Interventions for African Americans with Aphasia

Collaborative Communication in Multicultural Aphasia Intervention
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The Need

- Relatively low number of African American SLP/Aud professionals
- Inadequate educational preparation to serve African American adults
- Lack of population-specific assessment and treatment protocols
- Lack of evidence-based interventions for African American adults
The Need

– Large population segment
– Higher incidence of morbidity and chronic disability\textsuperscript{1, 2}
– Higher risk for medical conditions associated with aphasia\textsuperscript{1, 2}
– Least likely to volunteer as participants in research investigations\textsuperscript{3}
Evidence-Based Practice

- Best available research-based information
- Clinical expertise
- Client preferences

The road to EBP
Basic Assumptions

- Human communication cannot be fully understood without considering the cultural context in which it develops and the social context in which it is used.
- Socially and culturally congruent clinical services will be more effective.
- African American professionals are obligated to serve as cultural mediators between cultures.
Heterogeneity

- Traditional: immersed in culture of origin
- Bicultural: Equally immersed in culture of origin and mainstream culture
- Assimilated: Immersed mostly in the dominant (mainstream) culture.
Informal Assessment of Acculturation

- Age
- Literacy level
- Educational attainment
- Urban or rural residency
- Standard English language proficiency
Case Study

- 56 year-old
- African American woman
- Divorced, lives alone
- Non-remarkable pre-morbid medical history, except for controlled HTN
- College educated, financial consultant
- Motor vehicle accident
- Traumatic brain injury
- LOC for less than 10 minutes
- Nausea, lethargy, mild disorientation
- Hospital admission
Mainstream Profile
- Social identity
  - Corporate worker
  - Middle-class values
- Religious affiliation

- Communicative style
  - Standard American English
  - Low context style

Ethnocultural Profile
- Social identity
  - Single, Black working professional
  - Sorority member
- Religious affiliation
  - Choir member
  - Trustee
  - Financial advisor
- Communicative style
  - Code switching
  - High context style
Cultural Adaptation

- Consider communicative roles and contexts
  - Vocational
  - Social interactions
  - Community affiliations
  - Role-maintenance and communicative needs
Some Core African American Values

- Resilience
- Resourcefulness
- Religiosity
- Expressiveness
- Transcendence
- In-group/out-group distinctions
What We Need to Know

- Incidence and prevalence of language impairing disorders in adults from CLD backgrounds
- Culturally defined thresholds for “disordered” in cognition, language, and communication
What We Need to Know

- Extent of knowledge regarding the prevention and treatment of acquired communicative disorders
- Relative effectiveness of culturally-adapted therapeutic and supportive communication interventions
Selected References


