

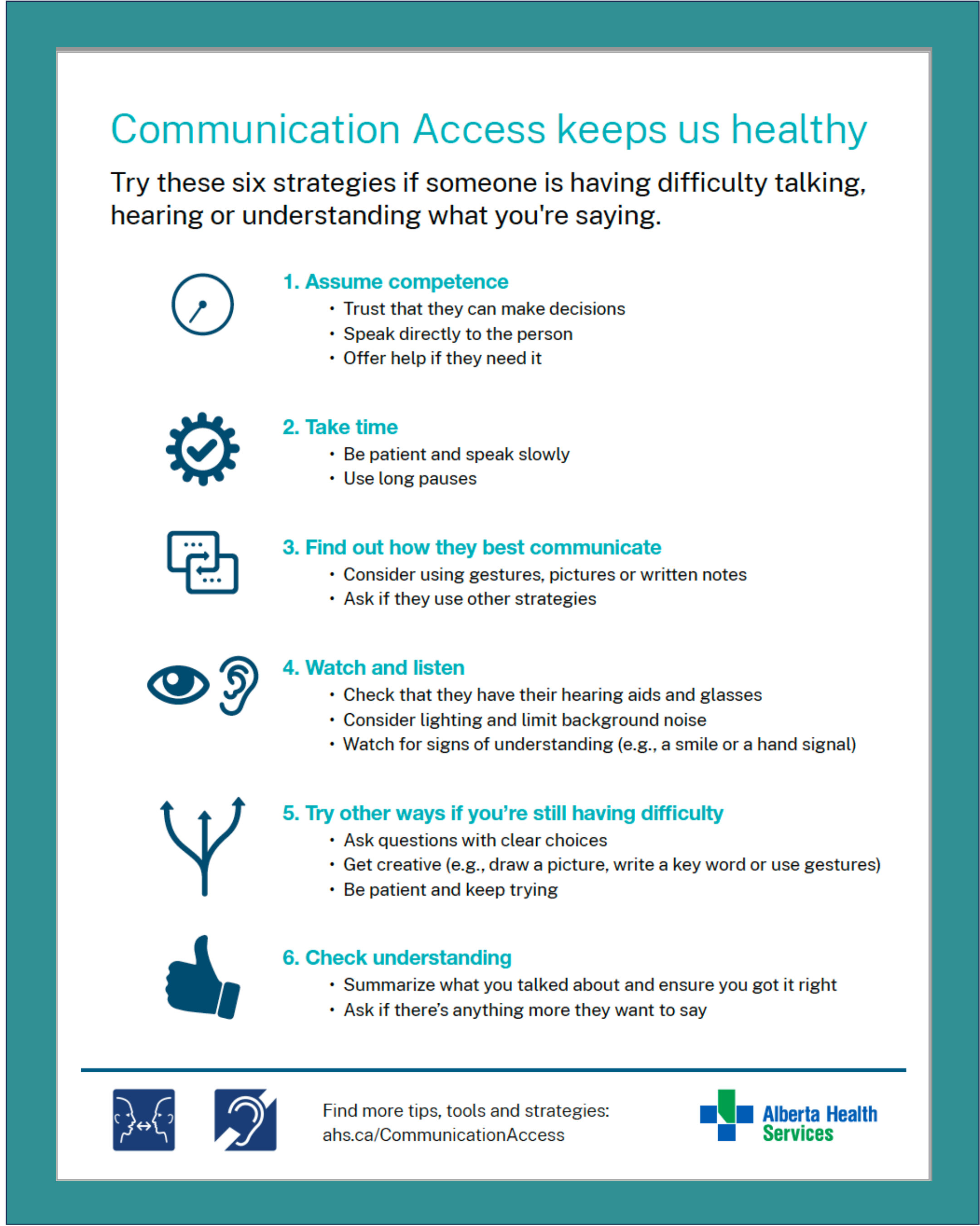
# Promoting Communication Access in Healthcare: Allied Health Provider Perspectives

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## Background

- Communication difficulties can impact a person's ability to access health services, resulting in poorer health outcomes, increased risk of adverse events, and reduced health-related quality of life.<sup>1-4</sup>
- AHS implemented a **Communication Access** initiative in 2018 to provide staff with resources and strategies to support effective communication with patients.
- Neither the uptake nor effectiveness of these resources have been formally evaluated until now.

