

Assessment of communication skills

– rehabilitation of severe brain injured patients having disorders of consciousness

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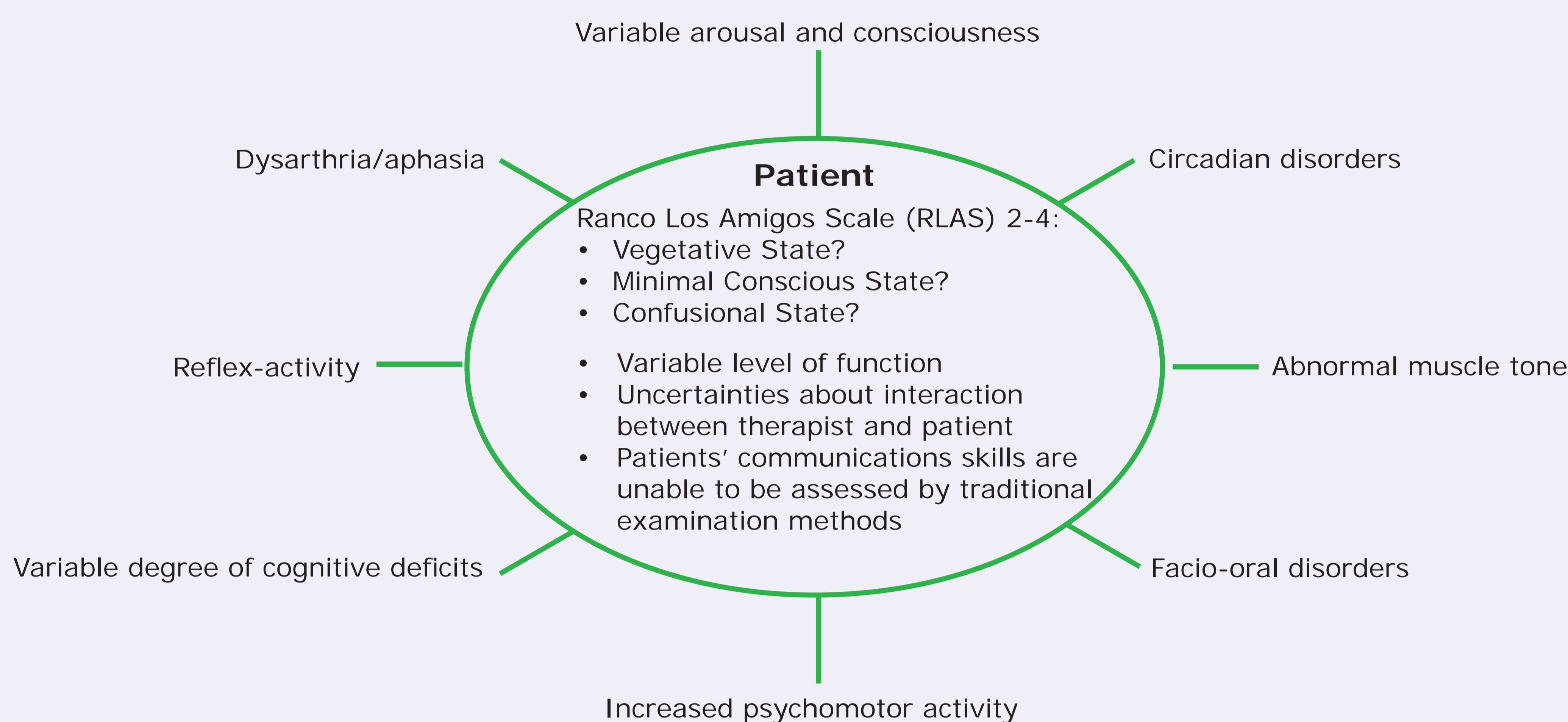
A project developed by Speech and Language Therapists and Occupational Therapists (OTs) at Hammel Neurorehabilitation and Research Centre, Regional Hospital in Central Jutland, Denmark

Aim

- Systematic assessment of communication skills
- Development of communication strategies tailored to patients having consciousness disorders

Focus for Occupational Therapist

- Patients' resources
- Activities and environmental conditions that facilitate contact and communication
- Integrate knowledge of patients' interests and motivations



