Strategies: Attention

- Eliminate distractions (turn off the television, silence any environmental noise, etc)
- Minimize number of people present, one person talking at a time
- Remove anything that may distract the person. Clutter is a visual distraction
- Be present in person’s visual field, where eye contact is established when talking with the person.
- Allow breaks, especially when distraction/frustration is apparent
- Provide visual cues/markers (i.e., covering up words or pictures that are not needed at the time or highlighting information) if impaired visual attention is an issue
- Provide clear and concise information, pacing amount of information/time to task
- Organize important items such as medications, money, keys, calendar and keep these items in a specific place
- Write lists of schedules or “to do” list
- Keep notebook to keep information in one place (medication list, time to take medication, daily schedule, appointments)
- Use a calendar for appointments, meetings, special occasions, etc.

Home activities: Attention

- Provide a list of items for person to write on the calendar
- Provide written schedule for person to reference (it may be an hourly schedule or daily schedule)
- Set a timer for scheduled pacing/rest breaks (start with 2 minutes, increasing time as person is successful)
- Keep conversations/tasks short (try 2 minutes, increasing as person is successful)
- Provide help to help person return to topic when they are off topic (“You were talking about ______”)
- Look at photo albums or magazines of person’s interest and engage in conversation related to photo/magazine, monitor person’s responses, turn-taking, topic maintenance, cue as indicated
- Practice search-a-word (circle the word in the word puzzle), puzzles, card games, dominos, board games at a level that is fun and successful. Start at a simple level that is easy and then try harder puzzles/games as the person has completed the easy puzzle/games without having trouble
- Watch game shows and participate from home, if enjoyable
- “What’s wrong in this picture?” looking for similarities between pictures
- Word chain task (i.e., write a word on a piece of paper such as “house”, the other person then has to write a word starting with the final letter “e”, so they may write “elephant”, then your turn would be to write a word that starts with the letter “t”, and so on)
- Have person locate certain items in room
- Engage in conversation that is of interest to the person, keep it casual and monitor person’s responses, turn-taking, topic maintenance, helping them if they need help

Compiled by Kati Canosa, M.S., CCC-SLP, BCS
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Speech-Language Pathology

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Communication Strategies: Auditory Comprehension

- Eliminate distractions (turn off the television, silence any environmental noise, etc)
- Speaker should be in listener’s visual field, where eye contact is established
- Ask questions in yes/no form or provide two choices when listener demonstrates difficulty with open ended questions (Instead of “What do you want to eat? Ask “Do you want chicken? Or “Do you want chicken or spaghetti?”)
- Information should be clear and concise (one-step requests rather than multi-step)
- Use gestures or point to item when making requests
- Allow additional time for the listener to process what you are saying

Home activities: Auditory Comprehension

- Make one-step requests related to daily tasks (“Hand me the socks” when doing laundry or “Hand me the bowl” when doing dishes or “Give me a stamp” when doing bills). Make sure requested items are easily accessible
- Look at photo albums or magazines of person’s interest and ask questions related to photos in album or magazine (“What is he doing?” Or “Is he fishing?”)
- Ask questions related to person’s interest via yes/no form, 2 choices, or open-ended (choose a level of difficulty that the person will have success, yet also be challenged). Ask questions that you know the answer, or can get the answer, so you know if the response are accurate
- Engage in conversation that is of interest to the person, keep it casual and allow additional response time. Monitor person’s responses and help then as needed
- Play “Go Fish” if card games are enjoyable. Use playing cards or you can use photos that are meaningful to the person. If using photos, have two of each so you can play like “Go Fish” and have matches for each picture

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Strategies: Recall

- Eliminate distractions (turn off the television, silence any environmental noise, etc). Attention is necessary for recall
- Write information down on paper (lists, calendar, notebook, schedule)
- Mark off items when completed on “to do” list
- Mark off past days on calendar
- Keep important items in a specific place (keys, wallet, medication)
- Use a “pill-minder” for medication
- Keep a routine
- Ask for help to remember important details
- Repeat information (verbally, mentally or in writing)
- Associate information by talking about something in common between two or more things
- Visualize/make a mental picture (visualize your path to figure out where you left an item)
- Use a timer for timed tasks (cooking, laundry, when it’s time to get ready for appointment)

