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UNLOCKING THE SECRETS OF BRAIN DISEASE®

*Thinking Outside of the Box: Multi-Modal  
Communication Strategies*

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# Changes in Communication

## What Changes Can You Expect?

- Speech becomes slurred
- Speech may be:
  - Spastic
  - Ataxic
- Voice may be softer
  - › Usually a combination of the above features

## Multi-Modal Communication

## Definition

- EVERYTHING an individual uses to communicate or enhance communication
- Different strategies needed for different situations
- Different strategies need for different communication partners
- Strategies and tools combined to meet a wide variety of communication functions
- Uses **full communication capabilities** of each individual

## Communicative Functions

What is the goal when you communicate?

- Make observations
- Express thoughts
- Describe feelings
- Identify needs

## "How do I love thee? Let me count the ways"

Sonnet 43 by Elizabeth Barrett Browning

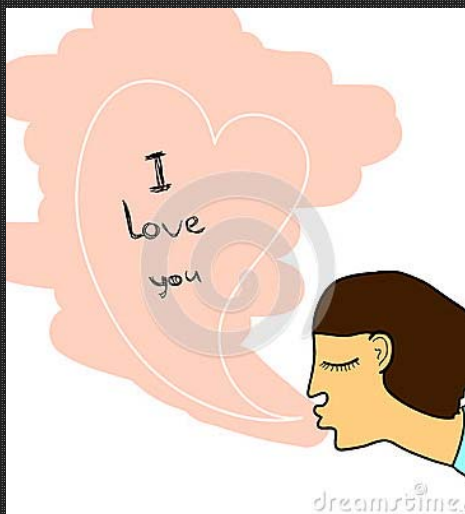
- How many ways can you say "I love you"?



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Say it



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## Use a Gesture



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## Use Sign Language

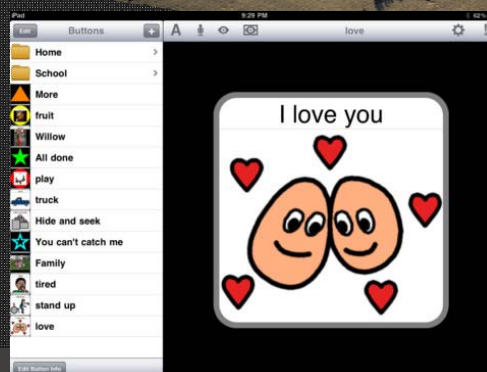
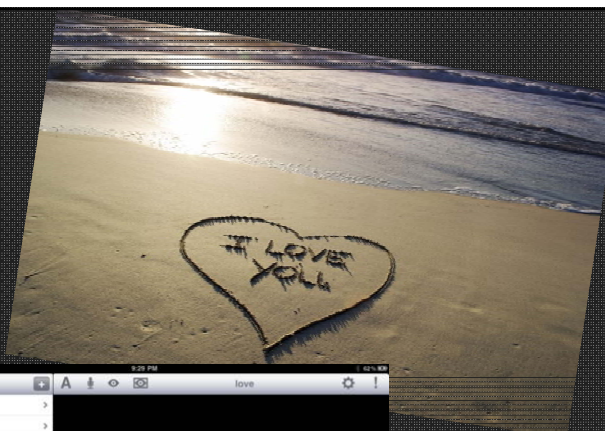


Facial  
Expression

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# Write or Type it



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# Other Examples of "I love you"



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# Strategies for Communication

## Focus on Communication Function

- What do you want to say?
- Get the attention of your listener
- Face the person you are talking to
- Identify your topic first
- Use short sentences or phrases
- Consider different ways to communicate the message



## Communication Partner Strategies

- Reduce/eliminate background noise
- Ask yes and no questions
- Provide choices rather than asking open-ended questions
- Provide extra time to respond
- Encourage use of alternative/multi-modal strategies
- Verify you understood what was said
- Ensure your hearing is as good as possible

## When to See a Speech-Language Pathologist

## Speech-Language Pathology

- ◇ Seek an evaluation when communication breakdowns first begin to occur

### Focus of Therapy:

- Maximize natural speech skills
- Identify multi-modal communication strategies & strengths
- Evaluation/training in augmentative and/or alternative communication strategies

## Augmentative & Alternative Communication (AAC) Options

- Personal amplifiers
- Word or picture boards
- Computerized communication systems