

Speech-Language Pathologists

Speech-Language Pathologists are autonomous professionals who have acquired an expertise in the area of human communication and its disorders. They are engaged in the prevention, identification, evaluation, assessment, counseling, research, treatment, management and education of/about communication and/or swallowing disorders. Communication disorders include disorders of speech, language, voice and fluency in individuals from all age groups. Services can be provided directly to the client or to those who interact with individuals with communication or swallowing disorders. Speech-Language Pathologists hold a Masters degree or equivalent to practice in Canada and are regulated in six provinces.

Speech-Language Pathologists may have the following responsibilities:

Responsibilities/Activities

Screening, identification, assessment, interpretation, diagnosis (restricted in some provinces), management, rehabilitation and prevention of speech and language disorders, including delayed and disordered language and/or speech to improve the client's ability to understand spoken and written language, convey ideas verbally and in writing, communicate in social situations as well as to improve articulation, intelligibility and fluency.

- **Screening, identification, assessment, interpretation, diagnosis,(restricted in some provinces) management and rehabilitation of disorders of:**
 - **the upper aerodigestive tract, including swallowing to ensure that clients are on safe diets and not at increased risk for choking; and voice dysfunction to improve vocal pitch, quality and loudness as well as to address those whose ability to vocalize has been affected by cancer of head, neck and throat;**
 - **cognitive communicative disorders such as those resulting from dementia, neurological impairment (ie Parkinson's disease, MS or injuries) to improve the reasoning, problem solving, memory and organizational skills required to communicate effectively;**

- **Assessment, selection and development of augmentative and alternative communication systems for those unable to communicate verbally and provision of training in their use;**
- **Provision of counseling and education services to clients, families, caregivers, and others regarding all aspects of communication and swallowing disorders;**
- **Provision of aural (re)habilitation and related counseling services to hearing impaired individuals and their families;**
- **Enhancement of speech-language proficiency and communication effectiveness (e.g., accent reduction)**
- **Screening of hearing and other factors for the purpose of speech-language evaluation and/or initial identification of individuals with other communication and swallowing disorders.**
- **Education and supervision of students and professionals**
- **Consultation with and referral to other professionals**

An audiologist is a professional who identifies, treats, and manages individuals with hearing loss or balance problems. Audiologists are also involved in prevention and research for hearing disorders. Audiologists have received a Master's or Doctoral degree from a university program. Their academic and clinical training provides the foundation for patient management from birth

through adulthood. Audiologists determine appropriate patient treatment of hearing and balance problems by combining a complete history with a variety of specialized auditory and vestibular assessments. Based upon the evaluation, the audiologist presents a variety of treatment options to patients with hearing impairment or balance problems. Some audiologists dispense and fit hearing aids as part of a comprehensive (re) habilitative program. Audiologists are regulated in six provinces.

Audiologists may have the following responsibilities:

Responsibilities/Activities:

The following is an overview of the broad range of services provided by audiologists to all age groups.

- Perform comprehensive evaluation of auditory function using behavioural, electroacoustic and electrophysiologic measures allowing to accurately identify the presence, configuration, degree and nature of auditory disorders.
- Determine the most effective treatment/management plan based on the test results obtained
- Prescribe, fit and dispense a variety of assistive listening devices including hearing aids, sensory aids, alerting devices and captioning devices.
- Provide counseling and aural (re) habilitation to maximize communicative skills and benefits of amplification
- Audiologic assessment and intervention for babies identified through newborn hearing screening
- Evaluate and treat some forms of tinnitus
- Evaluate vestibular function and make recommendations such as balance retraining therapy
- Develop, promote and manage hearing conservation programs for schools, government, industry etc.
- Cerumen management

Work collaboratively with other professionals including speech-language pathologists, physicians, nurses, teachers, psychologists, occupation and physiotherapists; appropriately refer patients in need of medical