

## COMMUNI-CARE: LABORATORY WHICH SEEKS TO INCREASE COMMUNICATION ALL THESE STRATEGIES ARE INCLUDED IN THE WOCE™ PROGRAM DOTT.SSA S.LANDI, DOTT.SSA F.BENASSI, DOTT.SSA M.PEROTTI

### WOCE™ (Written Output Communication Enhancement) WHAT IS IT?

WOCE™ is not a method but a set of strategies aimed at supporting social, cognitive and communication development.

It is a cognitive training centred on mental flexibility, on those abilities implying the acquisition of a communication process, symbolic and non symbolic abilities aimed at communication, and also supporting written language as an alternative to spoken language. WOCE™ addresses adults or growing people with communication and verbal difficulties, congenital or acquired.

#### The training consists of strategies to:

- develop intentional pointing to foster communication
- rehabilitate voluntary motor planning and pointing as a form of sharing in a communication exchange.

Through our strategies we also support development of an insufficient verbal language.

### PHASE 1

Support in input processing: put together sound and image; Attention and Supervisor Attention System; Procedure Memory; Turn taking and reciprocal interaction; Imitation, gesture and action; Construction of a shared vocabulary through pictures and words; Pointing structuring; Cognitive enrichment; Involvement of all persons in life context through coordinating meetings. Helping a person to perform an action, make a choice, learn turn taking, show, demonstrate, build pointing abilities, react to verbal facilitation, is the basis to build a shared context. The subsequent phases allow the person with impaired communication to develop a shared communication using codes alternative to verbal language.

### PHASE 2

As suggested by I. Rapin and her colleagues, persons with severe communication impairment, like in ASD, and or receptive language disturbances, but also verbal dyspraxia, take advantage of communication boards, sign language, computer assisted language learning, reading and other communication technologies.

These supports should be available as early as possible in order to:

- increase the level of language learning;
- exploit to the best the period useful to the child for language learning.
- minimize the behaviour consequences secondary to inadequate communication ability.
- anticipate potential subsequent consequences through the acquisition of written language.

### WRITTEN AND SPOKEN LANGUAGE

(M.S.Gazzaniga). Each linguistic functioning model must confront with "how" words are represented. The first task of a listening or reading person is that of identifying heard or written words. It is necessary to carry out the input perceptive analysis, a pre-lexical process which doesn't involve mental lexicon. The main difference between visual and auditive modes lies in "how much" the information is segmented. In a writing process spaces dividing words and sentences are more evident than in spoken language, furthermore punctuation supports the understanding of a sentence.

Reading and writing are often simpler to learn than verbal language production and comprehension because reading and writing allow a time for re-reading, for planning, revising and reducing information necessary to understand a written word.

### Language is communication but also...

- **Communication:** Development of the communicative purpose and of the autonomy
- **Thought classifier:** Use of the language as a thought classifier
- **Driver of the behaviour:** Use of the language to settle of the process of rehabilitation, in all the functions that we want to re-habilitate or enable
- **Lev Vygotskij**
- People, at any age, aren't composed by different separated functions (cognitive abilities, autonomies, social relationships, communication ecc.)...
- ...these fields are indeed interconnected

The workshop has the aim to

- increase the opportunity of communication
- increase the communicative purpose

for guys who learnt in the late childhood or in the teenage, alternative ways of communication.

Communi-care intend to increase the opportunities to communicate with

- new partners
  - in contexts different from usual ones
  - different tools
- analyzing the ways of communication activated and offering to the guy suitable strategies