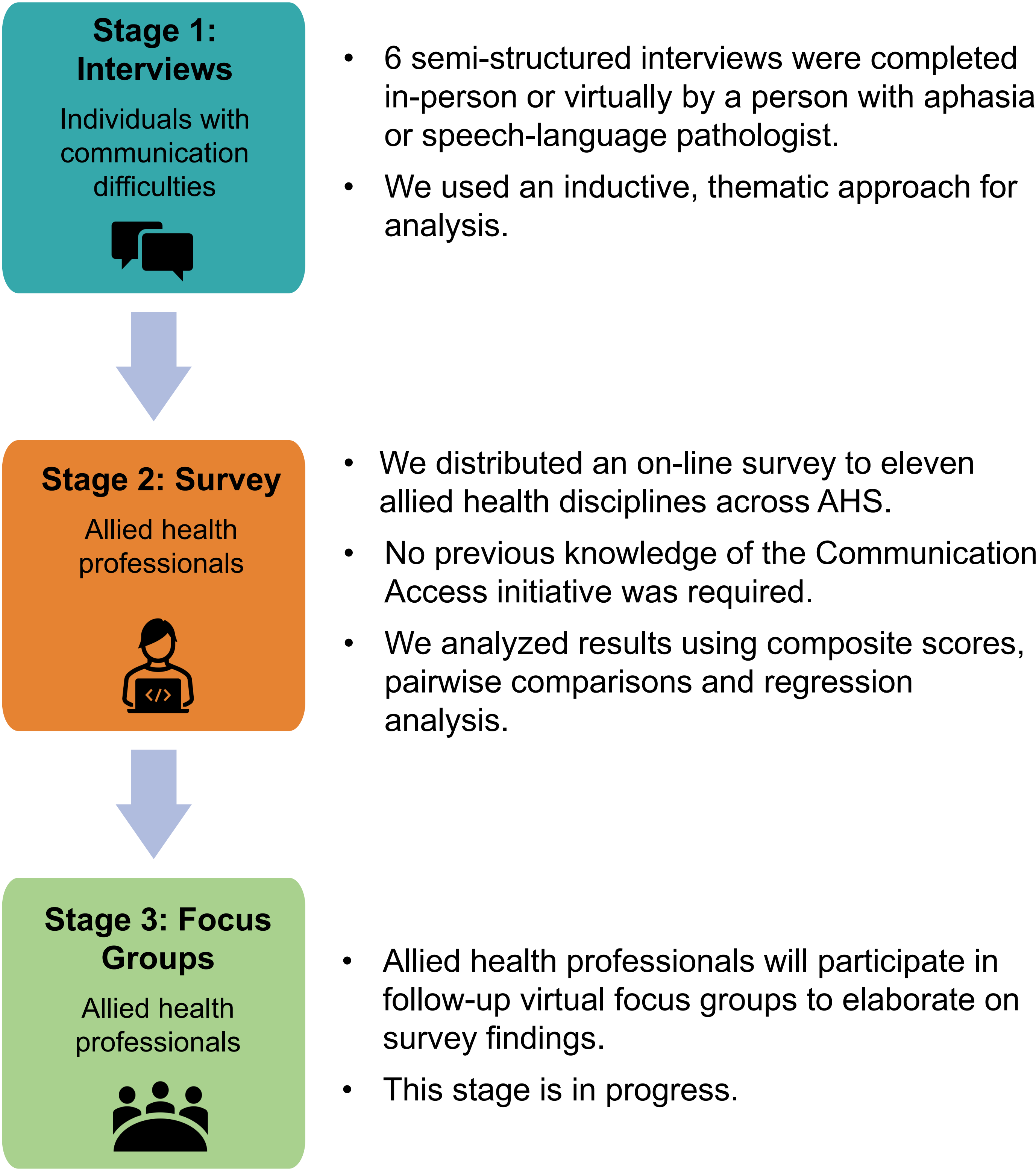


## Aim

- Guided by AHS's Patient-First Strategy, this study aimed to examine the:
- Experiences of current patients with communication difficulties within AHS.
  - Perspectives of allied health professionals in providing services to individuals with communication difficulties.

