

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** **Contact: (Name)**

 **(Phone, Email)**

**Adults With Speech and Language Disorders Report That Stigmas Take a Significant Toll on Their Daily Lives**

*(City)-Based Speech-Language Pathologist Stresses Simple Steps That Anyone Can Take To Mitigate Stigmas for People With Communication Difficulties*

*May Is Recognized as National Speech-Language-Hearing Month*

**(City, State – Date)** Communication disorders affect millions of people in the United States each year, making them relatively common in adults. Unfortunately, people with speech and language difficulties often encounter stigmas that negatively impact their daily lives.

This May, which is recognized as *National Speech-Language-Hearing Month,* (city)-based speech-language pathologist (full name, credentials, job title/place of employment) is encouraging the public to support their family, friends, neighbors, and colleagues with communication difficulties by taking simple but effective steps to mitigate such stigmas.

“Speech and language disorders can include problems with expressing our thoughts and feelings, being understood by others, or understanding what others are trying to communicate to us,” explains (last name).

 “Some people experience these difficulties when they’re young. However, other people can acquire these disorders in adulthood, which can be life changing. It’s especially hard because other people may make judgments about a person’s intelligence based on communication challenges, which is just one of many common misunderstandings about speech and language disorders.”

Common causes of speech and language disorders in adults include stroke, cancers in the head and/or neck region, brain injuries from falls or car accidents, and neurodegenerative diseases including Alzheimer’s disease, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), multiple sclerosis, and Parkinson’s disease.

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) commissioned a [**2024 poll**](https://www.asha.org/siteassets/nslhm/2024/communication-disorders-and-stigmas-report.pdf) of adults with communication disorders to assess the impact of these difficulties on their daily lives. The poll, conducted by YouGov, found that 88% of adults with speech or language disorders experience at least one of the following stigmas:

* feeling like an outcast
* feeling “less than”
* having people see them as less intelligent
* being talked down to
* being labeled
* being bullied

Over half of the respondents wish that there was more awareness about communication disorders and that people were more willing to make accommodations to help those with communication disorders access the information and communication supports that they need. Respondents also say that social gatherings or events are stressful for them and that they have experienced feelings of isolation or exclusion due to their communication challenges.

**How To Help: Effective Communication Strategies**

(Last name) shares some ways that others can support interactions with someone who has a communication disorder:

* **Ask the person how they prefer to communicate** or what strategies you can use to support them.
* **Be patient.** It may take an extra moment for someone to get their ideas out or to understand your message. Extend courtesy, and engage with them directly—and tell them if you didn’t understand.
* **Get rid of distractions,** and give the person your full attention (e.g., turn off the TV, put down the phone).
* **Presume competence.** Many people with communication difficulties have the intelligence and capability to make decisions, share their preferences, and perform certain tasks—as long as the information or activities are accessible.
* **Educate yourself.** Speech and language difficulties can occur for a variety of reasons, and they show up in many different ways. Learn more from trusted sources such as ASHA so you can best support your communication partner.

See additional [tips and strategies](https://www.asha.org/about/press-room/articles/tips-for-communicating-with-adults-who-have-a-speech-or-language-disorder/) from ASHA.

**Speech and Language Disorders: Diagnosis and Treatment**

Speech-language pathologists (SLPs) evaluate people of all ages for communication disorders. They support their patients and clients in gaining the skills needed to participate in the daily activities that are most important to them.

SLPs can work with people to help them understand questions, directions, conversations, and stories; express thoughts and words; and read and write. SLPs can also find other ways for people to communicate if they are having difficulty with spoken or written communication. These options may include pointing or using other gestures, drawing pictures, or using an augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) device.

SLPs also can train care partners in techniques to more effectively communicate with the person. For more information about communication disorders, visit [www.asha.org/public](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cjcerquon%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CMicrosoft%5CWindows%5CINetCache%5CContent.Outlook%5C5NG6CWRZ%5Cwww.asha.org%5Cpublic). To schedule a speech and language evaluation, contact (name/practice name) at (phone number or email address).

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