

## ABSTRACT LANGUAGE

- Abstract terms are ideas that are not related to our five senses (smell, touch, sight, hear, taste)
- We often use abstract terms when we communicate with one another to create a clearer “picture” of what we are saying
- Translating our ideas into abstract concepts requires high-level brain functioning



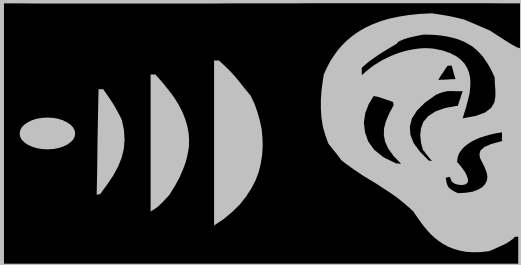
## ABSTRACT LANGUAGE AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

- People with DD may not always understand abstract language depending on which part of the brain is affected by their disability
- Sometimes people with DD use abstract language as a form of *social learning* or *echoing* what he/she has heard

***Don't assume that the person understands the abstract term just because he/she uses it***

## TIPS FOR USING LESS ABSTRACT LANGUAGE

- Reduce the number of words used to convey an idea
- Make eye contact and wait to see if what you said was understood
- Don't use abstract terms to 'soften' a message (E.g., your mother has passed away)
- Instead, use concrete terms (E.g., your mother has died)



It is important to rule out hearing or vision loss as possible causes of communication problems

### SOCIAL INTERACTION AND UNDERSTANDING

- A person's ability to engage in social interactions does not mean they understand the meaning of what is being said
- Alternately, a person's inability to engage in social interactions does not mean they are unable to understand the meaning

### EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION TIPS

- Reduce noise and distractions (including other people)
- Don't assume someone can/cannot understand what you're saying based on their verbal ability
- The more important the message, the clearer and less abstract it should be
- If you are doubt that the person understands, repeat the message using different words (E.g., "Get dressed" vs. "Put on your shirt")

### EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE

- Is the ability to produce speech and communicate a message (both verbal and non-verbal)
- Some people can understand more than they are able to say
- Expressive language disorders typically result in below-average vocabulary skills, improperly used tenses (past, present, future), problems making complex sentences or problems remembering words

### RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE

- Is how we understand what others communicate to us (verbal and non-verbal)
- Some people have a good vocabulary but don't ways understand what the words mean or may not understand what you mean when you use the same words
- Thus, receptive language disorders cause difficulty with understanding communication



**Expressive language involves a different part of the brain than receptive language. Therefore, damage to one part of the brain may impact only one aspect of communication**