

Impacts of communication disability

A Communication Hub resource

(electronic bubbles pop)

(note swooshes)

(gentle upbeat music)

- Autism impacts my communication by not being able to say stuff clearly, and either speaking really quietly or speaking really loudly.
- The threshold that you need to meet to have a communication disability is to have a communication difference which has a significant impact upon your participation.
- And when I can't communicate myself, it would be very stressful because they would look at me in a way like, and I'll think that would be a way of saying that "Hey, you're saying stuff a bit weirdly."
- Socially, it's very difficult if you don't have a way to communicate or if you don't have a shared way to communicate or a shared mode of communication, because you're unable to connect with someone, you're unable to form friendships or relationships with people.
- Like, jumble the sentence. So, maybe you had another sentence. If I can read, I can read the news or whatever, I know. But it's no words or whatever, and you're talking, and now answer. Ooh, I can't remember. You need to repeat the sentence.
- From a social point of view, it can be very isolating. Some people can get to the point where they actually withdraw from a social connection. And we all know the importance of social connection for our mental health.
- We have to almost decide at that moment of a block, or a potential block, is what do we do? Do we continue expressing our thought with the risk and the fear that, what if I stutter, this person may think differently of me? Do we change the words around with the risk that that sentence no longer makes sense, but we've hidden our stutter? Or do we just stop talking and use other means because verbal communication gets too difficult?
- When I don't have my communication device, I feel sad.
- Well, as my hearing has deteriorated, I've become more aware, personally, of people speaking more clearly to me and needing to speak more clearly to me.
- If you can't get that message across then you can sometimes be treated as a person who is less than you are.
- Every time I go to hospital, I get admitted and I repeatedly explain I need this to be on my bed at all times. When I have a procedure, I wake up and they've left it in the operating room or in the recovery rooms, yet it's written everywhere on my documents, "Give patient their communication device, even if asleep". When they take my device or they forget to put it with me, particularly in hospital settings, I feel anxious and scared.
- The impact of a communication disability on the students that I work with, is that it's more difficult for them to engage with the curriculum at school, because they don't yet have a way, necessarily, to communicate what they know or they don't have a way to understand what we're teaching them unless we use visual supports or different forms of AAC to support their learning.

- It was at his school. Often, he couldn't understand the instructions. And sometimes he couldn't express himself as well. And, the school have a lack of support and right strategies to help him.

- Before Paloma probably had this level of understanding - so she probably wasn't able to understand some people's verbal communication - in day-care a few years ago, she certainly was a lot more frustrated. She had certain behaviours, like biting, as a quick and easy, instant way to show her frustration.

- A lot of the barriers come back to, kind of what we expect communication is. You know, we expect that communication is sitting down and having a conversation backwards and forwards. And I think those expectations need to change. And I think the best way to support someone is to start to challenge your own thoughts about what communication is.

(gentle upbeat music)