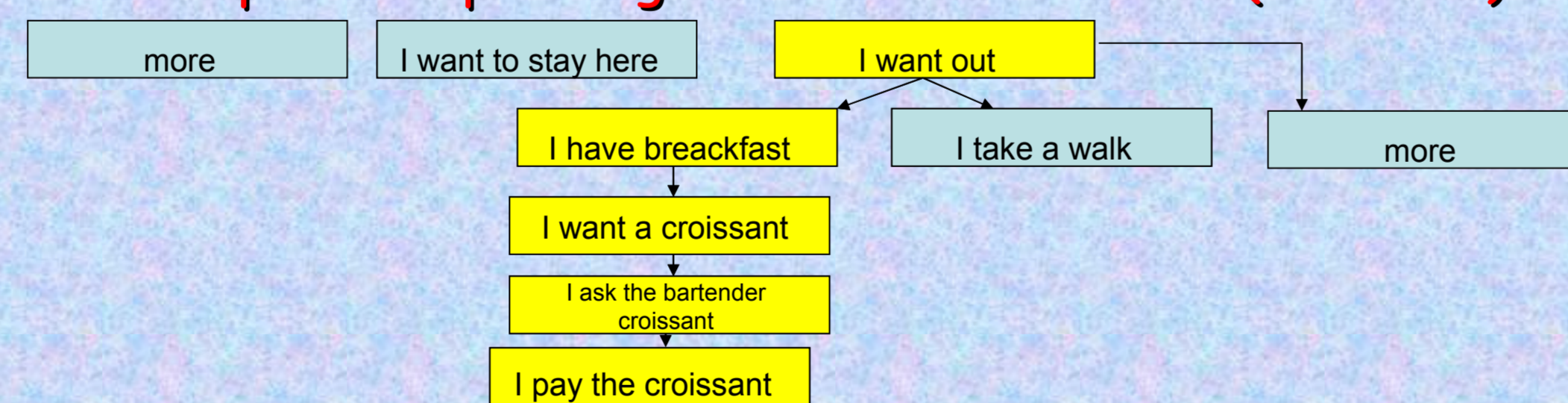
We would like to motivate  
*The capacity of willful choice*  
*The self-determination*  
*The communication*



Using ways of AAC low technology  
Mainly alternative writings, cards with images, conceptual maps

Those who use the verbal language receive an aid to increase la contextualization with the help of pointing at.

- The workshop is for boys and girls with serious communication disturbances and with **verbal language absent or very narrow and non operational who learnt the independent pointing and the written code (WOCE™)**.



- The guys who will take part to the workshop have difficulties to communicate in contexts different from the usual ones and with people they haven't met before.

The workshop is divided into quarters that plan a periodical test of the communicative strategies used according to

- *the frequency* (how many times they are used),
- *the effectiveness* (how many times they are used with an objective performance)
- *the efficiency* (how much and who understands the communication you use i.e. baker, cashier, driver..)

### RESULTS FOR CASE 1 QUARTERLY TEST (from November 2008 to March 2009) OF THE COMMUNICATIVE STRATEGIES

The usage of the verbal language is always present, but if during the initial phase an incongruity between the verbal language and the pointing at has been recorded, this incongruity decreases going on with the meetings. The verbal language is used in a more effective way compared to the first meetings. The use of the alternative writings is more careful and, if at the beginning S. started on impulse to point at, now we notice an usage more weighted and thoughtful. Regarding the communicative partners, S. shares more the communication also with people who haven't met before (baker, cashier.)

### The program plans:

- Description of the actual ways of communication and of the autonomies with a self-carried out survey filled by the parents; Sparrow, S., Balla, D., & Cicchetti, D. (1984). Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales. Blackstone, S., Hunt Berg, M., (2003). Social Network
- Video of the ways of communication at home;
- Activities in different places with different people;
- Video of the ways of communication tested in new places with new people;
- Return of the experience to the families

Each meeting is divided into three phases:

- 1) **The ideation** the guy choses and plans the activity to do;
- 2) **The production** of the activity;
- 3) **The reconstruction** of the activity and the reasoning about what happened using both the wordprocessing and the images.

### An involvement of the families

is planned in the phase of the reconstruction to get the guys used to share the experience done and to reconstruct it.

The reconstruction of the action allows also to work on the **episodic and procedural memory**.

The work on the language is indeed important not only for the communication but also for the **growth in awareness and movement**.