



Living Well with Aphasia: Speak Up, Stay Connected

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Hey There!

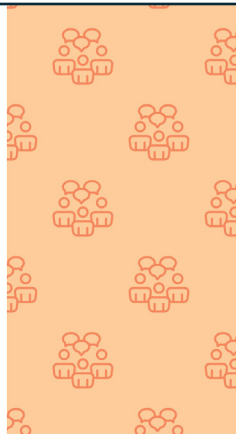
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- she/her, lives in Philly, Go Birds!, wiz wit out
- Undergrad: Loyola University Maryland
- Grad School: Towson University
- 13 years as an SLP working with adult & seniors
- Experience: nursing home, outpatient, memory care unit, behavioral health unit, assisted living, teletherapy, and home health
- Daughter and former caregiver of a dad with Parkinson's & dementia
- Named an ASHA Innovator
- Featured in Lingraphica documentary - Witnessing Their Words

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TODAY'S Agenda

- Introductions (5 min)
- Communication Strategies (15 minutes)
- Staying Connected & Caregiver Support (20 minutes)
- Advocacy & Aphasia Awareness (10 minutes)
- Resources and Q&A (10 min)



Learning Objectives

#1 Learn ways to communicate clearly.

#2 Find ways to stay connected with others.

#3 Feel more confident to speak up and ask for support.

Important Reminders



#1

I am not your speech pathologist and cannot provide direct therapeutic or medical advice. We will discuss general information, practices, and tips.



#2

Please feel free to take pictures of the slides and take notes!



#3

This is a safe space to learn & connect. No question is silly. Ask in the chat or wait until Q&A at the end.

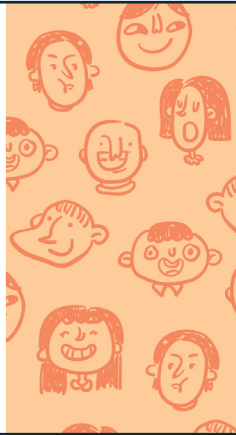
Communication Strategies

What is aphasia?

Aphasia is an acquired language disorder often resulting from a stroke or brain injury. It affects a person's ability to process, use, and/or understand language.

Aphasia does not affect intelligence.

(Code, 2020)



Communication can be hard.

- It's okay to feel frustrated
- You are not alone
- Communication can improve



Common Misunderstandings About Aphasia



Speak Louder

Speaking louder will help someone with aphasia better understand. Aphasia does NOT impact hearing.



Not Smart

People with aphasia aren't smart. This is NOT true. Aphasia impacts language, not intellect.



No Decisions

People with aphasia can't make decisions. This is NOT true. People with aphasia are competent and capable.



Can't Work

People with aphasia cannot go back to work or volunteer. This is NOT true. With the right support and environment, people with aphasia can work and volunteer.



Baseline

People with aphasia only have 1 year to improve. This is NOT true. People can improve years post diagnosis.

Tips for Speaking & Understanding

Ask for repetition

Take your time

Use multimodal communication

Ask for people to slow down



Self-advocate

(Poirier et al., 2024)

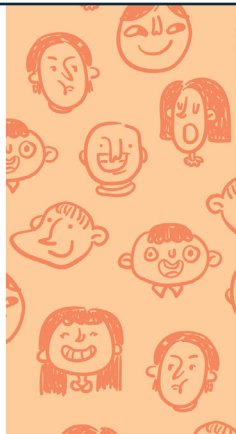
What can caregivers & communication partners do?

- Speak slowly
- Use simple language
- Give time to respond
- Don't interrupt or finish sentences
- Check energy levels
- Encourage use of AAC
- Include and advocate




What is AAC?


Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) refers to tools, strategies, or technology that helps someone with a speech or language impairment to communicate.



Tools to Reduce Communication Barriers



Low Tech AAC:
 Pen/Paper
 Communication Board
 Communication ID Card
 Whiteboard/Chalkboard
 Pictures



High Tech AAC:
 Cell Phone
 Apps
 Communication Device
 Voice Amplifier

(Poirier et al., 2014)

Low-Tech AAC



Daily Activities COMMUNICATION BOARD

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Communication Board

High-Tech AAC

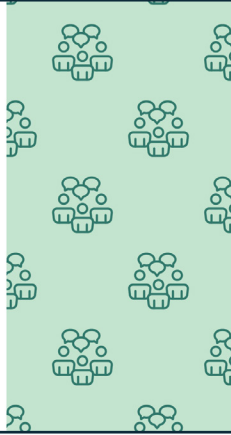


Express yourself in a variety of ways

Quick Reflection

Let us know in the chat!

- What tip or strategy works for you?
- What is hard right now?



