



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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PROJECT UPDATE

To kick off 2023, the Communication for Safe Care team had a planning session at Sydney University. As you can see from the photograph below, we're a large group! The session was attended by team members from South West Sydney LHD, Western NSW, the University of Sydney Business School and the Sydney School of Health Sciences. Together, we reflected on the progress we've made, then mapped out our next steps for research and evaluation.

We have partnered with four target sites: SWSLHD Oral Health Services, SWSLHD Campbelltown Emergency Department, WNSWLHD Oral Health Services and WNSWLHD Perioperative Services. In the coming weeks we will be conducting surveys and interviews with health care workers and consumers. This research will allow us to identify any communication access issues, which will inform the co-design process. We're looking forward to sharing our discoveries with you all!



University of Sydney - Susan Wakil Health Building



L-R: Dr. Rachael Rietdijk, Dr. Liss Brunner, Dr. Ju Li Ng, A/Prof. Anya Johnson, Katherine Shannon, Fiona Murphy, Molly Banks, Karri Kneebone, Prof. Sue McAllister, Prof. Sarah Dennis

WE'RE HITTING THE ROAD!

Catch us presenting at the following conferences:

NSW Health Human Experience Week (Tuesday 2nd May 2023, 10am - 12pm) - Virtual

Talk: "Co-designing communication accessible healthcare settings"
Synopsis: A transferrable model of practice and tools that can be adopted by any health care service to assess communication accessibility and use a process of partnering with consumers to co-design local solutions.



Speech Pathology Australia (SPA) National Conference (21-24th May 2023)- Hobart, TAS

SPARK Talk: "Communication for Safe Care: co-designing communication access solutions for health care settings"

PROJECT IMPACT: UNDERSTANDING LOCAL CONTEXT & HEALTH CARE ENVIRONMENTS



Pictured: Campbelltown Emergency Department

The project welcomed four Undergraduate Speech Pathology students in February. They joined the team for a six-week student placement block.

Two students were placed with the South Western Sydney Project team in the **Campbelltown Emergency Department**. Two students were placed with the Western NSW project team in the **WNSWLHD Oral Health Service**. The students worked closely with Health Care staff and patients to observe and understand communication access.

Campbelltown ED - Student Reflections

Aimun and Isabelle are fourth-year Speech Pathology students from the University of Sydney. During their visits to the Emergency Department (ED), they had the opportunity to observe nurse, paramedic, and doctor interactions with patients. They documented these interactions using the 'Communication Accessibility Observation Tool', which was developed by previous students groups in an Oral Health setting. It was Aimun and Isabelle's goal to test if the Observation Tool could be used in a faced-paced environment such as the ED.

**"We loved seeing the nurses
make changes to their
communication style to suit the
needs of the patients. We
observed them change their
speed and manner of speech, as
well as use gestures and their
environmental space to improve
communication and help with
the patient's understanding."
Aimun & Isabelle**



Pictured: Kerri (PEO), Aimun and Isabelle

Aimun and Isabelle worked closely with the Patient Experience Officer (PEO), Kerri. They reflected on the time spent with her: "Kerri's role involves interacting with patients in the waiting room to enhance their experience within the ED. We observed her to be a **key link** between patients and health professionals. **She was a comforting presence in the waiting room** that patients could direct their questions to. Kerri is passionate about improving the **experience and health outcomes** for all patients that enter the ED and we are grateful for her contribution to this project and our learning."

Western NSW Oral Health - Student Reflections

Hi, we are Kelly and Chloe, fourth year student speech pathologists from The University of Sydney. We are currently doing a 6-week placement with The Communication for Safe Care Project. Our time with the project has seen us work on several tasks including the development of an observation tool that determines the

... 'communication accessibility' of health care services - what hinders or supports communication.

During this placement, we have conducted multiple site visits to oral health clinics within the Western NSW LHD, including visits to Parkes and Orange Hospital. These visits have allowed us to user-test the observation tool, build rapport with services and observe themes regarding communication practices.



*Kelly and Chloe
4th year Speech Pathology Students*



*Katherine Shannon (Clinical Educator),
Kelly and Chloe on a site visit to Parkes
Oral Health*

We've had the opportunity to observe a number of **great communication practices by staff**. For example, we observed a man with hearing loss approach the reception desk at an oral health service. He was met by a staff member who immediately responded by standing up, walking closer to him and increasing the volume of her voice to an appropriate level.

It was clear these 'reasonable adjustments' were effective in helping him to understand what was being said.

We have also continually observed dental clinicians slowing down their rate of speech, using everyday language (i.e. no jargon) and facing the patient when providing them with information. This was very effective at enhancing communication.

PROJECT IMPACT: BUILDING CURRENT + FUTURE HEALTH CARE WORKER CAPACITY

Our students reflected with us on their experiences with the project. This model of placement is novel for the speech pathology profession.

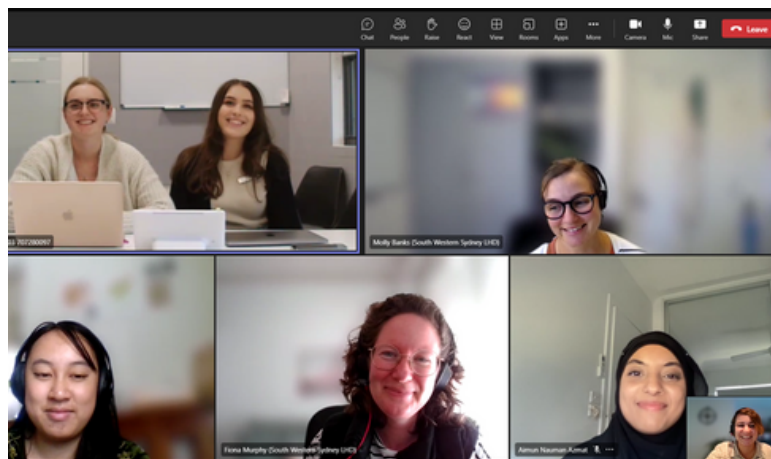
What is it like doing placement with a project team?

"Throughout this project we have been blessed with the opportunity to **work closely with several health service staff** as well as with our clinical educators (Katherine and Molly). It has been awesome to work alongside them, **listen to their perspectives on the project and learn about their experiences with communication access**" - Chloe & Kelly

What did you learn from collaborating with students across districts?

"The placement has also highlighted to us how working **collaboratively across 2 Local Health Districts (LHDs)** can help **support patient advocacy within their relevant health environments**" - Chloe & Kelly

"Collaborating with the Western NSW LHD team has also allowed us to **gain insight on regional versus metropolitan practice**. Our peers' (Chloe and Kelly) reflections of their observations at oral health services in Orange and Parkes always gave us so much to discuss and consider." - Aimun & Isabelle



What are your key learnings from this placement?

"This placement has been **valuable to our understanding of our role as future speech pathologists**. This opportunity has granted us a different perspective on improving people's communication as we have been able to learn about health service-delivery on a wider level.

We have both appreciated the focus on **patient autonomy and working together with patients to advocate for their needs instead of making assumptions**. We're so thankful we had the opportunity to contribute to this amazing project, even in a small way." - Aimun & Isabelle

"Overall, this placement has **strengthened our understanding of the functional impacts of communication difficulties** and educated us on how to enact positive change regarding communication within the healthcare system. This placement has provided us with **invaluable insight that we will carry with us into our speech pathology profession**." - Chloe & Kelly

CONTACT US:

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