

Developing Specialist Dementia Nurse Confidence And Skills In Supporting Communication In Primary Progressive Aphasia (PPA)

P2-12

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Practical communication training, delivered by specialist speech and language therapists, develops skills and confidence of dementia nurses to have better clinic conversations with people who have primary progressive aphasia.				
BACKGROUND	METHODS	RESULTS	DISCUSSION	REFERENCES
Primary Progressive Aphasia (PPA) causes communication difficulties that impact patient participation and decision-making in clinical discussions. At St George's Hospital London (SGH), three specialist nurses work within a consultant-led cognitive neurology and dementia service where approximately 5% of patients are diagnosed with PPA, but which lacks embedded speech and language therapy (SLT). Nurses' experience ranged from two to over ten years, with training largely informal and not specific to PPA. Dyscover, an aphasia charity in Surrey, provides specialist SLT for people living with PPA. Consultant neurologists at SGH regularly refer. Following an online Dyscover PPA information session, the nurses identified a need for bespoke training to recognise and understand communication changes in PPA, and develop their knowledge and practical skills to support effective clinic communication.	The SLT and nursing team met to identify learning priorities (below). A 2 hour bespoke workshop was created for the nurse team, focussing on these: <i>How to recognise and understand communication changes across all types of PPA</i> <i>How to use strategies to support patients' understanding, and help them participate in making choices and decisions.</i> <i>How to improve signposting to community resources</i> The SLT ran a second workshop, co - led with three people living with moderate-stage PPA. Nurses took part in conversations and received feedback from the SLT and people with PPA. Nurses completed pre- and post-training surveys to track knowledge and confidence. 	Pre-training surveys revealed low confidence and knowledge in: identifying communication difficulties, supporting expression and comprehension, taking histories, delivering information, involving patients in decision - making, and signposting. Challenges included partner-dominated conversations and managing distress related to communication breakdown. Following training, self-reported knowledge and confidence improved across all areas. Group discussions generated patient-informed recommendations for improved communication support in clinic including; 1.Create easy-read versions of clinic information & frequently discussed topics. 2.Send / invite questions prior to appointment to allow patients to plan and prepare. 3.Longer clinic appointments, in person 4.Encourage patient to attend appointments with their communication partner 5.Normalise the use of communication supports - pen & paper, maps, pictures, phone etc to support explanations and discussions.	This collaborative training initiative ✓ Improved dementia nurses' confidence and skills in supporting communication for people living with PPA ✓ Strengthened interdisciplinary working ✓ Involving 'experts by experience' enhanced learning and reinforced person-centred care. Future work will develop ➢ Teaching resources, co created with people with lived experience of PPA & built on existing general dementia training & health literacy guidance. ➢ Further opportunities for people with PPA to get involved with awareness raising and training. ➢ A network of PPA knowledge partners to support staff CPD, and improve signposting referral pathways and continuity of care for people with PPA	- O'Brien R, Goldberg SE, Pilnick A, et al. The VOICE study: a before and after study of a dementia communication skills training course. <i>PLoS One</i>. 2018;13(6):e0198567. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0198567. - Douglas NF, MacPherson MK. Positive changes in certified nursing assistants' communication behaviors with people with dementia: feasibility of a coaching strategy. <i>Am J Speech Lang Pathol</i>. 2021;30(1):239–252. doi:10.1044/2020_AJSLP-20-00065 - Skills for Health, Health Education England, & Skills for Care. (2018). Dementia training standards framework. Skills for Health. https://skillsforhealth.org.uk CONTACT rtownsend@dyscover.org.uk Rosemary Townsend – Principal SLT pgarrard@sgul.ac.uk Professor Peter Garrard Consultant Neurologist  