Writing Reports Anyone Can Understand

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Does “One Size” Fit All?

• To whom are you addressing the report?
• What is their level of sophistication about hearing and hearing loss?
• Why are you sending this report?
• What do you want the recipient to do about the information?
• Should you write different reports to different recipients?
Principles

• Write in the language of the recipient
• Don’t hide behind professional jargon
• Use functional terms wherever possible
• Do not spend hours teaching the audiogram
• Relate your comments and recommendations to things the reader can readily identify
The HEAR Report

• History, relevant background
• Evaluation--what you did
• Audiological Findings--what you found
• Recommendations--what you want the recipient to do about what you found
History, Relevant Background

• Reason for and source of referral
• Acknowledge the referral concerns
• Include ONLY relevant background
• Describe in non-technical terms
Let’s Try It

• Child did not pass newborn screening
• No pregnancy or birth complications
• No history of hearing loss in family
• Baby now 3 months and apparently healthy
• Parents feel baby responds adequately
• Occasional bouts of otitis media
What You Did

• Why you did what you did
• Describe in readily understandable terms
• NO JARGON!
• Describe test reliability in terms of the child’s responses
• Any difficulties you encountered
Let’s Try It

• Explain each of these procedures in layman’s terms so parent or teacher can understand:
  – Otoscopy
  – Tympanograms
  – Otoacoustic Emissions
  – Sedated ABR air and bone
  – Pure tone and speech thresholds
What You Found

- FUNCTIONAL TERMS, NO JARGON
- SEE ABOVE
- SEE ABOVE
- SEE ABOVE
- SEE ABOVE
- SEE ABOVE
Let’s Try It

• Describe test results functionally:
  – Otoscopy appeared normal
  – OAE’s absent bilaterally
  – Tympanograms normal
  – Sedated ABR mild to moderate sloping hearing loss by air conduction, similar bone responses
What You Recommend About What You Found

- Clearly define your recommendations in functional terms
- Clearly state who is to carry out each recommendation
- Set definite timelines
Let’s Try It

• Recommendations to parents
  – Examination by ENT
  – Earmold impressions
  – Hearing aid evaluation
  – Enrollment in early intervention ASAP
  – Hearing evaluation for siblings
Let’s Try It

• How would you change for primary care physician?
  – Examination by ENT
  – Earmold impressions
  – Hearing aid evaluation
  – Enrollment in early intervention ASAP
  – Hearing evaluation for siblings
The true test of a professional is the ability to translate the most complex concepts into language anyone can understand!