

Merry  
Christmas



Enhancing healthcare  
access for people with  
communication disabilities



COLLABORATIVE  
PARTNERSHIPS



LOCAL SOLUTIONS



SAFE, QUALITY  
CARE

# Communication for Safe Care Project News

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF LIVED EXPERIENCE

We would like to recognise those with lived experience of communication disabilities in Australia. We acknowledge that we can only provide quality care through valuing, respecting and drawing upon the lived experiences and expert knowledge of consumers, their families, carers and friends, staff and the local community. We acknowledge their contribution and guidance in our attempts to create more inclusive health care settings.

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# MEET THE TEAM

We have successfully recruited a multidisciplinary team who have extensive experience working within health care and disability organisations. In addition to the NSW Health project team (pictured below), we have partnered with a large team of researchers from the University of Sydney, including members of the Speech Pathology discipline, Sydney Business School and Work Integrated Learning. The research team are supported by Professor Sarah Dennis and Dr. Iqbal Hasan (Evaluation Officer).

## PROJECT MANAGEMENT



**Fiona Murphy**  
Project Manager  
(Physiotherapist)



**Merryn John**  
WNSWLHD A/Disability  
Strategy Manager  
(Social Worker)



**Dr Katherine Kelly**  
SWSLHD NDIS Coordinator  
(Speech Pathologist)

## SOUTH WESTERN SYDNEY TEAM - SWSLHD



**Rebecca Karmas**  
Project Officer  
(Occupational Therapist)



**Karri Kneebone**  
Clinical Specialist  
(Speech Pathologist)

## WESTERN NSW TEAM - WNSWLHD



**Molly Banks**  
Project Officer  
(Speech Pathologist)



**Katherine Shannon**  
Clinical Specialist  
(Speech Pathologist)

# PROJECT UPDATE

Communication for Safe Care is aiming to enhance communication access in health care settings. The past 12 months has been a thrilling period of consultation, collaboration and co-design. We've secured partnerships with a variety of services, ranging from Oral Health to an Emergency Department. In 2023, we will continue to work closely with consumers, health care workers and allied health students to develop locally appropriate and culturally safe communication access solutions.

We'd like to thank Kylee Roberts (SWSLHD Specialist Intellectual Disability Team) for facilitating several Easy Read workshops throughout 2022.

# KEY ACHIEVEMENTS OF 2022

## Publication:

The project team were invited to write an article for the November Issue of the **Journal of Clinical Practice in Speech-Language Pathology**. The issue's theme was 'Empowering health literacy and access to services'. Our article highlights the importance of communication access and reasonable adjustments in health care settings, as well as outline the impacts and poor health outcomes when accessibility is not considered. The article also includes a summary of the project methodology to support health services become more communication accessible as well as build current and future workforce capacity.



Karmas, R., Kneebone, K. & Murphy, F. (2022). Communication for Safe Care: Enhancing healthcare access for people with communication disabilities. *Journal of Clinical Practice Speech-Language Pathology*, 24(3), 114-117.


## Presentations:

The team have presented at a number of events, including:

- Communication access webinar for **International Day of People with Disability** celebrations SWSLHD (Dec 2022)
- **NSW Disability Stakeholder Forum** (23rd November 2022)
- **Centre for Disability Research and Policy (CDRP), Research Seminar** (December 2022)
- **NSW Oral Health Promotion Network meeting** at Ministry of Health (16th November 2022)

## Capacity Building:

- **Easy Read Workshops** – 3 workshops were run in SWSLHD, facilitated by Kylee Roberts (Specialist Intellectual Disability Health Team Manager, SWSLHD). These sessions were well attended by Community Nursing teams, Speech Pathology students and SWSLHD Media & Communications Team.
- The Project Team made a submission to the **National Health Literacy Strategy** to support the consideration of communication accessibility in the National Strategy.
- In December, the Project's Speech Pathology students facilitated a workshop for the **SWSLHD Integrated Care & Enablers Team** on Communication Access. Pictured below is part of a resource the students created to support the Integrated Care team when they are interacting with consumers who have communication difficulties.

Tips for Effective Communication				Tips for Effective Communication			
							
Speak in a normal tone of voice	Acknowledge communication difficulties and try to fix them	Keep a written "log" of the conversation for review		Maintain eye contact	Slow down Speak clearly	Inclusive and respectful tone	
							
Use drawing or gestures	Confirm understanding with yes/no questions	Write key words	Summarise what has been communicated	Listen to understand	Clarify misunderstandings	Acknowledge understanding	

# PROJECT IMPACT: BUILDING FUTURE WORKFORCE CAPACITY

In 2022, the SWSLHD project team hosted two Speech Pathology Placement blocks. In total, four students have completed their final year Masters placement with the project.

Students are considered to be project team members, adding value to the project progression and activities. They are immersed in communication access skill development opportunities and share these skills with the multi-disciplinary teams and services they are working with.

By partnering with universities and including students in the project's activities, we are equipping the future workforce as leaders in inclusive practice. We anticipate the expertise that students develop whilst on placement with the project team will continue to inform their future clinical practice, as well as positively influence the communication accessibility of the workplaces they are employed in throughout their careers.

Our most recent students, Gareth and Kirushna (pictured beside) worked closely with dental staff in SWSLHD Oral Health services to map the consumer journey through Oral Health. Using the project's Communication Access Audit Tool, they identified and analysed key interaction points a consumer may have with an oral health service.

The **Communication Access Audit Tool** is a bespoke resource that was developed by our previous Speech Pathology students, Liz and Lolita, following extensive analysis of the common barriers and enablers to communication accessibility in an oral health clinic setting.

Students are also active participants in the project's **Student Research Stream**, which is led by the University of Sydney's Work Integrated Learning team. This research is exploring novel placements and how these experiences may inform professional identity.

The project team are looking forward to facilitating placements for over 20 students throughout 2023. This includes rural and regional placements in our Western NSW sites.



Pictured- Speech Pathology Students  
Gareth Williams and Kirushna Ekamparam

*"This will be the best placement that you will ever attend... you'll have the opportunity to use your experiences, talents and passion to better the lives of those with communication access barriers!"*  
**Kirushna Ekamparam**

## CONTACT US:

For more information email us at: [SWSLHD-CommunicationForSafeCare@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:SWSLHD-CommunicationForSafeCare@health.nsw.gov.au)