RECAP

- Communication improves with support
- Use different ways to communicate
- Communication is a shared effort
- Tools and strategies reduce barriers
- Practice builds confidence

Staying Connected & Caregiver Support

Why Connection Matters

- Aphasia affects more than communication
 - It can change how you feel
 - It can change relationships
- Mood changes are common after stroke or brain injury
- Stress and fatigue can make communication harder



Benefits of Community Support



Improve
Communication
Skills



Boost Mental &
Physical Health



Sense of
Normalcy &
Control



Enhance
Cognitive
Function



Strengthen
Social
Connections

(Palmer et al., 2019)

Types of Communities



Peer Groups:
Small groups of people
with similar diagnoses or
communication challenges
who meet regularly.



Online Communities:
Virtual spaces like forums,
social media groups, or
Zoom-based programs
that connect people
across distances.



Networks & Organizations:
Family, friends, caregivers,
or local/national/global
organizations who provide
support, advocacy, and
companionship.

Places to Find Community



Neighborhood
People who live in your neighborhood or building.



Senior Center
Daily center visitors or residential communities.



School or Work
Coworkers, teachers, students, and colleagues.



Faith-Based
People in your faith-based or religious communities.



Family & Friends
Your relatives and sometimes long-term friends.

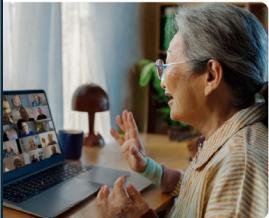
*This is not an all-inclusive list, you may or may not find community in these places.

How to Look for Community

- Google
 - In-person/online support groups for aphasia
 - In-person/online groups based on interest (ex: "adult garden club in Philadelphia")
 - Community resources for (diagnosis or age) in (city/state)
 - Aphasia organization/network
- Search Facebook groups by interest, diagnosis, and/or location
- Use Findhelp.org
 - Add your zip code to find local community resources
- Ask your therapists, doctor and/or social worker



**joinin_a
aphasia**
a Lingraphica community



Join In Aphasia is a free program that offers daily virtual calls for people with aphasia and caregivers. Sessions focus on conversation, social connection, and quality of life.

Sessions are hosted by speech pathologists, music therapists, rehab professionals, and aphasia experts.

SCAN TO JOIN



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How Caregivers Can Improve Aphasia Awareness



Care for the Caregiver

Caring for someone with a communication challenge can be rewarding, but it can also be emotionally and mentally demanding.

- Common stress signs: fatigue, irritability, guilt, or burnout.
- It's okay to ask for help.
- Simple strategies: take short breaks, stretch, or step outside for a few minutes.
- Seek mental health support and respite care, as needed
- Connect with your community to avoid isolation

(Shafer et al., 2019)

RECAP

- Caregiving is important AND challenging
- You are part of the communication team
- Support improves outcomes
- Self-care matters too

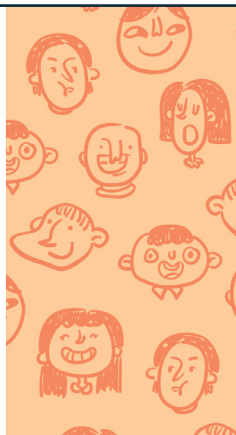
Advocacy & Aphasia Awareness

Why aphasia advocacy?

Approximately 2 million people in the United States have aphasia.

Public aphasia awareness is still low.

Code, 2020



Why Does it Matter?



Support

Raising awareness helps more people get the right support.



Impact

You can make a difference by sharing your story!



Connection

Personal stories connect with people and make aphasia real.



Healthcare

Doctors and nurses may not understand aphasia.



Advocacy

Most people have never heard of aphasia.

Advocacy Opportunity Examples

- Social media awareness posts
- Participate in research panels
- Local hospital or rehab talks
- Support groups
- Join aphasia awareness events
- Write to local representatives about aphasia funding



Aphasia Advocacy in Healthcare

- Bring a written "About Me" page
- Bring a communication ID card
- Ask for written summaries, videos, or pictures
- Request extra time if possible
- Bring a support person
- Ask providers to speak directly to you
- Say when something is too fast or confusing
- Share what motivates you
- Prepare scripts ahead of time
- Use AAC

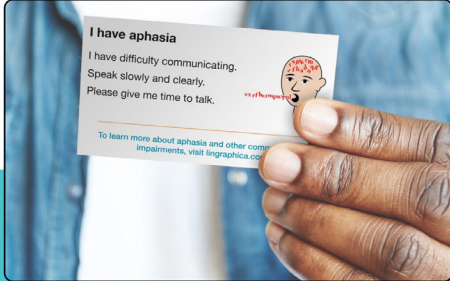


Aphasia Advocacy with Friends & Family

- Bring a written "About Me" page
- Bring a communication ID card
- Ask for a slower pace
- Ask friends to speak directly to you and one at a time
- Say when something is too fast or confusing
- Ask to turn down music or TV
- Prepare scripts ahead of time
- Use AAC

