

Communication for Safe Care

Enhancing health care access for people with communication support needs



COLLABORATIVE
PARTNERSHIPS



LOCAL
SOLUTIONS



SAFE, QUALITY
CARE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF LIVED EXPERIENCE

We would like to recognise people with lived experience of having communication support needs. We acknowledge that we can only provide quality care by valuing, respecting and drawing upon the 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.

THIS EDITION

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PROJECT UPDATE

The Communication for Safe Care team welcomed four speech pathology students.

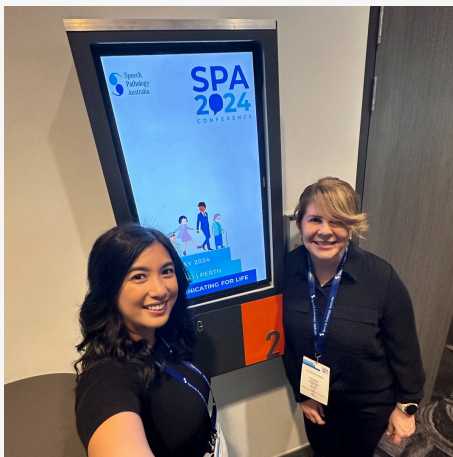
We had two students in South Western Sydney, and two students in Western New South Wales completing a rural placement.

The project team and students visited 3 target sites to observe how the environment, interactions, and resources can impact communication access.

Rae Anne and Nicole presented at the Speech Pathology Australia National Conference in Perth. They shared information about the project and how we have supported our health care workers, senior leaders, and consumers with lived experience to participate in the co-design process. While in Perth, they also had the opportunity to make a new friend.



*Speech Pathology students (left to right):
Hayley, Tamanna, Connie, and Chapman*



The project team travelled to Dubbo for a planning day and workshop. We were lucky enough to be shown around the town and experience the rural lifestyle for three days. We even got to have breakfast at the zoo! It was a great opportunity to get together face to face.



RESEARCH UPDATE

Co-design workshops

The Communication for Safe Care team recently facilitated four co-design workshops across four health facilities in NSW.

The aim of the workshops was to design solutions to the areas of improvements that we identified in the earlier stages of the project.

The workshops involved health care workers, senior leaders from the sites, people with lived experience of communication support needs and their families, carers and support workers.



Participants of the Target Site 1 Co-Design Workshop



Participants of the Target Site 2 Co-Design Workshop



Participants of the Target Site 3 Co-Design Workshop

The project would like to thank all the health care workers, senior leaders, and consumers with lived experience for coming to the workshops and working together to share their knowledge and expertise.

RESEARCH UPDATE

Co-design workshops

The co-design workshops were completed in three different ways, which showed how successful they can be using different formats.



Workshop Format 1:

We completed two of our workshops face to face. It was really great to have all of our consumers and healthcare workers together in the same room.



Workshop Format 2:

We completed one of our workshops online. Our consumers and healthcare workers were able to participate together in the workshop from a wide variety of locations across rural NSW.



Workshop Format 3:

We completed one of our workshops asynchronously. This means that we did our workshops with our consumers and healthcare workers at different times. This was a really helpful way to run the workshops during winter because of staff illness. We got to use different online platforms to help our co-design team brainstorm together at different times.

PROJECT IMPACT

The rural perspective

Our students in Western NSW were lucky enough to experience what it is like to live and work in a rural community. They wrote about their experiences and what they enjoyed the most about travelling out west.

I am Hayley, a Speech Pathology Student from The University of Sydney. I am on a 6-week rural placement in Dubbo with my peer Connie.

Our discussions with the Health Service Manager at Narromine Hospital highlighted the unique benefits of rural work: great work-life balance, closer community connections, and many professional development opportunities. Unlike metropolitan facilities where staff might only work in specific departments, rural healthcare offers varied work environments and a wider range of caseloads.

I learnt that smaller work teams provide greater access to mentorship, allowing specialization in unique skills like laryngectomy. Despite challenges like limited access to specialist care and staff shortages, these issues are innovatively addressed using virtual health services that allow nurses and allied health assistants to provide care under clinician guidance. The student team also co-designed solutions to improve rural health care access. Collaborative discussions led to new solutions, such as incorporating rural perspectives on patient intake forms by including questions about healthcare costs, travel and internet access. This can help us to identify rural patients and make suitable accommodations, such as adjusting appointment intervals and times, or introducing telehealth options.



Hayley and Connie at Narromine Health Service

PROJECT IMPACT

The rural perspective

Learning about virtual services has shown me the resourcefulness needed in rural healthcare and that solutions can often be found for most issues. I also like how the rural setting has expanded the scope of practice for health professionals, enabling them to learn new skills. I can now recognize how rural areas offer unique and valuable career paths as flexibility is encouraged in healthcare. Outside of my placement, I've enjoyed exploring Dubbo's parks, cafes, and restaurants. Due to the fewer options for entertainment, the rural setting has pushed me to step out of my comfort zone. I have tried new activities like trivia nights, comedy shows and run clubs. I also loved how everything was close by and there was no traffic, which makes for a great work-life balance in a rural setting.

Written by: Hayley Bui, Student Speech Pathologist



Dubbo Main Street

PROJECT IMPACT

Resources

The **My Health My Communication Project** have developed a toolkit called 'My Health Information Handover Form'.

You can download the toolkit and guide on the [My Health My Communication website](#).



interact•ABI•lity

Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) Communication Lab

interact-ABI-lity is a free self-guided program for family members, friends, support workers, and professionals working in brain injury.

You can access the program on the [ABI website](#).

The **Accessibility NSW** website has a range of online learning modules and resources to build on your understanding of digital accessibility. The 'Creating Accessible Documents' module explores practical tips to creating accessible documents that follow NSW guidelines.

You can access the module on the [Accessibility NSW website](#).

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