Language and communication difficulties- older children

Information for parents, teachers and carers

For more information, please contact Speech & Language Therapy on:

For York and Selby Area: 01904 726599

For Scarborough Whitby, Ryedale Area: 01723 342472
UNIVERSAL LEVEL:
Support, enable and include older pupils with language and social communication difficulties through understanding that:

- Verbal difficulties are not always resolved in Key Stage 3 and 4.
- The young person may appear to understand, but has learned to look like they are following!
- The young person may find it tiring and demoralising, when struggling to decipher or remember verbal information all day
- The young person may have specific difficulties with working memory (remembering what has been just been heard) and also with their organisational skills.
- The young person may still struggle to form phrases and sentences, think of the words to use or ‘tell a story’. This is also likely to be frustrating.
- The young person may have difficulties with more inferential understanding, for instance following non-literal language e.g. ‘I flew here’, ‘wash your hands in the toilet’ and also ‘reading between the lines’
- The young person may also find it hard to predict and reason about events and when given information.
- She or he may also find less concrete, more abstract concepts difficult to grasp, particularly time concepts and words e.g. ‘before’

Also through;
- Attendance at our training courses:
  - Introduction to working with children with speech, language and communication needs in the inclusive classroom
  - Developing verbal reasoning skills
- Accessing information from relevant sources……..
TARGETED LEVEL:
Support the young person further by:

- Checking that she/he is understanding and develop a ‘sign’ to be used if she or does not understand.

- Supporting with language tailored to the young person’s level of understanding. The SLT may have given information to support your understanding of his or her difficulties here.

- Giving spoken information in small chunks and allow him/her time to process what you have said before giving him/her more instructions.

- Using visual methods of giving information to support verbal understanding and working memory. ‘Back-up’ spoken instructions with written ones so that he/she can refer to these when completing an activity.

- Highlighting key information to help him/her bridge the gap between what is and is not stated.

- Checking his/her understanding of sayings and words with different meanings in texts and instructions

- Explaining idioms, metaphors and so on, as they crop up in everyday situations.

- Being aware of your language and all the usual intended meanings. ‘Pull your socks up’ is obviously a metaphor, but how about, ‘do it in your head’, ‘just slip to the office’ or ‘go and wash your hands in the toilet’?

- Encourage him/her to make a list of items he/she needs to remember in the school diary.

- Make time concepts as visual as possible e.g. using time lines in history.

- Subtly re-phrase any muddled sentences she/he produces, as though you are mulling over the information (so she/he knows you understand, but also they then hear the correct words)

- Use the (wrong) word s/he says and build from that e.g. “yes it’s like an apple, but it’s more pointed there;...it’s a pear”. Then talk about the differences.

- Encourage the young person to describe items or situations, if she/he seems to get ‘stuck for words’
Tell us what you think

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact;
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Teaching, Training and Research

Our Trust is committed to teaching, training and research to support the development of staff and improve health and healthcare in our community. Staff or students in training may attend consultations for this purpose. You can opt-out if you do not want trainees to attend. Staff may also ask you to be involved in our research.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Patients, relatives and carers sometimes need to turn to someone for help, advice or support. Our PALS team is here for you.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or via email at pals@york.nhs.uk

An answer phone is available out of hours.

About Us

Providing care together in York, Scarborough, Bridlington, Whitby, Malton, Selby and Easingwold.

Caring with Pride:

Our ultimate objective is to be trusted to deliver safe, effective and sustainable healthcare within our communities.

Our values:

- Caring about we do
- Respecting and valuing each other
- Listening in order to improve
- Always doing what we can to be helpful

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