Involving Communication Partners in Rehabilitation

About the Ida Institute

- Established as an independent non-profit organization in 2007
- Funded by the Oticon Foundation
- Global organization with about 7000 members world-wide
- All Ida tools and resources are freely distributed and publicly available at www.idainstitute.com

Mission for the Ida Institute

To foster a better understanding of the human dynamics associated with hearing loss
Paradigm Shift

Collaborative Approach

Ethnographic Videos
A chance to reflect
Hearing Loss and Communication Loss

“Forgive me when you see me draw back when I would have gladly mingled with you. My misfortune is doubly painful to me because I am bound to be misunderstood; for me there can be no relaxation with my fellow men, no refined conversations, no mutual exchange of ideas. I must live almost alone, like one who has been banished; I can mix with society only as much as true necessity demands. If I approach near to people a hot terror seizes upon me, and I fear being exposed to the danger that my condition might be noticed.”

(Ludwig van Beethoven)

WHO International Classification of Functioning: To live with Chronic Illness or Handicap

Third Party Disability (Hickson and Scarinci, 2007)
**Communication Partners**

**Significant others**
- A person who has a major influence on the behavior and self-esteem of another (e.g., spouse, partner, family member, friend)

**Communication partners**
- Each event in a person’s life involves a communication partnership in a communication environment
- Include the cooperative relationships necessary for successful communication

**Gill & John - Communication Partners**

**Ethnography**

**Video Reflection**
- How has Gill’s hearing loss affected the relationship between Gill and John?
- How has Gill’s hearing loss transformed the roles John and Gill play at social gatherings?
The Communication Partner Experience

Common themes evident across studies:

1. Fear of loss of relationship
2. Pragmatic adjustments to deal with hearing loss
3. Managing the adjustments leads to negative consequences for relationship

Preminger, 2009

Theme 1 - Fear of Loss of the Relationship

“The whole quality of our interactions was being stripped away and I was fearful that I couldn’t communicate with him.”

(Hallam, Ashton, Sherbourne & Gailey, 2008)

Theme 2 - Pragmatic Adjustments Have to be Made

“We stopped going out and I get quite worked up about the idea, if they invite us I don’t want to go...it is no pleasure.”

(Hallam, Ashton, Sherbourne & Gailey, 2008)
Theme 3 - Adjusting Leads to Negative Consequences

“We don’t talk a lot”

“Trivial remarks aren’t worth the effort”

“Constant repetition is tiring and annoying”

“It kills the moment”

“It is very stressful, I cannot, a part of our relationship in a way has died”

(Scarinci, Worrall & Hickson, 2008)

Why Involve Communication Partners in Rehabilitation?

- Family members are also affected by the hearing loss = third-party disability (Scarinci et al., 2009a, 2009b, 2012)

- Older adults with hearing loss are more likely to seek help for hearing difficulties if they perceive their family members are supportive of hearing rehabilitation (Meyer et al., 2014; van den Brink et al., 1996; Wallhagen, 2010)

- Older adults with hearing loss who had more positive support from family members were more likely to be successful hearing aid users (Hickson et al., 2014)

Communication Partner Tools
Communication Rings

Ring No. 1. The center or core represents the person completing the rings.

Ring No. 2. The inner circle represents the most important people in the individual's social network – those the individual shares a lot of time with or feels particularly close to.

Ring No. 3. The middle circle represents people who are still very important but not as close or important as the people in the inner circle.

Ring No. 4. The outer circle is reserved for those individuals who are less important but are present on a regular basis.
The GPS-Goal Sharing for Partners Strategy

Developing Shared Goals

Goal Sharing for Partners

The GPS offers a way to:

- Open a dialogue with the person with hearing loss and the communication partner in the appointment
- Help them acknowledge limitations caused by hearing loss
- Enable them to accept responsibility to work together to improve communication
- Allow them to set common goals
Communication Partner Tools in Clinical Practice

- Acknowledge the hearing loss as a communication loss
- Acknowledge activity limitations and participation restrictions that each partner faces as a result of the communication loss
- Develop an understanding of their shared responsibility in dealing with the communication loss
- Establish realistic communication goals
- Identify the necessary steps to achieve these goals

The Purpose of the Communication Partner Tools

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