



ABIOS

Acquired Brain Injury Outreach Service

FACTSHEET: Communication

Audience: Family and Support Workers

For further information contact the
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Dysarthria – after Acquired Brain Injury

“Dysarthria is muscle weakness, paralysis or poor coordination of the breathing and speech muscles and can affect a person’s speech volume or cause them to slur their speech”.

(Speech Pathology Australia)

People with dysarthria can understand what others are saying to them and know what they want to say, however their speech may be difficult to understand.

Signs of dysarthria:

- Slurred speech
- Nasal speech quality
- Hoarse voice quality
- Difficulty controlling the volume of speech (may be too loud or too soft)
- Monotone speech quality (speech is in one tone)
- Difficulty eating and drinking
- Difficulty controlling saliva (drooling)
- The speed of the speech is difficult to control



What you can do to help someone with dysarthria:

- be patient and provide encouragement
- help the person to practice any exercises recommended to them
- encourage the person to speak slowly & to take their time
- don't pretend to understand if the person's speech is not clear
- ask the person for clarification (E.g. “did you say...”) or ask them to repeat themselves if you are unsure what they have said
- educate others about dysarthria and effective communication tips

As a support person to someone with dysarthria, here are some strategies you can suggest to them:

- + Remain relaxed as possible when speaking
- + Take a deep breath before starting to speak
- + Speak slowly, concentrating on making each word clear
- + Face the person they are speaking with – to help the listener
- + Speak for themselves whenever possible – not letting others speak for them or finish their sentences
- + Use short phrases or sentences
- + Try to say their message another way (use a different word)
- + Give the listener a 'key word' to tune them into the conversation topic
- + Use writing or gestures (to add non-verbal information to their speech)
- + Reduce background noise as much as possible
- + Think about where they meet others in the community (make the environment work for them)