

This month's resources reviewed and rated by Bulletin's reviewers

Reviews

DVD

Understanding Suraj

PRODUCER: Ian Ingram

PUBLISHER: NL Productions UK

PRICE: £27.49 from Amazon (<http://tinyurl.com/p2lw6rx>) or directly from ian.nlproductions@gmail.com

REVIEWER: Leanne Ruggero, Specialist SLT, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Foundation Trust

RATING DVD ●●●●○

This film follows Suraj, 34, who has severe learning disabilities and is non-communicative. For more than two years, Suraj is filmed while his SLT, therapy assistants and carers use 'Intensive Interaction' to reduce his self-harming behaviours, which include repeatedly punching himself in the head to the point of splitting the skin.

Intensive Interaction encourages others to join in with someone's behaviours. The approach treats all people as intentional communicators in their natural modality, rather than expecting them to adapt to others' expectations for social interactions. This allows the team to discover that Suraj relaxes when they mirror his hitting rhythm or when they introduce new rhythms, such as clapping, hitting a drum or shaking bells. Increasing these activities reduces his self-harm and the team conclude that 'perhaps rhythm is his language'.

The film is very insightful and accessible. I can see it being a good resource to introduce the concept of intensive interaction for SLT students or for carers new to working with severe disability.

BOOK

Communicating across dementia

AUTHOR: Stephen Miller

PUBLISHER: Constable and Robinson

PRICE: £9.98

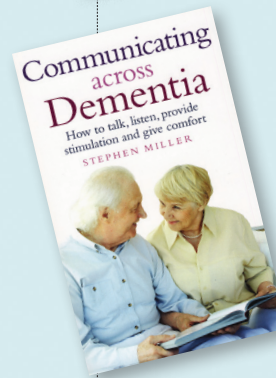
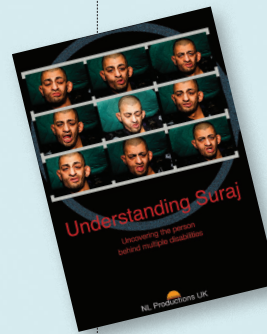
REVIEWER: Gillian McAlister, Consultant SLT, Go Communicate Consulting, NI

RATING Book ●●●●●

I highly recommend this book to anyone who has contact with people with memory difficulties or dementia/Alzheimer's disease. The title adds, "how to talk, listen, provide stimulation and give comfort". There are 12 chapters and the introduction provides a thoughtful and touching insight into the difficulties for people with memory difficulties and their carers.

While there is no chapter dedicated to carers looking after themselves, there is an emphasis on the carer making decisions about the level or effectiveness of the communication strategies, language type/level, non-verbal communication and activities to try. The chapters in these areas are well presented with frequent headings and good explanations with examples, making it easier for non-professionals to gain a deeper insight into strategies and activities.

Miller frequently refers to the need for the carer/professional to change their own methods of communication and attitudes to the person with memory loss/dementia. Other chapters look briefly at challenging behaviour, legal issues such as wills and care homes.



APP

Talk Around It HOME

PUBLISHER: Neuro Hero Ltd.

PRICE: £19.99

REVIEWER: Jessica Allen, SLT, Allen Speech and Language, Essex

RATING APP ●●●●○

There are four versions of the Talk Around It app including the categories of Personal, Nature, Men and Home. All use the Semantic Feature Analysis technique to support word retrieval for patients with word finding difficulties. It is the Home version that has been reviewed in this instance.

The app is well designed with a very clear layout and is intuitive with a library of clear pictures to choose from. There is a vast array of sound and written cues including first sound, first syllable, noise, information and sentence completion. The test section allows you to choose from 10, 50 or favourite words and provides a final score, which is plotted on a graph and can be compared to previous or future tests.

When working with clients, I found the app would benefit from increasing the amount of pictures and organising them into categories, such as food, inside the home and the garden. Some of the items make no noise as such and therefore the 'noise' cues are tenuous in these instances.

Overall, the app has a user-friendly interface and I would recommend

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