

# Strategies for communicating

after stroke or brain injury



## IF YOU ARE A SURVIVOR OF STROKE OR BRAIN INJURY

- 1 Take your time speaking. Go at your pace regardless of what anyone else says.
- 2 Practice conversation first in a quiet, distraction-free environment.
- 3 As you become more confident, slowly add more conversational partners. Try familiar places like church or neighborhood groups.
- 4 When talking to a new person, say "I'm a survivor of (stroke or TBI). Please be patient. Can you understand me?"
- 5 If someone speaks too fast to you, ask or gesture for them to slow down.
- 6 No matter what anyone says, science has shown it's possible to keep recovering! Don't give up!

## IF YOU ARE SPEAKING TO A SURVIVOR OF STROKE OR BRAIN INJURY

- 1 Make sure you have the person's attention before you start to speak.
- 2 Keep your voice at a normal level, unless the person indicates otherwise.
- 3 Reduce communication complexity but be adult. Simplify sentence structure and reduce rate of speech. Don't talk down.
- 4 Minimize background noise (like TV, music, other people.)
- 5 Give them time to speak. Resist the urge to finish sentences or offer words.
- 6 Confirm that you are communicating successfully by using "yes" & "no" questions. Use facial expressions and/or pictures.

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