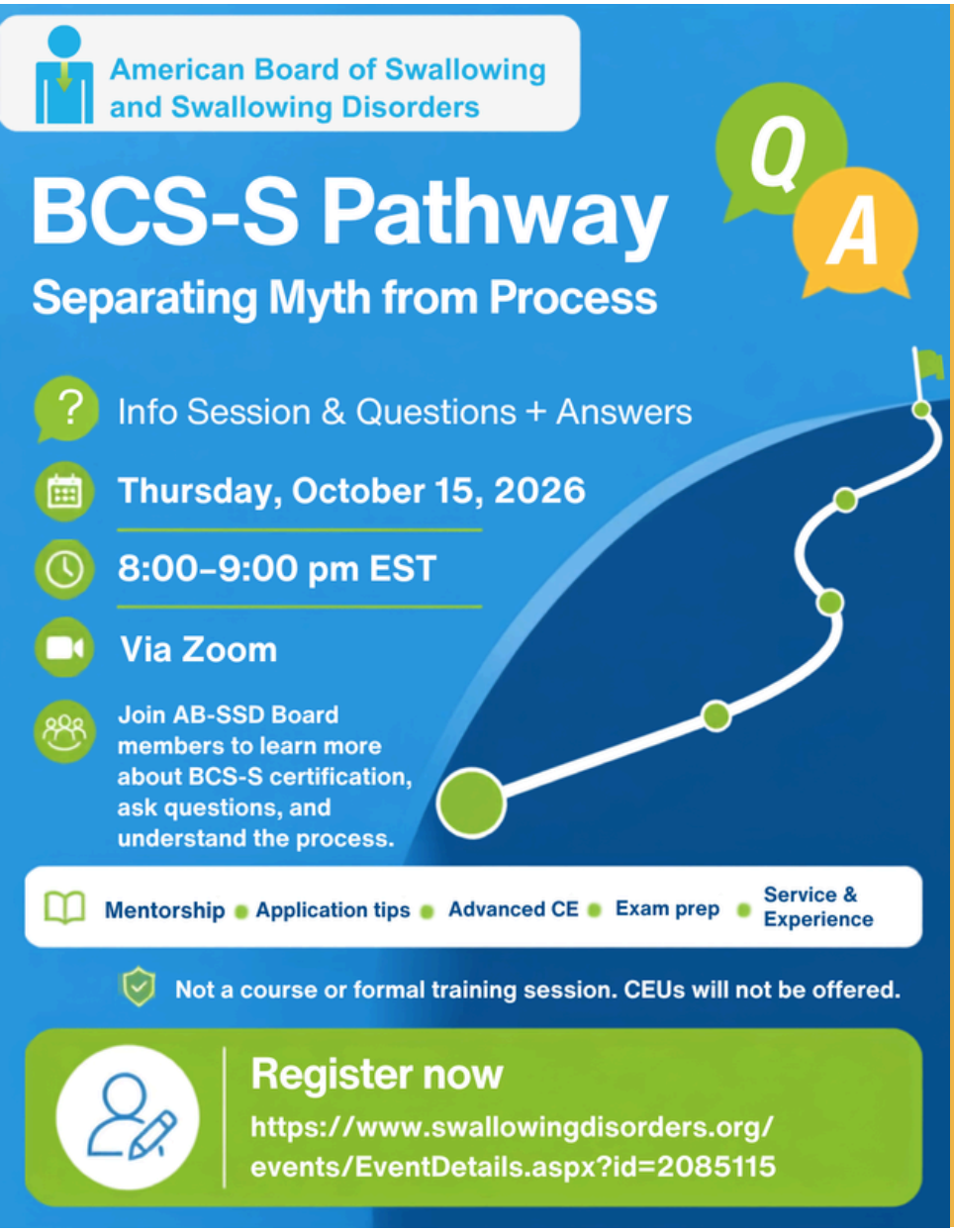
October 2026, Volume 5, Issue 11

EASY2DIGEST

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Follow Us on Social Media

We appreciate any likes, comments, and shares to help us spread the word about our important content and upcoming CEU opportunities.

THINKING ABOUT BCS-S? LET'S TALK

If pursuing board certification as a specialist in swallowing and swallowing disorders is on your mind then the AB-SSD Applications Committee would love to meet you.

Whether you are ready to apply or still figuring out what the process involves, bring your questions about documenting your experience, advanced continuing education, and preparing an application. We can also help bust the myths and reduce your fears/hesitancies. We will highlight the Mentoring process as well.

MYTH: I am not ready yet to reach out, as I need to have everything ready beforehand!

