effectiveness of AAC strategies within specialized nursing care departments, LSU Health Center/Tulane Medical Center, LA: Banajee, Sudkamp, Diannitto
- Murses' perspectives on the "big 5" basic needs communication in hospital, The University of Queensland-Australia/University College-Molde-Norway: Hemsley, Balandin, Worrall
- Providing health care providers consistent AAC knowledge/materials for critical care pediatric patients, Children's National Medical Center-DC: Quinn, Ritthaler, Stuart
- Facilitating people with mental health and complex communication needs to access medical consultations, Castlebeck Care, Dundee/Tayside Primary Health Care Trust (UK): Macer, Fox
- AAC assessment and feature matching in pediatric icu and acute care, Children's Hospital Boston-West Roxbury: Costello, Pritchard

Presentations at this conference

- Developing an AAC system for hospital emergency rooms in Saudi Arabia, Dar Al Hekma College-Jeddah (Saudi Arabia): Bugshan, Al-Saadi, Al-Sayed, Alasseri
- TEAACH: Preliminary results from focus groups with nurse practitioners, University of Dundee (UK), Høgskolen i Molde (Norway): Cummins, Waller, Balandin2, Kroll
- Contributions of AAC during nursing consultation, Universidade Federal de São Carlos-UFSCar (Brazil), Centro Universitário Rio Preto-UNIRP, Faculdade de Medicina de Rio Preto-FAMERP: Moreschi, Fernando, Bello, Biroli, Watanabe, Almeida, Almeida.
- AAC in a nursing setting: intensive care, neurology physiotherapy and pneumology units, S. Bassiano Hospitals (Italy): Cerantola1, Polita, Di Natale.
- Evolving AAC and AT provision during neurological rehabilitation for locked-in syndrome: A case study, Royal Hospital for Neuro-Disability-Putney (UK): Viera, Rossi, Bache, Cullen, Henson, Senghani, Derwent

Recent activities and their impacts



Picture Communication Board

- Vidatak Boards for use in ICUs with children
  - John Costello and Lance Patak
- Translation of boards into Spanish, Vietnamese
  - Gulf Coast Project USSAAC
- Activities related to Emergency Preparedness
  - Communication4ALL (Diane Bryen/AAC-RERC)

Augmentative Communication News (Vol 21, #2)

www.augcominc.com

- Information about
  - Promising practices
  - The Joint Commission Standard and Implementation Manual
  - Tools of the trade

Augmentative Communication News ACN

August 2009

Volume 21
Number 2

Upfront

Effective communication is recognized as a priority across the healthcare continuum because it directly affects the quality of patient care, safety, medical outcomes and patient satisfaction.[1] Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) techniques, strategies and devices can significantly alleviate communication problems and barriers and should be a major component of the arsenal of communication resources available across healthcare settings. While typically designed for people with complex communication needs (CCN), simple communication displays, speech generating devices (SGDs), eye gaze techniques, special call alarms and alphabet boards can help many other communication vulnerable patients reducing medical errors, lessening the length of hospital stays, increasing patient safety and lowering costs.[1,2] Communication barriers in healthcare settings have many causes.

Language issues. Language and cultural differences often underlie communication problems in healthcare settings.[3] For example, many people in the U.S. do not speak English as their primary language. Also, those who are deaf/hard of hearing often have difficulty communicating with healthcare workers. Trained interpreters can help these individuals negotiate the healthcare system.[4] AAC strategies and assistive technologies can also help mightily.

Stress, confusion and psychiatric conditions. Medically-related situations may trigger emotional responses in patients and/or in providers that make effective and efficient communication difficult. AAC strategies, tools and the training needed to use them well can support improved interactions. Increasingly first responders and emergency personnel depend on AAC tools and strategies to communicate more effectively with some of their patients.[5]

Lack of access to auxiliary aids. People who rely on hearing aids, glasses and/or AAC technologies may not have access to them in health-related situations. As a result, interactions with healthcare providers may be difficult. Simple assistive technologies can augment vision and hearing when glasses and hearing aids are unavailable. Generic low-tech AAC displays, devices and strategies can also help.[6-11]

Medical interventions. Medical interventions (e.g., intubation or a tracheostomy) may result in a temporary loss of speech. In addition, patients may have injuries or conditions that cause

Continued on page 2

Clinical News

Communication access across the healthcare continuum

Can you imagine nurses and other healthcare providers routinely using simple AAC approaches as a way to support *all* patients who experience communication difficulties? This is beginning to happen. In fact, the train is leaving the station and the AAC community should do more than just sell tickets. It's time to climb aboard.

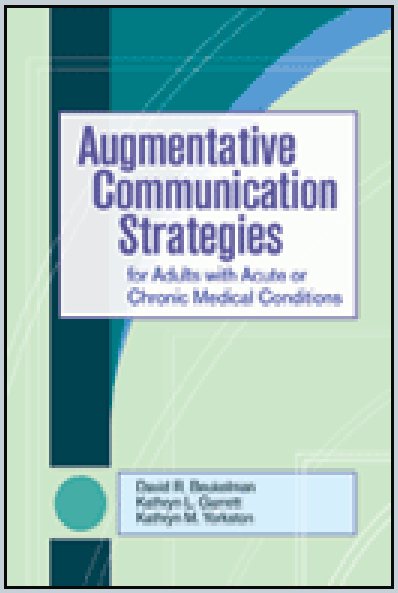
Background

Early in the development of the field, the AAC community developed and encouraged the use of AAC devices, aids and strategies. Back then, we focused primarily on school-aged children and adults with motor impairments (*e.g.*, cerebral palsy and motor neuron disease.) Today, we've expanded our vision and AAC approaches are widely utilized with individuals—across the age span—who have communication challenges secondary to cognitive, language, physical and multiple disabilities. This article suggests we take another step forward and use AAC for *anyone* who is "communication vulnerable," i.e., struggles to communicate in a particular setting. We can begin this journey in healthcare settings, where

Continued on page 2

inside this issue

Other Resources



- *Augmentative Communication Strategies for Adults with Acute or Chronic Medical Conditions* Book with CD Rom
- University of Nebraska website - http://aac.unl.edu
  - Books, aphasia resources, visual scene display resources, demographics, Speech Intelligibility test
- AAC-RERC website and webcasts – www.aac-rerc

To be in touch…

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WWW.PATIENTPROVIDERCOMMUNICATION.ORG

WWW.AUGCOMINC.COM

WWW.CENTRALCOASTCHILDRENSFOUNDATION.ORG

WWW.AACTECHCONNECT.COM