Communication Partner Training (CPT) programs assist communication partners (CP) and persons with aphasia (PWA) with improving communication.

The current study measured communication attitudes and behaviors, and if these changes following a half-day Communication Partner Training workshop.

Research Questions and Hypotheses:
1. What are the behaviors of CPs and PWA in conversations? - would display a relatively even number of facilitators and barriers prior to training.
2. Will CPT produce measurable changes in conversational behaviors among CPs? - CPs would display a relatively even number of facilitators and barriers prior to training.
3. What are the attitudes of CPs towards communication and do they affect changes in behaviors? - CP attitudes and behaviors.

Methods:
Participants:
- 11 dyads of PWA and their CP
- Mean age (SD): PWA: 62.3(11.1); CP: 67.4(8.1)
- Gender: 8 female PWA, 4 female CP
- Other families rarely experienced barriers.

Research Question 1: Analysis of conversational behaviors
- Distribution of Behaviors
- Facilitators: CPs often used yes/no questions and asking one question at a time, but they rarely used writing, drawing, gestures, pictures or props.
- Barriers: PWA often used head nodding for various communication purposes, and rarely initiated conversations.
- Repairs: Mostly clarification questions by CP & PWA.

Research Question 2: Changes in behaviors
- Change in Communication Behaviors
- CPs produced more facilitators after training (p<.05).
- PWA behaviors did not change as a result of the training (p=.05).

Research Question 3: Attitudes and Changes in Attitudes
- In general, CPs reported very positive attitudes towards communication, low levels of frustration, and strong belief that communication is possible and worthwhile.
- No significant relationships between CP or PWA attitudes and conversational behaviors (pre-training) or change in behaviors (post-training) (Spearman Rho, all p-values>.01).

Discussion:
- Effects of aphasia severity on ability to change behaviors is yet unknown.
- All families demonstrated frequent barriers, usually language.
- Some families demonstrated frequent barriers, usually language.

References:

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