

Media statement

27 August 2019

Communicating with confidence on the coast

There are 1.2 million Australians with communication disability. Speech pathologists like Julie Scott from Sunshine Coast University Hospital (SCUH) work with these Australians to provide them with the confidence to communicate.

“In Australia today, communication disability is largely invisible. Unseen and out-of-sight,” Ms Scott said.

“Australians with communication disability cannot maximise future educational, health and social outcomes, without specialist intervention.

“Communicating with confidence is vital to enable everyone to participate fully in the social, educational, economic and sporting aspects of community life on the Sunshine Coast.”

Only 38 per cent of Australians with communication disability are participating in the workforce compared with 80 per cent of people without communication disability.

That’s why during **Speech Pathology Week**, from 25-31 August, speech pathologist Ms Scott is highlighting the week’s theme: *Communicating with Confidence*.

“Communication, by definition, involves at least two people. It is important that everyone understands that communication is more than just speech,” she said.

“In the rehabilitation department at SCUH we regularly work with clients who’ve had strokes, brain injuries or people who are suffering from neurological conditions that result in difficulties talking and understanding.

“The full multidisciplinary Rehabilitation Team are taking responsibility for enabling communication for these clients, it’s not purely the domain of Speech Pathologists. Every interaction the client has, 24-hours-a-day, is important.

“Our SCUH Rehabilitation Team has been focused on multiple training activities this year to grow their skills to be better support the needs of our patients with communication difficulties,” Ms Scott said.

Activities have included: in-service training designed to identify communication disorders and strategies to guide their interactions, the development of new resources for the Rehabilitation Team and piloting a new multidisciplinary team training program in communication access.

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“For some people with communication difficulties assistive technology such as communication apps, speech output devices, voice amplification systems and computer access aids can be effective tools for supporting communication. Remaining on-top of advancements in this technology allows speech pathologists to offer a wider range of tools to our clients to better help them communicate with those around them.”

The commitment of our full Rehabilitation team, including our Speech Pathologists, is enabling healthcare conversations for our patients with communication difficulties. We will enable confident communication for both our patients and staff.

For information about *Speech Pathology Week* visit:

www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au/week

MEDIA OPPORTUNITY

Speech Pathologist Julie Scott is available for interviews and photographs on request.

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