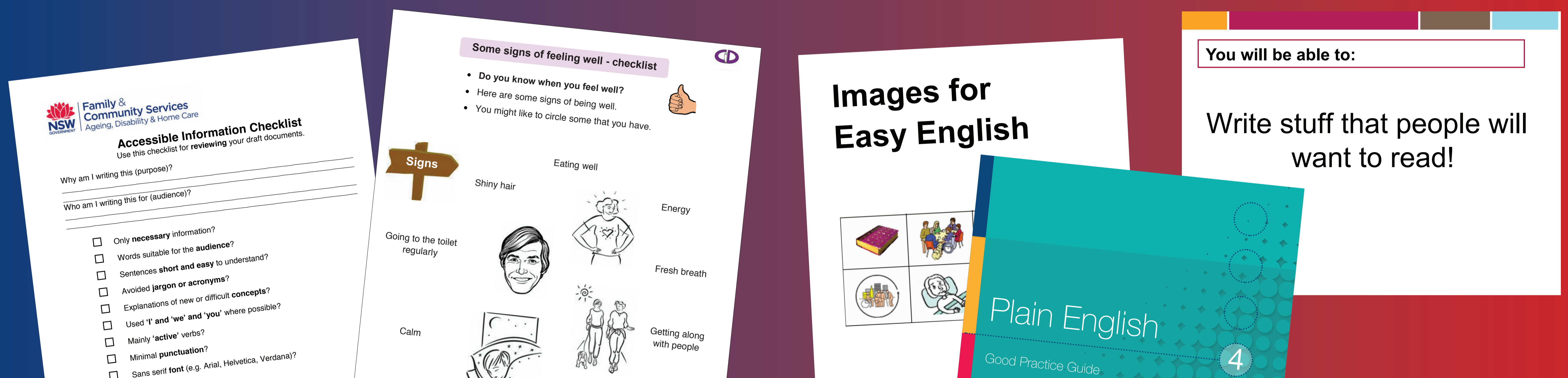


Keeping it simple

Training Speech Pathologists to use plain English and create accessible information

ADHC Accessible Information Training – a simple 2½ hour training session



Why two million Australians cannot read print easily

Around two million Australians cannot read print easily because of:

- learning disability
- intellectual disability
- brain injury
- cognitive impairment
- English is their second language
- literacy difficulties or
- vision impairment.

(Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2003)

Reasons people don't understand information

Some of the reasons identified that prevent people from receiving information are:

- no knowledge in the area (jargon, medical terms)
- attention (information is too long)
- vision (colour blindness)
- education (complex grammar).

Development of the training package

Senior Speech Pathologists in ADHC identified that there was a need to make documents more accessible. They resolved to set up some easy English report templates for swallowing and communication.

A package containing specialist training about plain English to Speech Pathologists was developed using resources from:

- NSW Council for Intellectual Disabilities
- SCOPE training in Accessible Information
- Presentations at SPAD Special Interest Group.

Aim of the training package

The package aims to improve the quality of communication in Speech Pathology by promoting the use of Plain English. The training package involves:

- participation in a 2½ workshop
- activities to practice using the Plain English principles
- samples of documents and resources.

Training package launch

In April 2011, the 2½ hour training package to ADHC Senior Speech Pathologists is officially rolled out.

Training package contents

Our training package includes a PowerPoint presentation with presenter slides and notes covering:

- what is accessible information?
- how do we make information accessible?
- who needs to know about accessible information?
- why should we bother with accessible information?
- when should we use accessible information?
- questions and barriers that may come up
- samples for activities and a demo
- a list of resources and web sites
- reference lists
- activities for ongoing learning
- accessible information checklist.

Outcomes

- Knowledge increased
- Confidence increased
- Need for training decreased

Outcome measures

ADHC conducted a post-training survey to measure the outcomes.

This feedback showed staff would:

- review documents to ensure they communicate clearly
- give more consideration to audiences when writing documents
- work with management to ensure a commitment to plain English across their organisation.

Follow-up survey

ADHC conducted a follow-up survey four months after the training was conducted. Comments showed the ongoing benefits of the training:

- “ I use less technical or formal language in written information after doing the training...”
- “ I consider specific needs of particular groups more closely than previously...”
- “ Encouraging and supporting others to make information accessible – not just therapists ”

