



Communication for Safe Care

What is the Communication for Safe Care Project?

The goal is to create environments where people with a communication disability are able to have effective information exchanges in a health care setting.

Effective communication will increase engagement and provide people with greater choice and control over their own health care, as well as improve staff satisfaction.

Why?

1 in 3 people who live with a communication disability report that their access to community and health services is impacted.

People with a communication disability find it much harder to have their health needs met for a range of reasons. Communication is a key safety and quality issue, and is critical to support the delivery of safe patient care.

Communication failures, verbal or written, can result in errors, misdiagnosis, inappropriate treatment and poor care outcomes.

Communication Disability – what is it?

A communication disability is an impairment in the ability to effectively share information. It may be in any area of the communication pathway: giving, receiving, processing or understanding, comprehending concepts symbols or verbal, nonverbal systems.

A communication disability may range from mild to profound and may have developed during any stage of life or clinical scenario. It may also be temporary and associated with a short term clinical situation.

Focus

In this project we are thinking about the needs of people who would benefit from adjustment to usual spoken or written communication interactions to be able to share information and be understood in a healthcare setting.

Improving communication for people who need healthcare will improve value and the experience for all involved: patient, carers, staff, and health services.

This project will also contribute to enhancing the continuity and coordination of safe quality care across the patient care spectrum.

How does your service rate for communication accessibility?

We are helping teams assess their environment and work practices to understand what adjustments will make their environment and processes more accessible to people with a communication disability, assisting both patients and staff.

We will do this by

- Asking people with a communication disability what they need us to do differently,
- Asking healthcare workers what they find the most challenging about adjusting the way they communicate with patients with different needs,
- Asking carers and support workers what they think needs to change
- Supporting teams to make the necessary changes to provide safer healthcare for people with a communication disability.

What support will the project offer?

- Coordination and support
- Additional staff – Speech Pathology and project staff to support changes and increase knowledge in your team
- Assessment of the relevant environment, processes and resources
- Consultation on communication plans for specific clients
- Tailored training and supported implementation

This project has a high level of adaptability that can work in any healthcare space.

How does our service find out more about this project?

If you would like more information contact the Communication for Safe Care Project Officer on Rebecca.Karmas@health.nsw.gov.au.

We value your input and questions about this project.