

Why start with the end in mind?

A tool to understand communication needs in the workplace

*Kate Cameron, Nina Wegener,
Kerrin Watter, Areti Kennedy*

*“Interpersonal relationship issues are at once the **most common** and the **most difficult** catalyst to predict workplace separation”
(Sale et al, 1991)*

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Great state. Great opportunity.
And a plan for the future.



What will be covered today?

- Background and context
- Workplace communication task analysis tool
- Case studies from the Acquired Brain Injury Transitional Rehabilitation Service (ABI TRS)

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Communication Skills and RTW

- Return to work (RTW) rates after ABI are **globally low**
- In Australia and NZ employment is **40-45%** (2 years post injury)
- Interpersonal communication skills have been linked to **employment stability** after ABI.
- Communication skills needed for the workplace have been **understudied**, making it difficult to support.

(Temkin, Corrigan, Dikmen & Machamer, 2009; Meulenbroek, et al. 2016; Douglas, et al., 2016; Materne, et al., 2017; Meulenbroek & Turkstra., 2015; Struchen et al, 2008)

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Communicating in a modern workforce

- Focus on **soft skills** and becoming more service orientated.
- **Work speech acts:** instructing, clarifying, informing, advising.
- **Needed for:** Relationships, recruiting, training & managing, explaining concepts, verbal reasoning etc
- **Channels:** Meetings, small groups, online and social forums, phones, emails etc.
- Studies estimate that between **80-90% of people with ABI** experience communication disorder.

(MacDonald & Wiseman-Hakes, 2010; Mullenbroek et al, 2016).

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Communication in the workplace context

Seven communication-related skills for RTW after ABI

- 1) Spoken language processing
- 2) Verbal memory
- 3) Reading and writing
- 4) Verbal reasoning
- 5) Expressive pragmatics
- 6) Multi-tasking; and
- 7) Social cognition.

Model of Cognitive-Communication competence

- Conceptualises range of ABI communication impairments

Communication Ax emerging as predictors for RTW

- FAVRES, Discourse Analysis, La Trobe Questionnaire etc

(Meulenbroek et al, 2016; MacDonald & Wiseman-Hakes, 2010; Meulenbroek, Bowers, Turkstra 2016).

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Guidelines for therapeutic approach...

Vocational treatments should:

- Be individualised
- Involve employers
- Be supported through an interdisciplinary approach
- Understand a person's strengths and weaknesses
- Build awareness of abilities and barriers early on
- Provided in context, be meaningful, focus on breakdown situations
- Involve an understanding of person's work role

How can we do this if we don't start with an end in mind?

