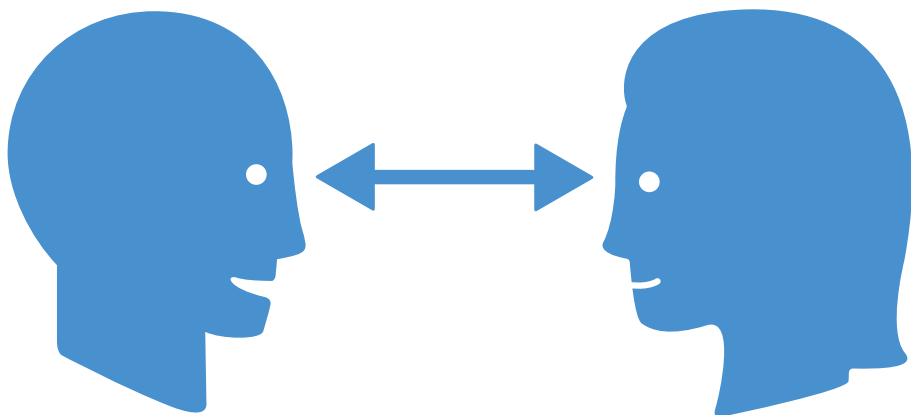


Communicating

after a brain injury



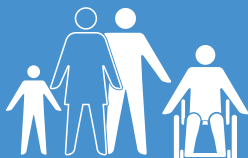
IN THIS BOOKLET

- Aphasia
- Apraxia of speech
- Dysarthria
- Communication, thinking and social skills
- Tips for you
- Tips for others

Brain Injury Series

Headway and people with a brain injury wrote this booklet.

Thank you to everybody who helped.



The design is based, wherever possible, on the 'Accessible Information Guidelines for People with Aphasia' by the Stroke Association (2012) www.stroke.org.uk



If you have any comments or suggestions contact Headway:



 1890 200 278 or 01 6040 800

 info@headway.ie

 www.headway.ie

Please note: You should not consider the information in this booklet as a substitute for getting advice from a Speech and Language Therapist or other professional.

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Tips	page 18
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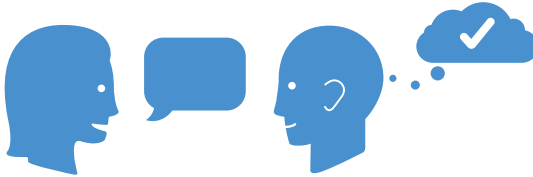
Communication

Communication is a **two-way** process.



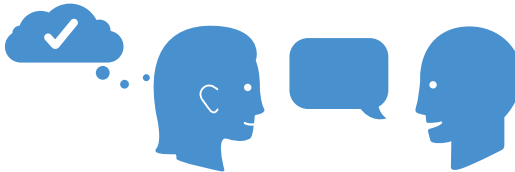
.....

Communication means **understanding** other **people**.



.....

Communication means other **people** **understanding you**.



.....

Communication also means **taking** in **information**.

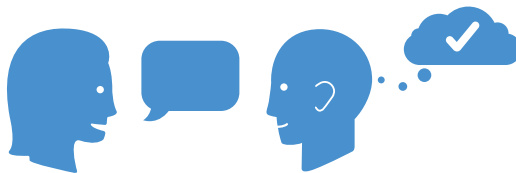
How do we communicate?

We **communicate**:
by **speaking**



.....

by **listening**



.....

by **reading and writing**



.....

and by **seeing**.



How do we communicate?

We **communicate** with **body language**.



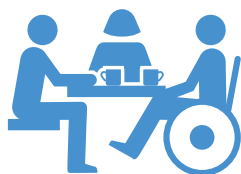
.....

Communication also uses **thinking skills**.



.....

Communication uses **social skills**.



Examples of **social skills** are:

- **Allowing other people** to **talk**.
- **Not saying things** that may **offend** other **people**.
- **Standing** at the **right distance** from other **people**.

Common changes after a brain injury

1. **Changes** in language
Aphasia (page 5)
2. **Changes** in speech
Dysarthria (page 7)
Apraxia of speech (page 8)



3. **Changes** in **Thinking skills (page 13)**



4. **Changes** in **Social skills (page 17)**



Aphasia

Aphasia affects **language**.

In **most people** the **left side** of the **brain** controls **language**.



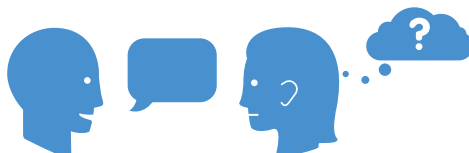
.....

Aphasia can affect:
talking



.....

Aphasia can affect:
understanding



Aphasia can affect:
writing



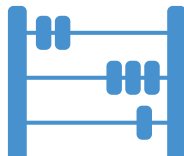
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reading



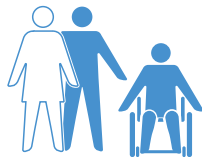
.....

and **using numbers.**



.....

Aphasia is **different** for **different** people.



Dysarthria

Dysarthria is a **speech difficulty**.

Dysarthria is caused by **muscle weakness**.

The **muscle weakness** is caused by **nerve damage** after a **brain injury**.

.....

Your **speech** may be **slurred**.



Hello

.....

Your **speech** may be **quiet**.



Hello

.....

Your **speech** may be **slow**.



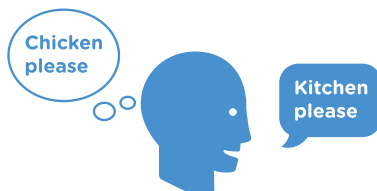
H-e-l-l-o

Apraxia of speech

Apraxia of speech is a **difficulty coordinating** the **muscles** used for **speech**.