## Methods

This is a mixed methods study involving qualitative stakeholder engagement and survey methodology.



## Respondent characteristics (Stage 2)

- 417 allied health providers responded to the survey.

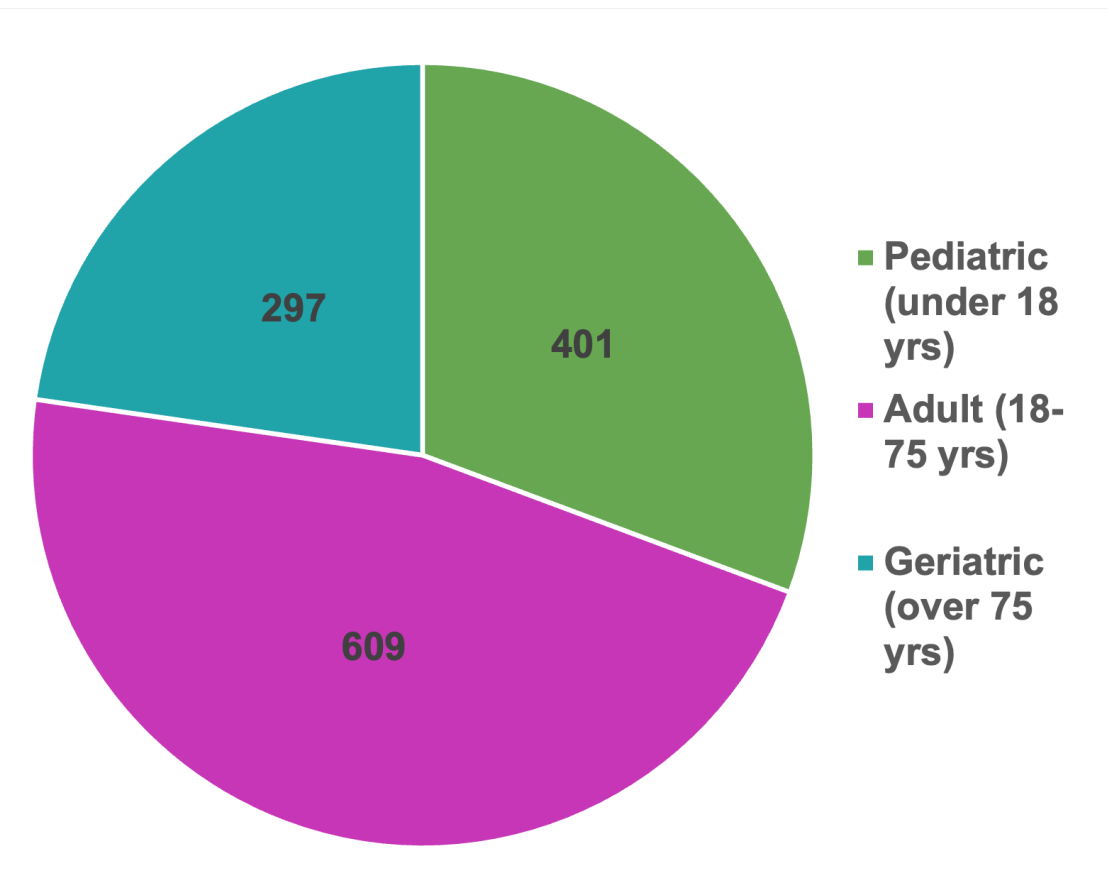


Figure 1. Patient population\*

\*Categories are not mutually exclusive

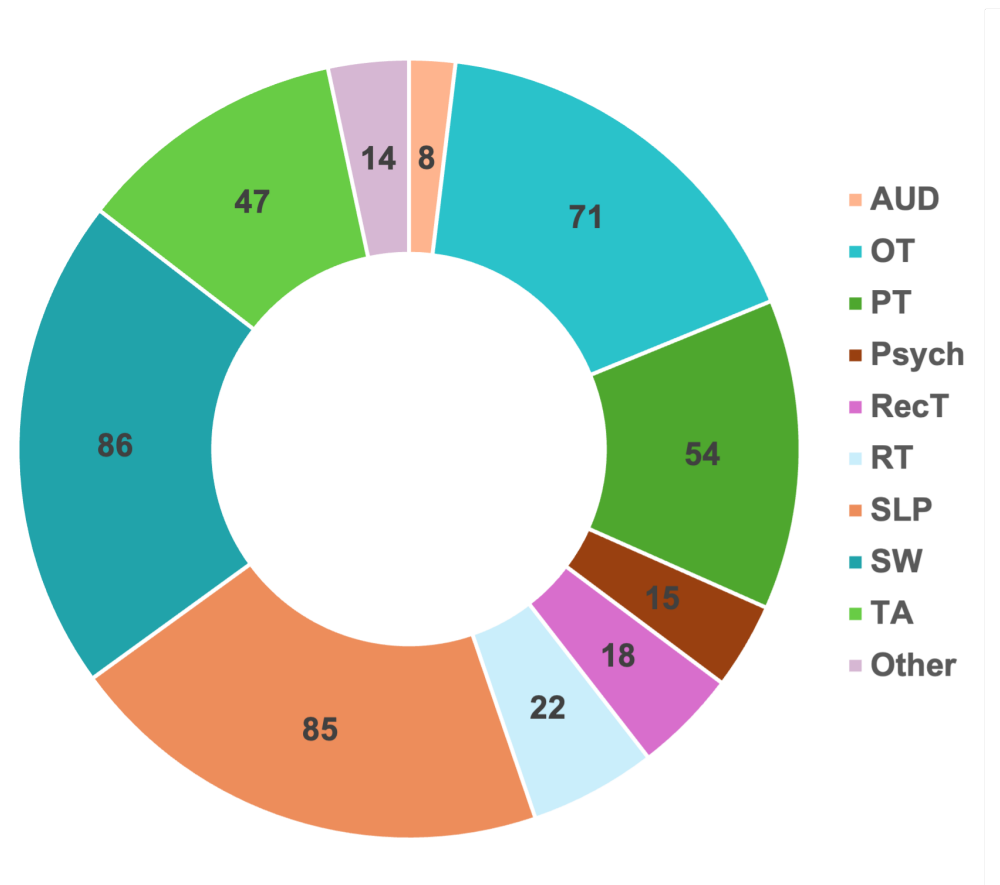


Figure 2. Allied health discipline