FACT: Feel free to reach out wherever you are in the process. Come to this event to learn more about the process and ask where to begin.

Join us for the upcoming virtual information session and Q&A

(October 15th, 8:00-9:00 EST): BCS-S Pathway: Separating Myth From Process

Meet Board members of AB-SSD. We look forward to helping you identify your next step. No cost for this INFO SESSION event, but please follow the registration link **HERE** for the ZOOM link

Get started today:

- Fill out this form to request a **MENTOR**
- Please see our 3-5 year plan **here**
- Here is the **Application Process**
- Here are more **Application Resources**
- Also, come find us at the ASHA Convention's Exhibit Hall at the "Specialty Boards" table!



Again, see you October 15th, 8pm EST on ZOOM
REGISTER NOW

AB-SSD SENDS LETTER TO AHA/ASA

The AB-SSD has sent a **letter** to the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association about the dysphagia section (5.2) of the 2026 Guideline for the Early Management of Patients With Acute Ischemic Stroke. Below are highlights of our message:

The issues we raised:

- No speech-language pathologist served on the 34-member writing group or the 31-member peer review committee.
- The section's summary paragraph still credits pharyngeal electrical stimulation (PES) with reducing dysphagia severity, aspiration risk, and length of stay, which are claims the August 2026 correction removed from the recommendations themselves. Yet, the evidence for PES is outcome- and population-specific.
- The clinical swallow evaluation (CSE) does not appear in the care pathway.
- The section uses several different terms for screening, and we asked that screening and the clinical swallow evaluation be clearly distinguished.
- No timing is attached to when the screening is to be performed.

What we asked for:

- Correct the summary paragraph so it matches the corrected supporting text.
- Add the CSE as an option in the clinical pathway.
- Seat speech-language pathologists, including BCS-S, on future writing groups and peer review committees.

What this means for your clinical practice:

- Inclusion of a treatment in a guideline does not establish it as the standard of care.
- If your facility is weighing a PES purchase or citing the guideline in policy, the evidence distinction above is the relevant one.
- We will share any response we receive from the AHA/ASA.

Please see the original January 2026 **guideline** here and the **August 2026 correction** here

MEET THE NEWLY ELECTED & RE-ELECTED BOARD MEMBERS

Thank you to everyone who took the time to vote in our 2026 election! We're so excited to introduce you to our elected board members and look forward to all they will bring to AB-SSD in 2027 and beyond.



Raquel Garcia, SLP.D, CCC-SLP, BCS-S

***Work*:** Raquel works as an Associate Professor & Research Clinician at Nova Southeastern University's *Husman Neuroscience Institute and Gray Research Lab*. Dr. Garcia is a speech-language pathologist, educator, and researcher whose work focuses on neonatal feeding/swallowing, as well as swallowing, communication, and respiratory function in individuals with motor neuron disease. Her research is driven by a commitment to bridging the gap from bench side to bedside, translating evidence and emerging discoveries into proactive, clinically meaningful approaches that identify functional changes early, guide timely intervention, and improve outcomes and quality of life.

Fun facts ~ Beyond Dysphagia:

"I am a proud dog mom who loves cruising, hiking, exploring new places, and spending time with family and friends. I am also a true-crime enthusiast and am always ready for my next adventure!"



Jennifer Kizner, CsCD, M.ed, CCC/SLP, BCS-S

***Work*:** Jennifer is a medical speech pathologist for 29 years. Currently working as Clinical Specialist in speech pathology at Stanford Healthcare's multidisciplinary head and neck oncology clinic. Dr. Kizner evaluates/treats complex patients who are receiving oncology care to optimize their speech, voice & swallowing functions. She provides FEES courses to medical SLPs to help improve dysphagia care for the people we serve.

Fun facts ~ Beyond Dysphagia:

"I started playing golf recently and love to be outside hiking, walking, or running. Also, I am a mom to two college students and cat-mom to two Siamese cats."



Valentina Mocchetti, MS, CCC-SLP, BCS-S

***Work*:** Valentina is a Speech-Language Pathologist at the *Sean Parker Institute for the Voice* in the Department of Otolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery at Weill Cornell Medicine in New York City. Her clinical work focuses on the evaluation and treatment of swallowing disorders within a multidisciplinary laryngology practice. She is also involved in clinical research and in the education and training of graduate students and clinicians.

Fun facts ~ Beyond Dysphagia:

"I love traveling, especially to Italy to visit family or anywhere with a beach! When I'm home, I enjoy cooking and exploring new restaurants around NYC."



