

SKILL UP: GETTING IT RIGHT WITH THE PENETRATION-ASPIRATION SCALE (PAS)

0.1 ASHA CEU and 1 Act 48 PDH

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Learning Objectives:

- Describe the operational definitions and clinical meaning behind each PAS level.
- Identify common scoring errors that affect accuracy and interrater reliability.
- Apply correct PAS scoring procedures to VFSS cases in daily clinical practice.



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The Penetration-Aspiration Scale (PAS) is one of the most widely used and cited tools for quantifying airway safety during videofluoroscopic swallowing studies (VFSS). Despite its ubiquity, recent observations suggest that many clinicians apply the PAS inconsistently or inaccurately, leading to variability in clinical interpretation and patient management decisions. This session—led by one of the original developers of the PAS—will provide clinicians with a practical, case-based review of how to correctly apply and interpret the PAS across a range of swallowing presentations. Through interactive examples and video-based calibration exercises, participants will gain hands-on experience identifying each PAS level, differentiating between penetration and aspiration events, and recognizing common scoring errors. The session will also address how to integrate PAS findings with broader clinical impressions to inform care planning and communication with interdisciplinary teams. This “Skill Up” session is designed to enhance clinician accuracy and confidence with PAS scoring and to ensure that this gold-standard measure continues to be used consistently across settings. Participants will leave with tools and strategies they can immediately implement in their clinical practice.

Speaker's Bio: Dr. Coyle was professor of Communication Science and Disorders at the University of Pittsburgh for 26 years. He co-developed the penetration-aspiration scale, has personally trained 400 SLP graduate students in the acute care setting, and has been involved in developing a noninvasive dysphagia-screening and diagnostic system through NIH funding.