



A CARE PARTNER'S GUIDE

Supporting Communication and Understanding Behavior After Stroke or TBI

Aphasia is a language disorder that commonly occurs after a stroke or brain injury. Aphasia makes it difficult to speak, understand, read, and/or write. The 12 tips below can help you communicate more successfully with someone living with aphasia.

Helping the person with aphasia understand **YOUR** message:

As a communication partner, try these 6 tips when you want to help the person with aphasia understand *your* message:

1. Use short, simple sentences in a normal tone of voice
2. Use gestures and body language to help convey your message
3. Write down keywords or topics, so that you can both see them
4. Use pictures or drawings to share an idea, working with one picture/image at a time
5. Reduce distractions and external stimulation, including noises, other people, or multiple visual materials
6. Look at the person's facial expressions, eye gaze, body posture, and gestures to determine their level of comprehension.

Helping the person with aphasia communicate **THEIR** message:

As a communication partner, try these 6 tips when you want to help the person with aphasia communicate *their* message:

1. Ask "yes or no" questions
2. When asking a series of "yes or no" questions, start with general ones and work your way to more specific
3. Ask one question at a time
4. Ask questions that already contain an answer or a choice of answers such as, "Do you want tea or coffee?"
5. Ask them to gesture, point to objects or pictures, or write keywords, such as "Can you draw/write/show me what you mean?"
6. Give them adequate time to respond without your interrupting

Understanding communication and behavior changes after stroke or TBI

If your loved one has aphasia, you might notice more than just changes in speech. Their behavior, mood, or motivation may also be different. These changes can be confusing — but they're common after a stroke or brain injury. Here's what you need to know:



Depression and anxiety are common after a stroke or brain injury.

Depression and anxiety affect roughly 1 in 3 stroke survivors, and ~25-50% of TBI survivors within the first year (Chun et al., 2021; Jorge & Arciniegas, 2014). These conditions impact motivation, mood, and how your loved one responds to challenges in daily life.



Behavior changes are real symptoms of brain injury.

What may look like disinterest, stubbornness, or a lack of effort is often the brain struggling to process, respond, or communicate. Your loved one is not being rude or lazy. Their brain is still healing.



Aphasia makes communication hard — and that is frustrating.

Most of us avoid things we struggle with. If your loved one isn't initiating conversations or responding right away, it doesn't mean they don't care. They may be dealing with feelings of overwhelm.



Aphasia recovery takes time — and progress may look different every day.

Fatigue, pain, and mood can all impact your loved one's speech. If they seem to be having an "off" day, it doesn't mean they're giving up on their language recovery. Celebrate when they make progress in therapy (even the seemingly small wins!) and offer support whenever they need it.



Remember: your loved one is trying.

They need your patience, encouragement, and partnership. By learning about aphasia together, you can help them rebuild confidence, reduce frustration, and support meaningful communication — even when words are hard to find.

The right support can change everything.
Lingraphica is here to help.

Give us a call at **866-577-0151** or learn more online at

lingraphica.com