Home activities: Recall

- Write every appointment, celebration, and/or planned activity on a calendar.
- Keep the calendar visible and in a place that the person will see easily and be around during the day
- Keep a notebook/folder and write all information from appointments, medication list, time to take medication, daily schedule, etc. Label notebook sections and folders
- Set up “pill-minder”, reading medication labels and sorting, with supervision
- Look at photo albums with someone who is familiar with the photos. Discuss who is in the picture, where the picture was taken, and/or what was going on in the picture
- Talk. Have conversation that is of interest to the person, keep it casual and allow additional time for recall (daily events, next day’s plans, etc)
- Request items in the room for the person to locate and bring you, as items are needed. For example, if you are in the kitchen cooking and need an ingredient, have the person get that ingredient
- Play board games and/or card games, if enjoyable

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Speech-Language Pathology

Strategies: Thought Organization/Sequencing

- Eliminate distractions (turn off the television, silence any environmental noise, etc)
- Remove anything that may distract the person. Clutter is a visual distraction
- Organize important items
- Use filing system, “pill-minder”, etc.
- Write lists such as a “to do” list
- Use a notebook to keep information in one place (medication list, time to take medication, daily schedule, appointments). Label notebook sections and folders
- Use a calendar for appointments, meetings, special occasions, etc.

Home activities: Thought Organization/Sequencing

- Provide a list of items for person to write on the calendar such as appointments, meetings, special occasions, etc
- Provide hourly/daily/weekly written schedule for person to reference
- Have person write their daily schedule, prioritizing and scheduling events/tasks from a “to do” list that you give them
- Search-a-word, puzzles, card games, dominos, board games at a level that is fun and successful. Start at a simple level that is easy and then try harder puzzles/games as the person has completed the easy puzzle/games without having trouble
- Watch game shows and participate from home, if enjoyable
- Word chain task (i.e., write a word on a piece of paper such as “house”, the other person then has to write a word starting with the final letter “e”, so they may write “elephant”, then your turn would be to write a word that starts with the letter “i”, and so on)
- Sort laundry
- Sort mail
- Load/unload dishwasher
- Set up “pill-minder”
- Discuss or write ingredients needed for a meal
- Discuss or write needed grocery items, checking what staples are in house and which are needed, etc.
- Discuss items needed for packing or for taking to places you go
- Discuss pros/cons of topics of interest
- “What’s wrong with this picture”. Look at pictures that have something unusual or wrong, such as a man drinking out of a shoe. Talk about what’s wrong, why that is wrong or doesn’t make sense, and what should it look like

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Speech-Language Pathology

Communication Strategies: Word Retrieval

- Eliminate distractions (turn off the television, silence any environmental noise, etc)
- Encourage speaker to talk at their level. Encourage them to use short, simple phrases or just single words if they are speaking using one word instead of phrase or sentences
- Encourage speaker to describe target word by feature (what it looks like) and/or by function (what you do with it or what it’s used for), and/or by size and/or shape
- Encourage speaker to use gestures or point to help communicate
- Encourage speaker to try to say target word
- Encourage the speaker to use a word that is similar (it’s like a(n) ___”), or use a word that is opposite (“it’s not a(n) ___”)
- Do not speak for/over the speaker
- If the speaker demonstrates difficulty saying a word, and is demonstrating frustration, offer the beginning sound of the word if target word is known
- If the speaker is frustrated, and target word is known, say the target word (after the speaker has made efforts) and encourage the speaker to repeat the word
- If the speaker demonstrates difficulty saying a word, and is demonstrating frustration, encourage speaker to stop, take a breath and then re-attempt
- Encourage the speaker to attempt writing the target word. Help them by having them copy the word after you write it, or put your hand on their hand and guide them to write the word
- Be in the speaker’s visual field, where eye contact is established, and the speaker can focus without distractions
- Allow additional time for the speaker to communicate
- Allow breaks when frustration is apparent

Home activities: Word Retrieval

- Sing familiar songs together
- Practice familiar tasks such as counting
- Ask for names of items related to daily tasks (doing laundry, unloading dishwasher, making a grocery list)
- Look at photo albums or magazines of person’s interest and have the person talk about them.
- Ask questions about photos in album or magazine (probe “What is he doing? Or “Is he fishing?”)
- Search-a-word and crossword puzzles. Start at a simple level that is easy and then try harder puzzles/games as the person has completed the easy puzzle/games without having trouble
- Play games that they can play. Start at a simple level that is easy and then try harder games as the person has completed the easy game without having trouble (Scrabble, Boggle, Scattergories)
- Ask for names of items in specific categories of interest (fruits, fishing equipment, jewelry)
- Talk about things that are of interest to the person, keep it casual and allow additional word retrieval time

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