Laurie Wennerholm, MA, CCC-SLP, BCS-S, CLT, PhD candidate

***Work*:** Laurie works at *NYU Langone Health/Perlmutter Cancer Center*. Her focus is in evaluation and treatment of speech, voice and swallowing impairments in patients with head and neck cancers. She is an Adjunct Professor at NYU for the Dysphagia in Children and Adults Graduate Course. Nearing completion of a PhD at The University of Queensland, her research aims to create a framework of care for individuals with laryngectomy.

Fun facts ~ Beyond Dysphagia:

"I am an avid Peloton(er) - Bike and Tread! I enjoy spending time with my two children, hound dog, and a naughty cat."



TO NEW AB-SSD AFFILIATES

Molly Polacco MS, CCC-SLP, BCS-S
St. Luke's University Health Network, Mentor: Amber Valentine

Claire Heitlinger MS, CCC-SLP, BCS-S
Sutter Health California Pacific Medical Center, Mentor: Katy Peck

NEW AFFILIATE SPOTLIGHT



A new affiliate shares her professional journey from interest to board certification. Meet AB-SSD Affiliate: Meagan Hamous, MS, CCC-SLP, BCS-S!

Meagan has been a speech-language pathologist since 2019 with the majority of her career working with adults. She spent 5 years in inpatient rehab and is currently working in acute care at Baylor Scott & White in College Station, Texas.

1. What initially sparked your interest in swallowing and swallow disorders?
From my very first introductory class into the major, back in college, I knew I was interested in the medical aspect of speech language pathology, especially involving neurological disorders and swallowing disorders. I love that swallowing is such a whole-body or "whole system" approach to patient care, and I feel I am truly able to make a difference in my patients' lives by restoring some quality of life in such a delicate area.

2. What inspired you to pursue board certification in swallowing?
I first heard about BCS-S towards the end of my graduate program, and was inspired by the idea of continual learning and dedication to helping to grow the field. There are so many mentors I have met since then and looked up to, including those I have taken continuing education courses from or heard lectures by at DRS.

3. What does this accomplishment mean to you?
Achieving my BCS-S was a personal goal I had for myself that was solely for my own professional growth. I wanted to push myself to be involved in new research for striving to use evidence based practice in my own clinical practice and to gain knowledge at an advanced level to be able to treat my patients to the best of my ability. I don't view the BCS-S as being an "expert" in dysphagia, and it was never about any form of recognition. I simply wanted to be more involved in the field of dysphagia and furthering it while pushing myself out of my own comfort zone and to do things I might have never considered.

NEW AFFILIATE SPOTLIGHT CONTINUED



"I wanted to push myself to be involved in new research for striving to use evidence based practice in my own clinical practice and to gain knowledge at an advanced level to be able to treat my patients to the best of my ability."

4. What would you tell a clinician who is interested in pursuing board certification but is not sure where to start?

The best first step I did was gaining a mentor. My BCS-S mentor was so incredibly helpful with shaping my involvement the last 4-5 years and making sure I was staying on track with my application, including looking for activities and roles that I would have never thought of on my own. The BCS-S is a daunting process, but with a mentor available to discuss your progress and help shape your next steps, it became much easier by just focusing on one "next thing" at a time. I helped to create support groups, gave poster presentations, a zoom lecture and podcast, joined a new research team, and more. These are definitely things I desire to do, but likely would not have done without having a helpful nudge. This experience is something I definitely could not have done by myself, but I am so thankful that I stuck to it.

5. What professional goals do you hope to achieve next?

In my current setting, I work in acute care and a little with outpatient dysphagia as well, and I complete MBSS and FEES as part of my practice. I would love to continue furthering my experience with both of these exams to ensure I am serving my patients to the best of my abilities. One of my next goals is to hopefully complete the REST training next year so that I can better screen and identify esophageal abnormalities as I believe it is a huge area of growth our field is heading towards.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

AB-SSD ASHA HAPPY HOUR

NOV

19

4:00 – 6:00 PM EST

TOM'S WATCH BAR

140 S Illinois St, Indianapolis, Indiana 46225

American Board of Swallowing and Swallowing Disorders

AB-SSD's *Meet & Greet* ASHA2026

Look out for advertising on social media that looks like this. Please share with your friends/colleagues who are considering obtaining their BCS-S.

Check it out HERE

- Enjoy networking & Great food/drink
- Meet AB-SSD board & other BCS-S affiliates
- Learn how to obtain your board certification (BCS-S)



Thursday, November 19, 2026

4:00-6:00 PM

Tom's Watch Bar
140 S Illinois Street
Indianapolis

No charge for this event, but registration is required.

