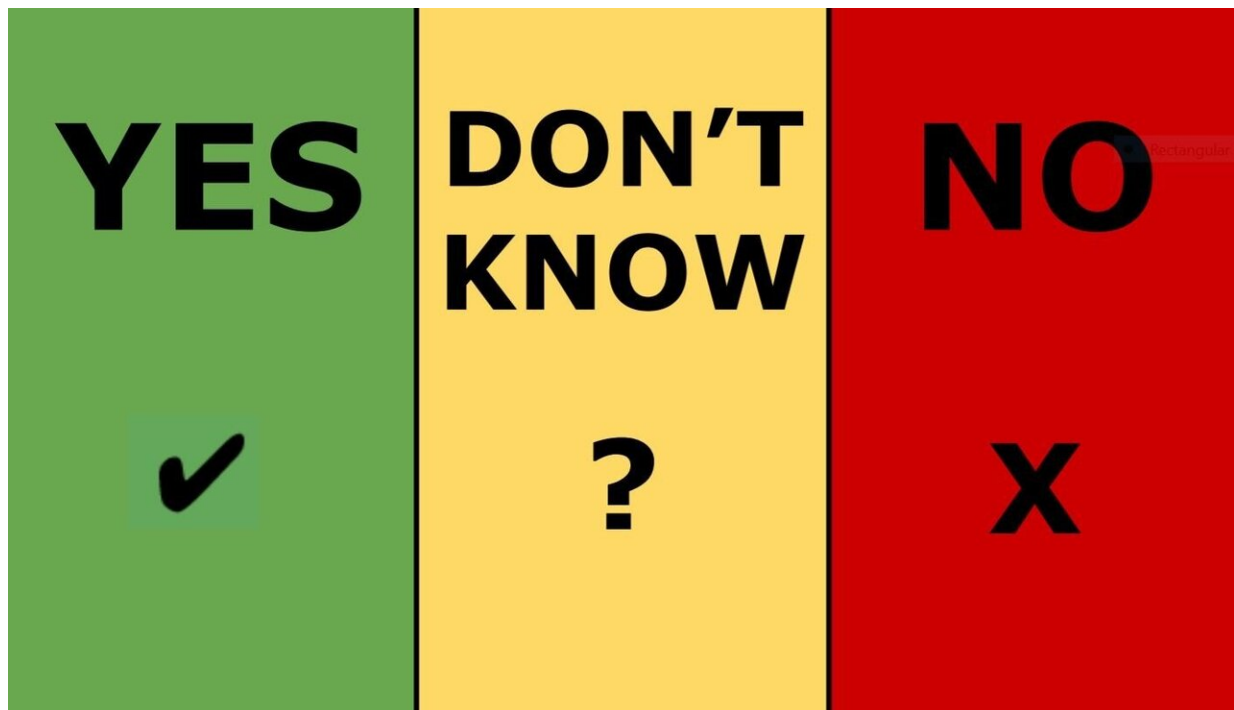


New tools help healthcare professionals communicate with COVID-19 patients

March 26 2020



Credit: SPEACS

Speech-language experts from The Ohio State University and across the country have teamed up to produce a [free online suite of tools and resources](#) for healthcare professionals to utilize in the treatment and care of patients battling COVID-19 who are unable to speak.

Speech-language pathologists, nursing leaders and engineers from the Patient-Provider Communication (PPC) Forum developed the toolkit with support from the U.S. Society of Augmentative and Alternative Communications.

As the [coronavirus](#) pandemic worsens, experts anticipate a dramatic increase in patients who require intubation and mechanical ventilation to aid in their breathing. Intubated patients cannot speak, but the tools and resources provided by the Forum provide opportunities to communicate with these patients and support their ongoing treatment.

Mary Beth Happ, associate dean of research and innovation at the College of Nursing, is a member of the PPC Forum and a co-creator of the [Study of Patient-Nurse Effectiveness with Assisted Communication Strategies](#) (SPEACS, pronounced "speaks") online communication training and demonstrations.

"We designed these tools to be low-tech, easy-to-use and, above all, helpful to clinicians on the front lines of the fight against this pandemic," said Happ. "The faster clinicians can understand what their patients are experiencing—especially those patients who cannot speak—the better they can respond to their patients' needs during treatment and recovery."

The tools available online, which can be used for patients of all ages, include:

- [Printable communication tools](#) to support communication between [healthcare professionals](#) and patients who cannot speak
- [Tips](#) to support bedside communication and prepare materials
- [List of resources](#) such as online learning modules, videos and free/low-cost communication materials
- [Contact information](#) for members of the PPC Forum who both

created these tools and are continually developing materials to aid in [communication](#) with patients who cannot speak

- [Unique case examples](#) of how the tools and resources can be used

The PPC Forum is in the process of developing tools in several [different languages](#), including Arabic, German, Hebrew, Italian, Mandarin, Portuguese and Spanish. Those multilingual materials will be available in a matter of days.

Provided by The Ohio State University

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