

Acquired Communication Disorders

Acquired communication disorders refer to speech and language disorders that an individual acquires due to a medical condition.

Aphasia is an acquired language disorder that may result in difficulties with verbal expressions (i.e. finding the correct words to say) and understanding instructions, conversations, reading, writing and/or spelling.

Cognitive communication disorders can result in problems understanding and knowing the appropriate words or language to say in different circumstances.

Dysarthria and apraxia are acquired speech disorders that can affect an individual's clarity of speech.

Acquired language and speech disorders can be a result of brain injury, following a stroke, head trauma, brain tumors or neuro-degenerative diseases such as Parkinson's disease.

Individuals with acquired speech or language disorders usually find it difficult to communicate to others, leading to frustration and possible disengagement from social situations and loved ones.

With intervention however, they may regain some of their speech and language functions, and/or be able to explore other communication options.

How is it treated?

After a comprehensive assessment of the individual's communication functions, a personalised rehabilitation plan will be provided to help improve the individual's ability to communicate better with others and vice versa.

What does rehabilitation involve?

The overall aim of rehabilitation is to improve the individual's ability to communicate better, and/or to facilitate communication using alternative means.

Treatment usually involves regular, personalised therapy sessions targeting areas of impairment or working on specific functional communication goals. Often, speech therapists will also involve the individuals' family members to teach them strategies to communicate more effectively with their loved ones. For those who are not able to express themselves verbally, speech therapists can also explore alternative modes of communication such as the use of communication boards, books or other devices. For patients who have difficulties coming into the hospital for therapy sessions, telehealth programmes may also be recommended by your therapist to perform therapy sessions using virtual technology at home.

Specific approaches may be offered to certain patient groups. For example, the Lee Silverman Voice Treatment (LSVT) programme is specifically offered to patients with Parkinson's disease.

An initial assessment will be conducted to identify the person's strengths and weaknesses. Following this, goals will be discussed with the patient and family and specific targeted intervention will then begin. Homework may be given to facilitate and reinforce ongoing practices and learnings of what was covered in sessions.

Useful websites^[BLQY1]

[Aphasia](#)

[Apraxia of Speech](#)

[Dysarthria](#)

[Alternative and Augmentative Communication](#)