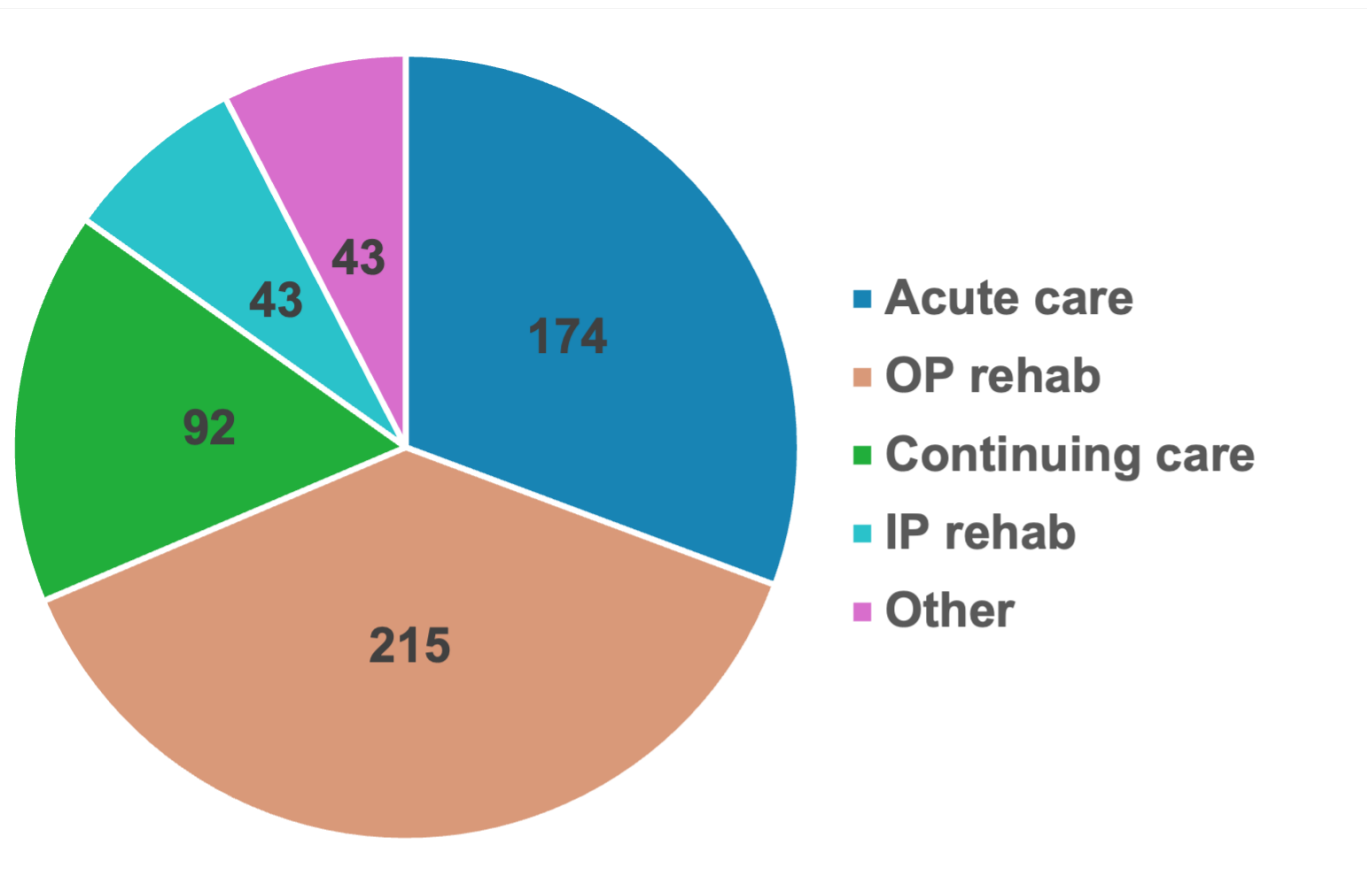


Figure 3. Clinical setting\*

Abbreviations: AUD, Audiologist; CD, Communication Disability; IP rehab, Inpatient rehabilitation; OP rehab, Outpatient rehabilitation; OT, Occupational Therapist; RecT, Recreation Therapist; RT, Respiratory Therapist; PT, Physical Therapist; Psych, Psychologist; SLP, Speech-Language Pathologist; SW, Social Worker; TA, Therapy Assistant

## Stage 2 Survey Results

- Allied health providers are **changing their communication** with patients with CD but have **lower self-reported knowledge of strategies and confidence** in interacting with these patients.
- Provider-informed **barriers** to communication access included: limited access to materials and resources, poor interdisciplinary practices; **enablers** included: provider-led initiatives and involving family members.