.....

You may **mix up sounds** in words.



.....

Longer words are more **difficult** —
for **example**:



.....

It may help to **break up** longer words.





General tips to help your communication

Try the **tips** out. Use the **tips** that **work**. 

Choose a **quiet place** to talk.

Turn off **distractions** in the **background**.



Talk **one-to-one** where possible.



Keep **eye contact**.



Ask the **other person** if they **understand**.



Try to **limit conversations** when you feel **tired**.



Use **pen** and **paper** or **drawings** and **pictures**.



Use **gestures**.



A smart phone, ipad or other **electronic device** may help. Get **advice** from a **Speech and Language Therapist**.



Speech and **language** therapy, exercises and **strategies** may **help**.



Tips for other people

Bear in mind that having a **communication difficulty does not necessarily mean** any **change** in a person's **intelligence**.

.....

Choose a **quiet** place.

Talk one-to-one when possible.



.....

Face the person. Get their attention !
before talking.

Keep eye contact. This **helps** you **both** to know if **communication** is **going well** or **not**.



.....

Speak clearly, without **rushing**.

Use **short sentences**.

Only ask **one question** at a **time**.
Wait for the **answer**.

Ask 'Yes' / 'No' questions if necessary.

.....

Be patient. Give enough time to respond.



Try not to finish their sentences.

.....

Do not pretend to understand the person if you do **not**.



Repeat back what you **think** they meant.
Ask if this is **correct**.

.....

If needed, try other ways to communicate:
gestures, **pictures**, **pen** and **paper** or any
devices the **person** uses to **communicate**.



Thinking skills and communication

A **brain injury** may affect **thinking skills**.



.....

Thinking skills may affect **communication**.
Common difficulties are:

Forgetting what you **said** or **did**.



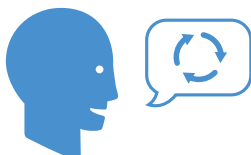
.....

Switching from **one subject** to **another**.



.....

Getting 'stuck' on **one subject**.

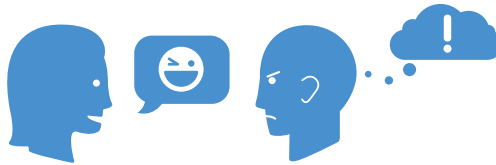


Needing **more time** to **take** in **what** is **being said**.



.....

Not being **able** to **realise** when **someone** is **joking** or being **sarcastic**.



Thinking skills and communication — tips that may help you

Ask if **you** are **repeating** yourself.



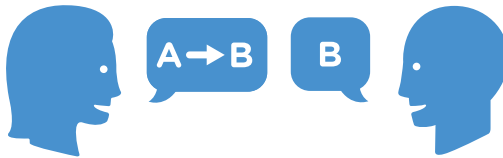
.....

Ask for **feedback**.



.....

If **someone changes** to a **new topic**,
stick with the **new topic**.



Tips for friends and family

Try to maintain eye contact.



.....

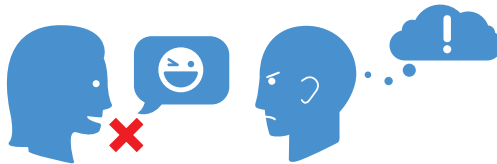
Give the person enough time to respond.



If **they** get **stuck** on a **topic**, ask a question to **change** the **topic**.

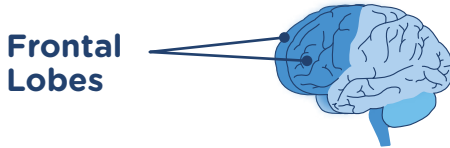
.....

Avoid **sarcasm** if the **person** tends to take things literally.

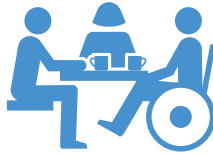


Social skills and communication

The brain's **Frontal Lobes** control **social skills**.



An **injury** to the **Frontal Lobes** can **affect social skills**.



Social skills affect **communication**.

.....

Some difficulties after a **brain injury** are:

Saying **things** that may **offend others**. Being overly **familiar**.



Interrupting other people. **Talking** too much.

Not noticing other people's **body language** for example: **someone fidgeting** if they **want to leave**.

Tips that may help you

Try to **keep eye contact**. Keeping **eye** contact may **help** you **notice** other people's reactions.



.....

Be open to **getting feedback** about your social skills.



.....

Tips for friends and family

If the person is **talking too much**, try to **change the topic** of the **conversation**.

.....

If they have **behaved** in a **socially unacceptable way**, they may be **unaware** they have. **Give** them **feedback discreetely** and in **private**.

Help and information

Speech and Language therapy may help.

Ask your **GP** or **Public Health Nurse** about a **HSE Speech and Language therapist**.



 1850 24 1850  www.hse.ie

.....

For a **private Speech and Language Therapist**, contact the **Independent Speech-Language Therapists of Ireland**.





 www.isti.ie

.....

Aphasia Ireland

Their goal is to raise awareness of aphasia and offer support.



 (01) 7642 200
 www.aphasiaireland.ie

You can also contact **Headway** 
Information and Support staff. [Brain Injury Services & Support](#)



1890 200 278



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www.headway.ie

Acknowledgement

Thank you to the **City of Edinburgh Council** who gave us permission to use their **Bonington Symbol System (BSS)**.



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See headway.ie/information for further details.

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