



PRAGMATIC LANGUAGE DEFICITS

Overcoming Difficulties

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PRAGMATIC LANGUAGE can be defined as the way we use language. It can be described as the understanding and expression of the rules of functional language.

People with neurological impairments such as aphasia or people within the autistic spectrum often are found to have pragmatic deficits in their language system. Difficulties in maintaining eye contact, correct interpretation of non-verbal cues, body placement in the communicative process, volume of speech, turn-taking skills and lack of ability to understand and deal with emotions are just some of the areas that may be deficient with a pragmatic disorder.

An example of an individual who has difficulty with eye contact is someone who has difficulty looking at a person while he or she is talking or when being talked to. This individual will often look up or down or position his/her body so as not to look at the person talking.

Incorrect interpretation of body cues is continuing to talk, even when a listener is trying to tell you he or she is no longer interested by moving away or yawning. Volume levels are usually much louder than necessary. Usually pitch and prosody (natural rhythm of speech) is noticeably different from normal.

People with difficulty in turn taking-skills often do not wait for the other person to finish before talking. It is common for them to interrupt others at inappropriate times during a conversation. People with pragmatic confusions do not understand or practice the same body space courtesies innate to the rest of us. They may stand too close to the speaker or listener as to make the other party uncomfortable.

Usually we can read another person's mood without words. We can sense when another person is frustrated, tired, sad, or excited. People with pragmatic disorders often seem to have difficulty with this perception.

A person with a difficulty with functional language may understand what an apple is. This person may even be able to say the word apple, but will not use these skills to tell the person sitting next to them to give him or her the apple when it is wanted.

Pragmatic language deficits can be diagnosed and treated in speech and language therapy. This can be very helpful to a person in the social and professional aspects of their lives. ✨