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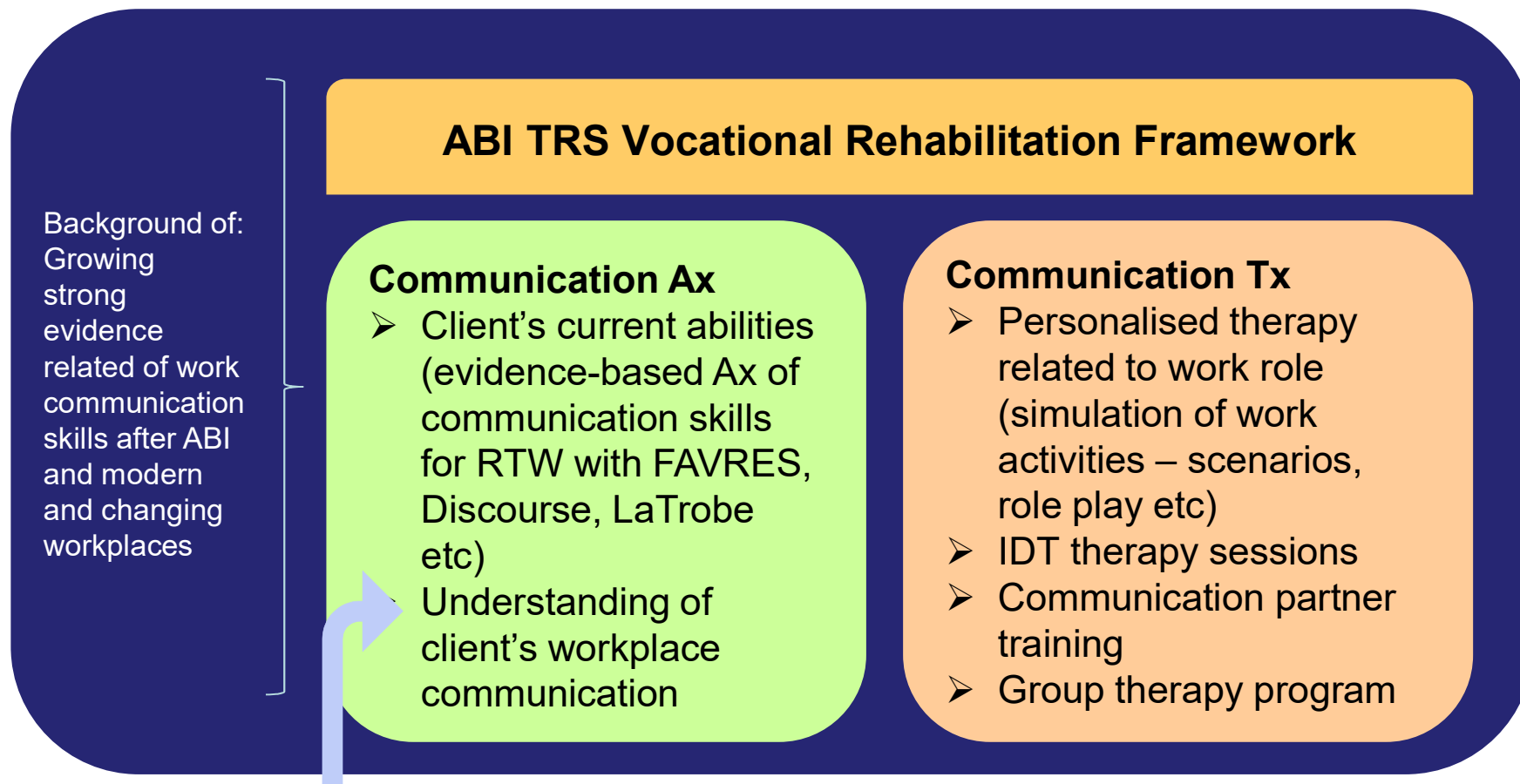
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Our Approach – Supporting RTW communication



Missing...deep understanding of individual's communication environment

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Communication Needs Analysis Tool

Client



WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION NEEDS ANALYSIS TOOL (WORK-CNAT) ABI TRS
 For Clients

The following document helps to identify the communication roles within the workplace and the types of environments that communication takes place in. It is designed to be completed with the speech pathologist as a discussion tool to get more detail about each of the communication roles.

Client: enter client's name
 Job title: enter client's job title
 Date: Click or tap to enter a date.

Please tick any of the following environments that communication takes place in at your workplace!

Workplace Communication Environment

Phone
 Video / skype
 Conference calls
 Face to face
 Computer / online - including email, text messages, internet searching etc.
 Meetings - including team briefings, case conference, regular team meetings, etc.
 Open plan office
 Secretary / private office
 In the field / outdoors - quiet
 In the field / outdoors - noisy
 Indoor noisy environment
 Other: _____

What are the 3 priority environments you need to communicate in for your work role?
 Priority 1: Choose an item.
 Priority 2: Choose an item.
 Priority 3: Choose an item.

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Employer checklist



WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION NEEDS ANALYSIS TOOL (WORK-CNAT) ABI TRS
 For Employers

The following document helps to identify the communication roles within the workplace and the types of environments that communication takes place in. Thank you for taking the time to fill this in.

Client name: (Client name)
 Client's job title: enter client's job title

Completed by (supervisor): enter supervisor's name Date: Click or tap to enter a date.

Please tick any of the following environments that communication takes place in:

Workplace Communication Environment

Phone
 Video / skype
 Conference calls
 Face to face
 Computer / online - including email, text messages, internet searching etc.
 Meetings - including team briefings, case conference, regular team meetings, etc.
 Open plan office
 Secretary / private office
 In the field / outdoors
 Indoor noisy environment
 Other: _____

What are the 3 priority environments (Client name) needs to communicate in for their work role?
 Priority 1: Choose an item.
 Priority 2: Choose an item.
 Priority 3: Choose an item.

Please tick any activities that (Client name) does in their job:

Talking and listening

Following basic instructions - familiar / unfamiliar tasks
 Following complex instruction - familiar / unfamiliar tasks
 Requesting information from others
 Understanding information from others (identifying important info and ignoring irrelevant info)
 Integration of new information with old knowledge
 Using information to make decisions
 Providing advice

Educating others - including presentations or providing explanations to others
 Customer service interactions
 Explaining work based concepts
 Describing work activities / provide a rationale for actions
 Using technical or work based vocabulary
 Advocating their views, for something new etc)
 Interview - conducting or job making

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Workplace Communication Needs Assessment - Client

Client Version

- Semi-structured interview with client
- Premorbid strategies that can be used in therapy.
- Allows awareness building.



WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION NEEDS ANALYSIS TOOL (Work-CNAT)
For Clients

ABI TRS

The following document helps to identify the communication roles within the workplace and the types of environments that communication takes place in. It is designed to be completed with the speech pathologist as a discussion tool to get more detail about each of the communication roles.

Client: enter client's name
Job title: enter client's job title
Date: click or tap to enter a date

Please tick any of the following environments that communication takes place in at your workplace!

Workplace Communication Environment

Phone
 Video / skype
 Conference calls
 Face to face
 Computer / online – including email, text messages, internet searching etc.
 Meetings – including team briefings, case conference, regular team meetings, etc.
 Open plan office
 Solitary / private office
 In the field / outdoors – quiet
 In the field / outdoors - noisy
 Indoor noisy environment
 Other: _____

What are the 3 priority environments you need to communicate in for your work role?

Priority 1: Choose an item.
Priority 2: Choose an item.
Priority 3: Choose an item.

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Workplace Communication Needs Assessment - Employer

Employer Version

- Checklist
- Can be performed by SP / OT/ other discipline during worksite visit.
- Able to be cross-checked against client report.



WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION NEEDS ANALYSIS
For Employers

The following document helps to identify the communication needs of your client. Thank you for taking the time to complete this assessment.

Client name: [client name]
Client's job title: enter client's job title

Completed by (supervisor): enter supervisor's name

Please tick any of the following environments that communication takes place in.

Workplace Communication Environment

Phone
 Video / skype
 Conference calls
 Face to face
 Computer / online – including email, text messages, internet searching etc.
 Meetings – including team briefings, case conference, regular team meetings, etc.
 Open plan office
 Solitary / private office
 In the field / outdoors
 Noisy environment
 Other: _____

What are the 3 priority environments [client name] needs to communicate in for their work role?
Priority 1: Choose an item.
Priority 2: Choose an item.
Priority 3: Choose an item.

Please tick any activities that [client name] does in their job:

Talking and listening

| | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Following basic instructions - familiar / unfamiliar tasks | <input type="checkbox"/> Educating others – including presentations or providing explanations to others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Following complex direction - familiar / unfamiliar tasks | <input type="checkbox"/> Customer service interactions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Requesting information from others | <input type="checkbox"/> Explaining work based concepts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Understanding information from others (identifying important info and ignoring irrelevant info) | <input type="checkbox"/> Describing work activities / provide a rationale for actions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Integration of new information with old knowledge | <input type="checkbox"/> Using technical or work based vocabulary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Using information to make decisions | <input type="checkbox"/> Advocating (for others, for something new etc) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Providing advice | <input type="checkbox"/> Interview – conducting or job seeking |

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Case Study 1: Using the client version

Client 1: Personal Trainer

Function: cognitive communication deficits – comprehension, recall / memory, poorly organised verbal expression, reduced initiation and maintenance.

Client version used:

- Helped him retrieve detail and expand on how he communicated in role and strategies he used.
- Raised awareness of high communication need in his role.

Outcomes: Work activities were incorporated into therapy program. Client wrote his own PT program and delivered to therapists. He was able to identify and practise his previous strategies in the gym.

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Case Study 2: Using the employer version

Client 2: Signals Maintainer (& Safety Protection Officer)

Function: Moderate CCD – poor comprehension, recall, verbal output; social communication, insight, ability to reflect and understanding of impact of actions on others, poor pragmatics, fatigue.

Using the tool (employer):

- OT completed on worksite visit – observation of colleagues working

Outcomes:

- Better able to simulate workplace activities in joint OT/SP sessions.
- More robust RTW plan and medical clearance for parts of role that had lower communication demands.

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Outcomes

Understanding *the end* is helping:

- Identify therapy targets
- Personalise therapy
- With strategy development
- Inform RTW plans
- With handover to other services

*Thanks to Nina Wegener,
probably on a mountain in NZ
somewhere, Kerrin Watter,
Areti Kennedy, and the rest of
ABI TRS Team*

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Questions

For further information:

- katherine.cameron@health.qld.gov.au
- nina.Wegener@health.qld.gov.au

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