



# The Missing Link for SLPs Podcast

## The Speechless SLP Series

freshslp.com

### Episode 108: The Speechless PT: The Experience of Treating a Colleague

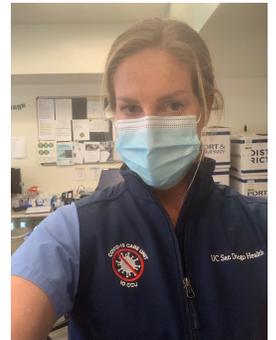
In this episode in the Speechless SLP series with Vanessa Abraham, we meet one of the first people to take care of her in the ICU, Shannon Cotton, RN. Care being the operative word, Shannon walks her talk. Shannon shares how she navigated and planned appropriate communication with Vanessa while she was speechless, the important role that SLPs working in ICUs play, and her suggestions for SLPs working with patients and their families.

#### Discussion & Reflection Questions

1. What tactics can you use personally to ensure you remain patient and give patients/clients enough time to respond and communicate to you?
2. How physically distanced are you from your clients/patients when you interact with them? Would they find it reassuring if you can safely and appropriately be closer to them and on their own level?
3. Are you working in a setting where it's okay to provide reassuring physical contact and touch to your patients/clients?
4. How are your observational skills? Are you good at picking up little signs and signals that may give further insight into how someone is?
5. Do you interact with family members/caregivers who can let you know if a patient/client is displaying symptoms, body language, or other characteristics outside of their norm?

#### Shannon Cotton, RN

Shannon Cotton has been a nurse for 15 years, with most of her time spent in critical care. She loves the challenge of caring for the sickest of the sick, and watching them heal. Shannon is passionate about learning and teaching, and is a PhD student at UC Irvine. Shannon currently lives in San Diego, CA, and spends most of her free time outdoors, at a beach or tasting a new beer from a local brewery.



Contact Shannon Cotton:  
[shannonacotton@gmail.com](mailto:shannonacotton@gmail.com)

#### Quote from the Conversation

*"You're constantly interviewing and triaging, but it's important to let the patient speak as well and to give that person time, especially in the ICU. Think of the whole person. Give that person time to react to your questions and to your interview because they do have something to say, even if they can't talk."*

- Shannon Cotton

## **Vanessa Abraham, MS, CCC-SLP**



Vanessa is a wife, mother and school based Speech-Language Pathologist. She learned firsthand what it's like to be on the receiving end of speech services after experiencing a sudden-onset critical illness that left her with limb and neck paralysis

as well as a PEG tube and tracheostomy. She was thrown into the rehabilitation world after being an independent, healthy and vibrant young mother. Through many swallow studies, voice therapy, OT and PT, she had to learn to eat, talk and move again. Her goal now is to help people critically ill patients cope with the grief they experience after a critical illness through speaking up about the topic of Post Intensive Care Syndrome (PICS), depression and anxiety post ICU in addition to educating families and patients about the various rehab modalities that have been successful for her.

Contact Vanessa Abraham  
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### ***Quote from the Conversation***

*Be patient with patients. Let them get their words out. Give them time and let them process their emotions. Let them take their time to get their words out because a lot have a lot to say, and a lot of questions. Don't stand eight feet away. That proximity, I think, lessens the patient's fears and anxiety.*

**- Vanessa Abraham**

## **Mattie Murrey Tegels, MA, CCC-SLP, L, CPC, CLSC**

*Medical Speech-Language Pathologist and  
Founder of Fresh SLP & Badass SLP*



Mattie Murrey-Tegels is the founder and SLP behind Fresh SLP, Badass SLP, and The Missing Link for SLPs Podcast. She's been "in-the-trenches" as a medical SLP around the world for over 25 years and now an Assistant Professor for 3 years. She is thrilled to be adding this dream of a podcast because paying her experiences forward is

something she is very passionate about. If you ask her patients and students, one thing they will remember is how much she loves her job! She may not look like it but she is a huge introvert and when she is not actively working as an SLP, she is almost always reading, writing (writing over 1,000,000 words a year), or listening to amazing Chicago Blues bands. She also loves being outdoors and definitely enjoys soaking up the sun at her home in Minnesota, where warm and sunny days can be limited. She's ridden motorcycles for many years, raced sled dogs, hiked huge mountains yet she cherishes the quiet moments of climbing into a hammock to nap or timeless conversations with friends and family. The Missing Link for SLPs podcast and Fresh SLP is her legacy, giving back to a career that has so richly rewarded her.

### ***Quote from the Conversation***

*Hold on to that hope that what you are doing as a speech pathologist is making a difference whatever setting you're in. You may have somebody who can't say their gratitude back, or whatever is holding them back, but you are making a difference.*

**- Mattie Murrey-Tegels**

# Keep the Conversation Going

Thank you for listening to *The Missing Link for SLPs* podcast!

**If you enjoyed the show, I'd love you to subscribe, rate it and leave a short review.**

Also, please share an episode with a friend.

Together we can raise awareness and help more SLPs find and connect those missing links to help them feel confident in their patient care every step of the way.

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or learn more at [FreshSLP.com](#) or [badassslp.com](#).

Let's make those connections. You got this!

*Do you have a question you'd like answered on the show?  
Interested in sharing your experience as an SLP with our audience?  
Send a message to [Mattie@FreshSLP.com](mailto:Mattie@FreshSLP.com)!*

## The Missing Link for SLPs Podcast Show Notes