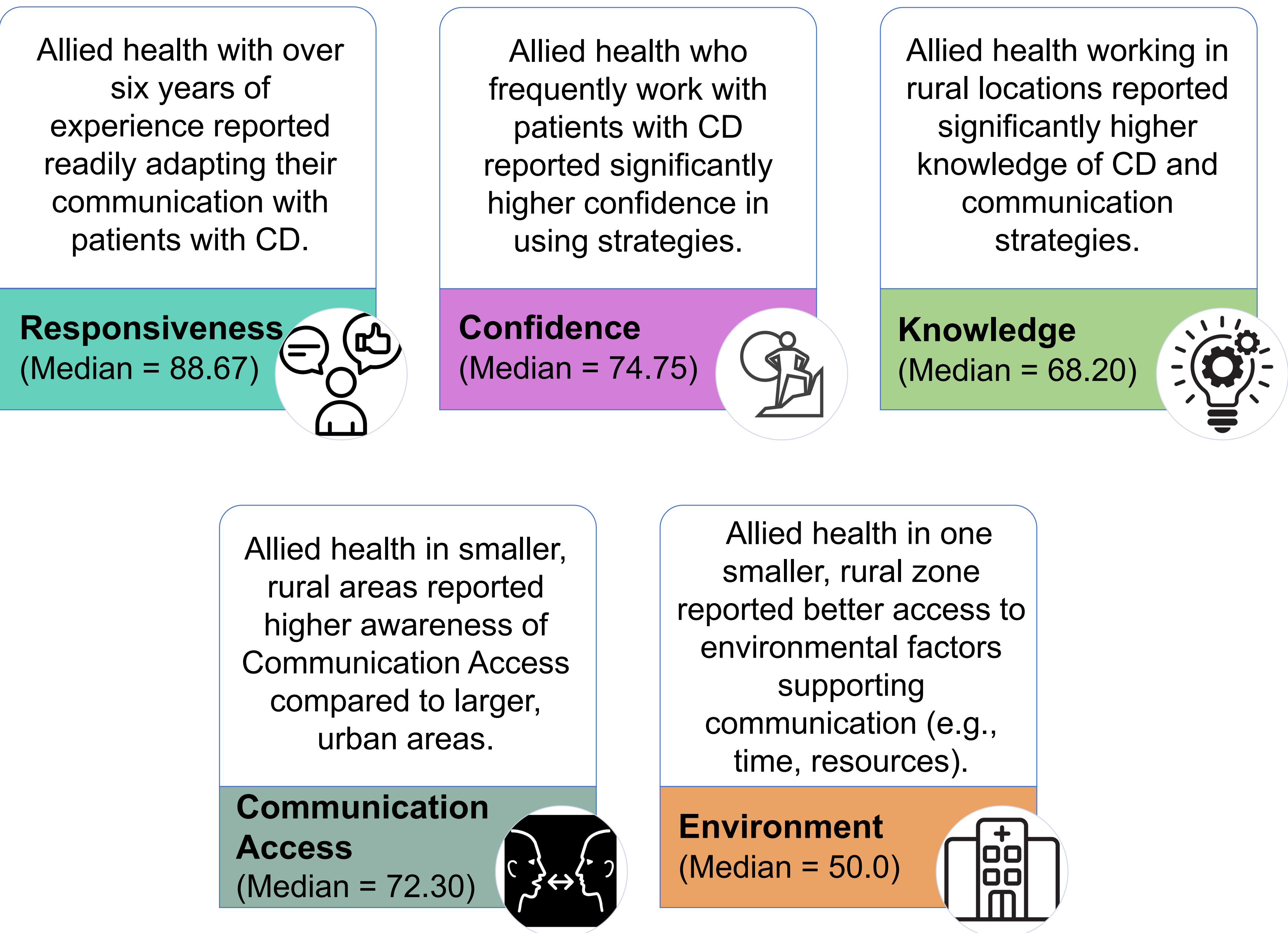


Figure 4. Sample composite scores for each of the five subscales measured in the survey.

## Next Steps

- Identifying factors impacting use of the Communication Access initiative will help to identify strategies to improve its accessibility and utilization.
- Findings across the three phases will be integrated to inform next steps in adapting and sustaining the Communication Access initiative.

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**Funding:** Speech-Language & Audiology Canada



Speech-Language & Audiology Canada  
Communicating care

**Acknowledgements:** Abbey Willes, Francesca Middleton, and AHS allied health staff

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