Low Tech Communication Strategies

**STEP 1 – ASSESS**

1. **ASSESS COGNITION**
   - Is patient alert?
   - Can patient follow commands?
     - Raise your arm and make a fist.
     - Blink your eyes twice.

2. **ASSESS ORAL MOTOR SKILLS**
   - Are patient’s mouth movements clear when mouthing speech?
     - Count from 1 to 10.
     - Tell me what your first job was (in a sentence).

3. **ASSESS COMPREHENSION**
   - Does the patient need support with comprehension?
     - Does the patient use glasses/hearing aid?
     - Are they available?
     - Any language barriers?

4. **ASSESS EXPRESSIVE COMMUNICATION**
   - Does patient have a reliable yes and no signal?
     - How does patient signal yes? _______
     - How does patient signal no? _______
   - Can the patient point?
     - Point to your feet.
     - Point to your (name of family member) in person or in a photo.
   - Can the patient write?(assess literacy & motor ability)
     - Write your name.
     - Write your favorite color.

**STEP II - PROVIDE COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES**

- Hearing Aids/Glasses
  - Audiology consult
- Get Attention & Face
- Pause Time
- Clear Yes/No
- Confirm Message
- Procedure Boards
- Written key words
- Nurse Gestures

**STEP III – CHOOSE STRATEGY BASED ON ORAL MOTOR SKILL**

- **Limited Articulation**
  - Go to other side
  - Mouthing w/ exaggeration
  - Mouthing with first letter spelling

- **Good Articulation**
  - Proceed to next action
  - Engage SLP or translator services if non-English speaking or illiterate.
**STEP IV – CHOOSE STRATEGIES FOR EXPRESSIVE COMMUNICATION**

- **Limited upper motor skills**
- **Good Cognition**

**Limited cognition**

- **Tagged Yes-No**
- **Pt. Gesture-Signal List**
- **Simple Picture Boards**
- **Written Choice**
- **Partner Assisted Scanning**

**Good Cognition**

- **Pt. Gesture - Signal**
- **Alphabet board**
- **Picture Boards**
- **Complex Communication Boards**
- **Writing**
- **Electronic tablet applications**

**Limited upper motor skills**

- **Tagged Yes-No**
- **Pt. Gesture-Signal List**
- **Simple Picture Boards**
- **Written Choice**
- **Partner Assisted Scanning – topics**

*Consult Speech Language Pathologist (SLP) for complex strategies or if selected strategies are unsuccessful.*