

5. Volkmer, A., Spector, A., Swinburn, K. *et al.* Using the Medical Research Council framework and public involvement in the development of a communication partner training intervention for people with primary progressive aphasia (PPA): Better Conversations with PPA. *BMC Geriatr* 21, 642 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12877-021-02561-8>

*Background;* Primary progressive aphasia is a language-led dementia resulting in a gradual dissolution of language. Primary progressive aphasia has a significant psychosocial impact on both the person and their families. Speech and language therapy is one of the only available management options, and communication partner training interventions offer a practical approach to identify strategies to support conversation. The aim of this study was to define and refine a manual and an online training resource for speech and language therapists to deliver communication partner training to people with primary progressive aphasia and their communication partners called Better Conversations with primary progressive aphasia.

*Methods;* The Better Conversations with primary progressive aphasia manual and training program were developed using the Medical Research Council framework for developing complex interventions. The six-stage development process included 1. Exploratory review of existing literature including principles of applied Conversation Analysis, behaviour change theory and frameworks for chronic disease self-management, 2. Consultation and co-production over 12 meetings with the project steering group comprising representatives from key stakeholder groups, 3. Development of an initial draft, 4. Survey feedback followed by a consensus meeting using the Nominal Group Techniques with a group of speech and language therapists, 5. Two focus groups to gather opinions from people with PPA and their families were recorded, transcribed and Thematic Analysis used to examine the data, 6. Refinement.

*Results;* Co-production of the Better Conversations with primary progressive aphasia resulted in seven online training modules, and a manual describing four communication partner training intervention sessions with accompanying handouts. Eight important components of communication partner training were identified in the aggregation process of the Nominal Group Technique undertaken with 36 speech and language therapists, including use of video feedback to focus on strengths as well as areas of conversation breakdown. Analysis of the focus groups held with six people with primary progressive aphasia and seven family members identified three themes 1) Timing of intervention, 2) Speech and language therapists' understanding of types of dementia, and 3) Knowing what helps. These data informed refinements to the manual including additional practice activities and useful strategies for the future.

*Conclusions;* Using the Medical Research Council framework to develop an intervention that is underpinned by a theoretical rationale of how communication partner training causes change allows for the key intervention components to be strengthened. Co-production of the manual and training materials ensures the intervention will meet the needs of people with primary progressive aphasia and their communication partners. Gathering further data from speech and language therapists and people living with primary progressive aphasia and their families to refine the manual and the training materials enhances the feasibility of delivering this in preparation for a phase II NHS-based randomised controlled pilot-feasibility study, currently underway.