Register Online

Bring friends & colleagues!

ARE YOU PRESENTING AT ASHA?

Are you presenting at ASHA? We would love to know for our November newsletter highlighting ASHA2026, as well as our social media communications.



THE SWALLOWING SYMPOSIUM

Registration is now open!

The conversations that shape clinical practice don't just happen. They happen when #dysphagia experts come together to discuss the difficult decisions we face every day. Join us in Indianapolis the day before the #ASHA26 Convention November 18th in Indianapolis, Indiana for #TheSwallowSymposium, a complimentary pre-convention educational event featuring 10 distinguished speakers, two expert panel discussions, networking, and refreshments.

Panel 1 | Advocacy in Practice: Navigating Functional Goals, Difficult Conversations, and Discharge Decisions

Panel 2 | Innovative Dysphagia Care in Stroke Management Across the Adult and Pediatric Patient Journey from ED to Discharge

Two expert panel discussions

- 10 distinguished speakers
- Up to 0.4 ASHA CEUs (4.0 contact hours)
- Networking reception with refreshments

No cost to attend thanks to an unconditional educational grant from Bracco Diagnostics

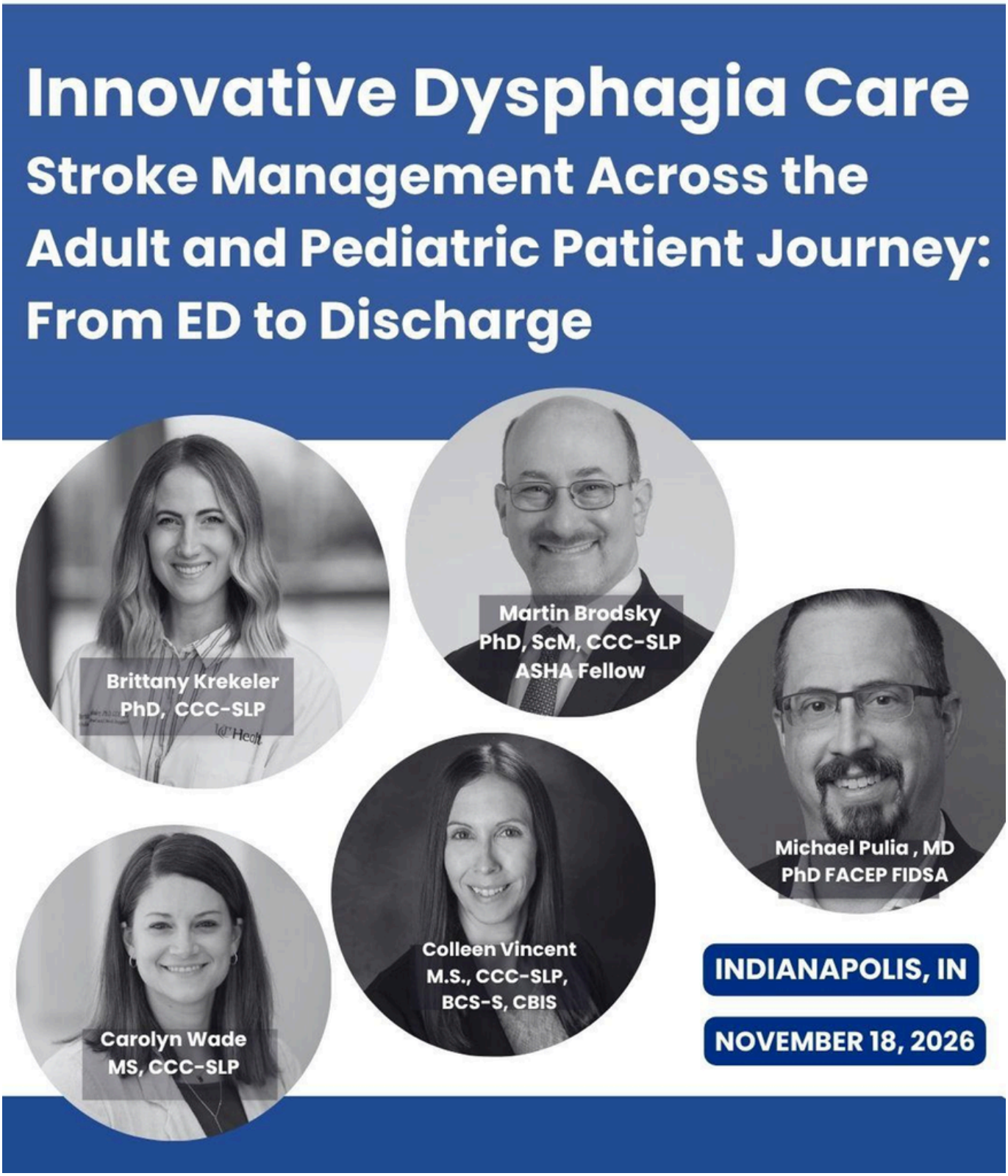
Presented by Dysphagia Cafe in collaboration with the American Board of Swallowing and Swallowing Disorders

Who Should Attend?
Already attending the #ASHAConvention? Arrive a day early and join colleagues for an afternoon of engaging discussion and networking before the convention begins.

