

Speech and language therapy approaches for people living with Parkinson's

There is robust evidence for speech therapy approaches that focus on **volume and intelligibility** in Parkinson's. This might involve structured exercises or drills to achieve a louder volume. These exercises have predominantly been researched in those with mild-moderate Parkinson's symptoms, and require intensive input and practice. These exercises can make a difference to how loud someone speaks and how easy it is to be understood.

However, these approaches that focus on volume and speech exercises have certain **limitations**. Some people with Parkinson's and speech therapists report that:

- The exercises tackle just one aspect of communication
- It can be difficult to maintain progress made between and after therapy sessions
- It is difficult to transfer gains outside of therapy sessions to day to day life
- The exercises can be difficult to engage with
- These approaches do not necessarily involve family members or friends who are also affected by communication changes

The Better Conversations therapy programme is a different, **evidence-based** approach that aims to make **every day conversations easier and more engaging** for people living with Parkinson's. It considers multiple aspects of communication (for example gesture, facial expressions as well as words and volume) and includes **family members and friends** as key partners in improving conversations.