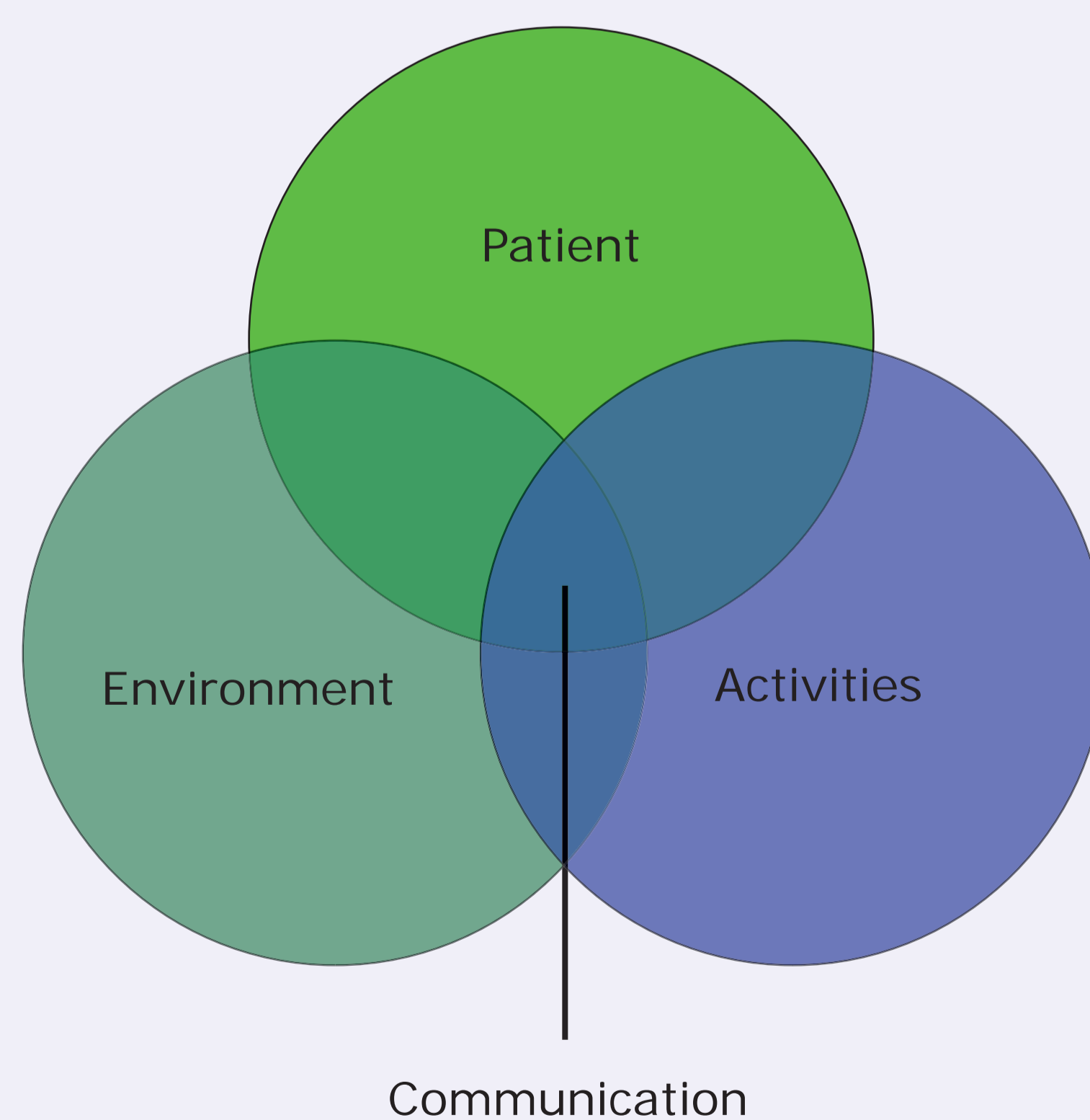
1) 72 hour observation in all activities	2) Coma Recovery Scale – Revised	3) Interviewing relatives
<p>Enables insight in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time and circumstances for best interaction and patient's level of functioning 	<p>Enables insight in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of consciousness • Auditory -, visual -, motor - and verbal function • Scale of communication (yes/no) • Arousal 	<p>Enables insight in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relatives' experience of contact and communication with the patient • The patients' communication skills in a meaningful and wellknown relation

Communication Strategy

Environment

Examples:

- Variation in caregiver approaches during activities
- Individually adjusted day-programmes, including frequent, short rests
- Use of a yes/no communication method
- Speak to the patient as if he/she understands
- Ask questions and expect an answer – providing the patient necessary time to answer
- Place the patient in a position that encourage communication
- Set up patients' room, e.g. with patients' private belongings
- Use of humor and intonation
- Communication aids/assistive technology for communication
- Further observations, tests and examinations



Activities

Examples:

- Activities that gives pleasure
- Activities that motivate
- Social activities
- Activities that stimulate the sensory system
- Visits from friends and relatives
- Further observations, tests and examinations