

# No More Questions: Using Comments to Elicit Functional Communication

Brianna Rein M.A. CCC-SLP, CBIS

Adler Aphasia Center

## What is Conversation?

### Conversational Makeup

- **Dialogue Modeling:** Natural conversation typically consists of approximately 36% statements, 19% opinions, and only 5.9% to 12% questions. (Stolcke et al., 2000)

### Core Components:

- **Syntax:** The formal structure of the language used.
- **Semantics:** The literal meaning behind the language.
- **Pragmatics:** The social meaning, which includes the use of statements, questions, and directives.

### Sentence Types:

- Questions
- Declaratives
- Exclamatives
- Directives

### Types of Questions

- **Closed Questions:** typically lead to brief, specific answers
  - **Yes/No Questions**
  - **Declarative/Tag Questions**
  - **Conductive Questions**
- **Open-Ended Questions:** more detailed responses
  - **Wh-Questions:** Who, what, where, when, why, and how.
- **Alternative Questions:** Offering a choice between two or more options.
- **Testing Knowledge:** Questions specifically designed to assess what the patient knows ("What is this?" or "What do you do if you run out of medicine?").

(Collins, 2020)

## Purpose of Questions

In a therapeutic setting, questions serve functions beyond gathering facts. (Freed, 1994)

- **Gaining Information:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- **Assessing Knowledge:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- **Stimulating Thought:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- **Engaging and Connecting:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- **Solving Problems:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- **Guiding and Influencing:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Purpose of Statements

Comments often provide more functional communication and personal information than structured questioning. (Collins, 2020)

- **Providing Facts and Additional Information:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- **Sharing Opinions and Analyzing:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- **Clarifying and Interpreting:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- **Using Humor:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- **Providing Motivation:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- **Giving Directives:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Evidence for Conversation-Based Therapy

Research indicates that conversation-based therapy improves functional outcomes across various disorders and align with Person-Centered Care.

## **Aphasia**

- **Increased Language Production:** A study of 48 people with chronic aphasia found significant improvement in language production (measured by the "complete utterance method") following 10 weeks of conversation group treatment (1 hour, 2x/week).

(Hoover et al., 2025)

- **Functional Gains:** Research on 91 individuals with moderate-to-severe aphasia showed significant improvements in functional communication (CADL-3) and patient-reported outcomes (ACOM) in both dyadic and large group settings.

(DeDe et al., 2025)

- **Social Participation:** The **ECoLoGiC-Tx** approach focuses on communicating personally relevant information to improve typical conversation and self-repair, resulting in generalized gains on standardized tests like the WAB-R and CADL-3.

(Leaman & Edmonds, 2024)

- **Life Participation Approach to Aphasia**

## **Cognition**

- **Life Integration Approach (LIA):** This evidence-based method for cognitive-communication rehabilitation addresses barriers by incorporating advocacy, adaptability, and real-world strategies into daily clinical practice.

(MacDonald, 2025)

## **Voice**

- **Conversation Training Therapy (CTT):** Research shows CTT is effective for benign vocal fold lesions. CTT groups achieved equal gains in just 2 sessions compared to 4–8 sessions of traditional voice therapy.

(Gillespie et al., 2019)

## **Dysarthria**

- **Communicative Participation:** For Dysarthria, management has shifted toward "communicative participation"—how a person communicates in real-life roles like work and family—rather than focusing solely on speech intelligibility.

(Page & Yorkston, 2022)

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brein@adleraphasiacenter.org

## Clinical Application:

### When to use questions, directives, and comments

#### **Questions**

- Start of session
- Goals
- Session activity
- Session review
- Activity planning
- Patient preference

#### **Directives**

- Assessing patient understanding
- Directions
- Performance feedback
- Session activity
- Session/ task review

#### **Comments**

- Conversation
- Humor
- Analyzing
- Clarifying
- Additional information
- Motivation
- Giving support
- Repetition
- Building rapport
- Summarize
- Reflect
- Validate
- Reframe
- Guide
- Collaborate
- Focus
- Teach Back
- Paraphrase

## Clinical Application:

### When to use questions, directives, and comments

<b>Expressive Language</b>	
Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li></ul>
Directives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li></ul>
Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li></ul>
Structured Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li></ul>

## Clinical Application:

### When to use questions, directives, and comments

<b>Receptive Language</b>	
Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• _____</li><li>• _____</li><li>• _____</li><li>• _____</li></ul>
Directives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• _____</li><li>• _____</li><li>• _____</li><li>• _____</li><li>• _____</li><li>• _____</li><li>• _____</li></ul>
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## Clinical Application:

### When to use questions, directives, and comments

<b>Cognition</b>	
Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li></ul>
Directives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li></ul>
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## Clinical Application:

### When to use questions, directives, and comments

<b>Dysarthria</b>	
Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li></ul>
Directives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li></ul>
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Structured Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li></ul>

## Clinical Application:

### When to use questions, directives, and comments

<b>Voice</b>	
Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li></ul>
Directives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li></ul>
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Structured Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li><li>● _____</li></ul>

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## Resources

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