



MAY 12-16 2025 · CHICAGO, IL USA · REHABWEEK.ORG



**Category:** Research

**Workshop Title:** Who's Missing from Our Dataset? A Practical Workshop on How to Grow Your "n" by Including and Supporting Individuals with Communication Disabilities in Research

**Organizer(s):** Elissa Larkin

**Speaker(s):** Chrzastowski, Stacy, Shirley Ryan AbilityLab, Center for Aphasia Research and Treatment

Hurwitz, Rosalind, Shirley Ryan AbilityLab, Center for Aphasia Research and Treatment

Kinsey, Laura, Shirley Ryan AbilityLab, Center for Aphasia Research and Treatment

Sayers, Matthew, Shirley Ryan AbilityLab, Center for Aphasia Research and Treatment

**Workshop Time:** 13:45 - 15:15

**Attendee Engagement:** Workshop attendees will gain hands-on guided practice on conversational support strategies to facilitate involving people with communication disabilities (CD) in research. Attendees will receive example accessible outcome measures, recruitment and consent documents, and be encouraged to bring study materials (e.g., fliers, consent forms, surveys, etc.) to the workshop to receive feedback from research speech-language pathologists on ways to make research materials more communication accessible.

**Abstract:** In the U.S., people living with a communication disability (CD) comprise 10% of the population (Morris et al., 2016). Global estimates project there will be 190 million people with CD in low- and middle-income countries by 2025 (Jagoe et al., 2021). CD is associated with many targets of common rehabilitation research (e.g., stroke, TBI), however people with CD are often excluded as participants (Shiggins et al., 2024). To maximize representation and applicability of findings, people with CD must be included as participants. Inclusion of people with CD in research often requires communication accommodations and modifications to the consent process, interventions, and outcome measures. Many researchers lack critical skills to meet the varied communication needs of CD research participants. This results in exclusions of people with CD, compromising validity and limiting the generalization of findings. Communication partner training (CPT; Simmons-Mackie et al., 2016) is an evidence-based instruction method on communication challenges and strategies to accommodate the needs of people with CD. CPT can be delivered to communication partners individually or in combination with a person with CD (Cruice et al., 2018). In this session, attendees will hear from experts living with CD, who will share their personal perspectives and their experiences as research participants. Additionally, we will discuss CD-accessible considerations for recruitment, consent, interventions, and outcome measures and offer participants opportunities to workshop their own study materials. Attendees will walk away with additional training resources, tools, and skills to expand their "n" through inclusion of people with CD in rehabilitation research.