Live in or near Indianapolis? We'd love to have you too. You do not need to be registered for the ASHA Convention to attend The Swallow Symposium.
Reserve Your Seat Today

Registration is complimentary, but seating is limited.

THE SWALLOWING SYMPOSIUM



THE SWALLOWING SYMPOSIUM



THE 2026 SUMMER SERIES ARE STILL AVAILABLE ON DEMAND!

We are committed to providing low cost advanced CEUs. If you do not see a topic that is essential to your practice, please let us know. That will be great feedback for our hardworking continuing education committee: Email ABSSD@badgerbay.co (not .com) Please follow the link below to find all our **Advanced CEUs**

Please follow the link below to find all our Advanced CEUs and these Summer Series tracks:

Adult track

Pediatric track

See more details on the next pages about each of the CEUs and what they offer!



NEED MORE ON MENTORSHIP?

Did you miss the most recent mentorship newsletter? Check out the mentorship newsletter here https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.swallowingdisorders.org/resource/resmgr/ABSSD_Newsletter_-_Sept_V8.pdf

American Board of Swallowing and Swallowing Disorders

$39

2026 Adult Summer Series

AVAILABLE ON DEMAND!



Catriona Steele, PhD, S-LP(C), CCC-SLP, Reg. CASLPO, ASHA Honors

How Does Swallowing Change with Healthy Aging? Using New Evidence to Guide Clinical Assessments



Sara Abu-Ghanem MD, MMedSc

The Aging Swallow: A Laryngologist's Perspective



Sonja Molfenter, PhD., CCC-SLP

Pharyngeal Sarcopenia: Making the Case for a Proactive Swallowing Exercise Regimen in Older Adults



Amber Heape, ClinScD, CCC-SLP, FNAP, CDP

Fact vs. Fiction in the Aging Swallow: What SNFs Get Wrong & How to Get It Right

American Board of Swallowing and Swallowing Disorders

$39

2026 Pediatric Summer Series

AVAILABLE ON DEMAND!



Erin Ross, PhD., CCC-SLP

Interventions in Infant Feeding and Swallowing Disorders: Reviewing the Evidence to Inform Practice



Maureen Lefton-Greif, PhD., CCC-SLP, BCS-S

Pediatric Videofluoroscopic Swallow Studies: Reducing Variability and Enhancing Clinical Value



Rachel Arkenberg, PhD., CCC-SLP

Developmental Neurophysiology of Swallowing from Prenatal Development to Early Infancy: What do we know?



LeAnn Schow, M.S., CCC-SLP, BCS-S

Interventions in Infant Feeding and Swallowing Disorders: Reviewing the Evidence and Informing Practice

CHECK OUT THE CEU LINKS!

Past **Meet the Master's events (now called The Swallow Symposium)**

Check out the link for **all the current AB-SSD advanced CEU offerings** from the Summer Series on neurogenic dysphagia through all our amazing webinars this year, such as:

- **Teaching the Next Generation of Dysphagia Clinicians**
- **Striving to Provide Equitable Dysphagia Care in an Inequitable World**
- **ABSSD 2025 Summer Webinar - Adult Track**
- **ABSSD 2025 Summer Webinar - Pediatric Track**
- **Holistic Dysphagia Management for People with Head and Neck Cancer**
- **Ankyloglossia and Breastfeeding**

ARE YOU A MENTOR?
INTERESTED IN BECOMING A MENTOR?

The *Mentor Training Process* is available to new mentors, as well as those of you who have been mentors for many years!
To become a mentor or renew your training, here is the process:

- **Contact info@swallowingdisorders.org to request to be a part of the next scheduled *Mentor Training.***
- **Learn or Refresh your knowledge of the mentor process and discuss all the current application changes & updates.**
- **After requesting, you will be contacted with a date and time.**

If you need a reprieve from being assigned proteges, please email info@swallowingdisorders.org

See September Mentor Newsletter here.