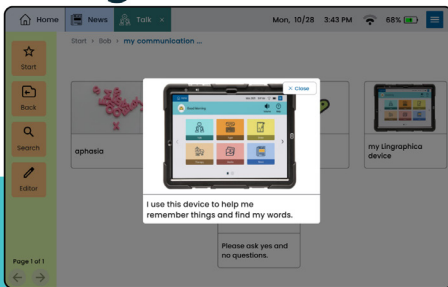


Communication ID Card



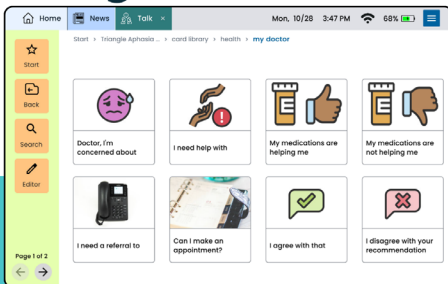
Advocate for yourself and share your communication strategies.

High Tech AAC



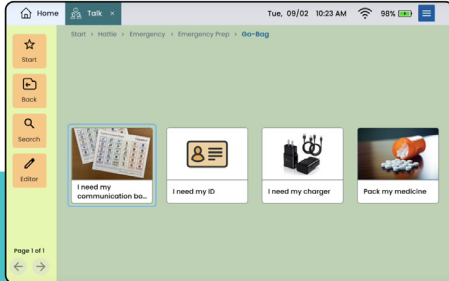
Advocate for yourself in conversation.

High Tech AAC



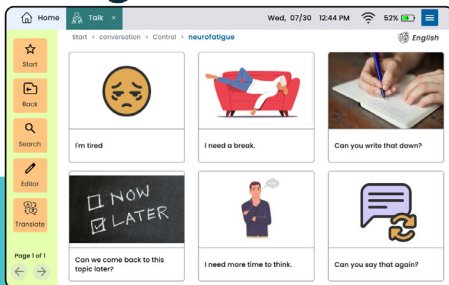
Advocate at the doctor's office.

High Tech AAC



Advocate for your communication and medical needs.

High Tech AAC



Advocate for yourself in conversation.

Different Ways to Share your Story



In Person

family,
friends,
coworkers



Online

social media,
support groups,
blogs



In Writing

letters,
emails,
cards



On Video

social media,
podcasts



Events

community,
local



Aphasias Orgs

national,
international,
research
groups

Examples of How to Share your Story

- Photo with simple caption
- 1-minute video
- "One-page story" for doctor's visits
- Community presentations
- Podcast episodes
- Posters / flyers
- Joining documentaries or media projects

Their Words



Lingraphica Aphasia Docuseries

Documentary Series: Their Words



THEIR WORDS follows the real-life profiles of four (4) different people living with aphasia, a communication disorder often caused by a stroke or brain injury. Each person's experience and symptoms are different. These are their stories. These are their words.

www.aphasia.com/aphasia-docuseries/

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RECAP

- Aphasia awareness is low
- You can help others understand aphasia
- Speaking up reduces barriers
- Advocacy builds confidence and access

Resources

Download the Ultimate Communication Toolkit



Get all the helpful tips and tricks to navigate communication challenges like a pro with this free downloadable toolkit.

Our toolkit includes:

- 12 Tips for Successful Communication
- Communication ID Card
- Caregiving for a Stroke Survivor
- Communication Boards
- And more!

www.lingraphica.com/ultimate-communication-toolkit/

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Watch the recording: Living with Aphasia - Rebuilding Communication & Identity



In this 1 hr webinar recording, we'll discuss how aphasia impacts identity, social connection, and community.

Attendees will gain tools and strategies for rebuilding confidence, expressing feelings, and creating meaningful routines.

SCAN TO WATCH



www.lingraphica.com/resources/living-with-aphasia-rebuilding-communication-and-identity/



Let's Talk!

Schedule time to speak with a Lingraphica team member to discuss communication goals and identify the best resources for your communication journey.

Whether you're interested in our AAC devices, free apps, or our free online community, we'll help answer any questions you may have.

SCAN TO SCHEDULE



THANK YOU!

- Use supported communication strategies
- Stay socially connected
- Take small, consistent steps
- Work together (PWA + caregiver)
- Advocate and raise awareness



Questions? Contact us: lingraphica.com/contact-us/

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Need help getting started with a Lingraphica device?
We're here for you.

Contact us at 888-274-2742 or lingraphica.com/contact-us/.