

Easy Spoken Language. A speech pathology perspective

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Communication is two way and interactive. Behaviour is communication.

It does not require language. Not everyone develops language, yet that person can communicate.

Speech pathology expertise include assessing and remediating all aspects of a persons' communication including all aspects of how a person uses spoken communication, spoken and written, comprehension, reading and writing. It may be working with an individual or it may be working with communication partners to support them to modify what they are to enhance an individual's communication.

In my clinical experience I have worked with many people who do not speak. Some can understand their world, like many people in all our communities. Some require multiple supports to assist them to understand their world.

Communication is more than language. You use a range of skills including, but not limited to

- understanding or comprehending words, sentences and conversations
- knowing how words are put together in phrases and sentences for meaning
- body language and facial expression
- natural gesture and sign
- the environment you are in, and the objects around you
- pictures and words around you
- voice and tone
- planning, memory, reasoning
- life experiences
- previous success in communicating in general or with a specific person.

You also need to know and use a range of different social functions, called pragmatics.

To use spoken words, you have developed skills in how to make sounds and combine them to make words and sentences. But if you are not able to communicate effectively or all the

time with speech, there are a range of other tools called augmentative and alternative communication or AAC you can use to develop your language. This is supporting a person to communicate in their best way. It is not a separate entity to language.

Effective communication requires communication partners who know how to modify their communication to meet your needs. We all do this in all our communication interactions. But when you have more limited skills, such as an acquired brain injury or intellectual disability your reliance on your communication partner knowing and using these strategies leads to more positive and effective communication interactions.

There are many well developed and highly researched frameworks to support effective communication interactions already in the literature. It is more than the spoken language that the person or their communication partner uses or does not use.

How to communicate using spoken language, easy or not, is already in the literature. There is a need for this audience to collaborate more broadly with professionals such as speech pathologists, who work with people who have varied challenges in their spoken and written communication.

This paper will challenge you to consider what is already in the literature about language and effective interactive (spoken language) communication strategies, and what is inherently missing with such a label. Based on this new knowledge, I ask this audience what they think is still missing that there is a drive to create a new label, Easy Spoken Language.