



## Communication and Disorders Common in Adults

*SW MI Residents Encouraged to Learn the Signs, Seek Help This National Speech-Language-Hearing Month*

**May 2024** - With speech, language, and swallowing disorders common in adults following stroke, head and neck cancer, and a variety of other illnesses and injuries, SW MI-based speech-language pathologist, Patricia Masello, M.S., CCC-SLP encourages residents to learn the signs—and seek an evaluation—if they have concerns about themselves or a loved one. This is a timely message, as May is recognized as *National Speech-Language-Hearing Month*.

“If you have experienced a change in health from an injury or illness, your ability to communicate effectively may be different,” said Masello. “Effective communication is critical to your recovery and to your quality of life.”

Patricia Masello continued: “Communication is something we often take for granted until we are faced with challenges. But it is central to everything that we do. Luckily, speech-language pathologists can help people who have had strokes, traumatic brain injuries, and other life-altering events make progress so they can share medical information, stay connected to friends and family, and return to the activities that make up their daily lives.”

The causes of speech and language problems that begin for the first time in adulthood can vary. Common causes—in addition to strokes, cancers in the head and/or neck region, and brain injuries— include Alzheimer’s disease, multiple sclerosis, and Parkinson’s disease. Communication difficulties can also stem from breathing problems and voice damage.

Speech and language disorders that may be acquired in adulthood include the following:

- **Aphasia.** This involves problems speaking or signing, understanding, reading, and writing. Often misunderstood, aphasia does *not* affect a person’s intelligence. The most common cause of aphasia is stroke.
- **Cognitive-communication disorders.** This involves problems with thinking that can affect communication. Some examples are difficulty paying attention, remembering, organizing thoughts, and solving problems.
- **Apraxia of speech.** This involves the way the brain plans and coordinates movements for speech.
- **Dysarthria.** This involves changes in the muscles and nerves used for speech and/or breathing.



- **Voice disorders.** This involves changes in pitch, loudness, and vocal quality that negatively impact communication.

Learn more about speech, language, and cognition problems in adults from the [American Speech-Language-Hearing Association](#). SW MI residents who would like to discuss their speech, language, and cognition concerns may contact Patricia Masello at 269-380-7588 (text or call) or at <https://nowspeechtherapy.com/contact>.

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