

# DID YOU KNOW?

## WHAT IS APHASIA?

An acquired language disorder often resulting from a stroke or brain injury. Aphasia affects all forms of language: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Aphasia is more common than Parkinson's disease, cerebral palsy, and muscular dystrophy.



**2 MILLION**

People in the US have aphasia



**25-40%**

Stroke survivors have aphasia



**Language**

Aphasia impacts language and **does not** affect intelligence

## CHALLENGES

Aphasia can hinder communication and comprehension, leading to difficulties in daily activities, social isolation, cognitive challenges, emotional impact, and strain on relationships.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

Here are the top three ways to connect with someone with aphasia and improve communication.



Speak slowly  
AFTER getting their attention



Connect in a quiet space



Ask permission before finishing their sentence

## BENEFITS

### Enhanced Understanding and Clarity

1

Simplification and gestures can help individuals with aphasia and their communication partners better understand each other, resulting in more meaningful interactions.

### Increased Emotional Connection

2

Employing effective communication strategies can improve emotional connections and reduce frustration when interacting with people with aphasia.

### Empowerment and Confidence

3

Facilitating effective communication empowers both the person with aphasia and their partner, reducing apprehension in social situations and improving their quality of life.

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# SIMPLE TIPS TO PROMOTE COMMUNICATION

## HOW YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE



When interacting with a person who has aphasia, keeping specific tips in mind can significantly enhance their communication experience and overall quality of life.



### BE POSITIVE

Maintaining a positive attitude in all our interactions will foster happiness for others as well as for ourselves.



### GET THEIR ATTENTION

Make sure they are focused on you by saying their name, moving closer to them, and making eye contact.



### AVOID INTERRUPTIONS

Choose a quiet, distraction-free space to communicate.



### BE SUPPORTIVE

Don't finish their sentences or rush them. Smile reassuringly.



### SIMPLIFY QUESTIONS

Use "yes/no" questions and provide choices when possible.

## WHAT IS APHASIA?

Aphasia is a language disorder that occurs when the brain is damaged, typically as a result of a stroke. It can affect a person's ability to speak, listen, read, and write, or all of these areas.

While the disorder affects individuals differently, there are universal communication strategies that can be helpful for both aphasia and non-aphasia persons alike.

## HOW TO BE INCLUSIVE

- Use gestures, props, etc.
- Show you are listening by maintaining eye contact and nodding
- Convey empathy by using facial expressions to show you care



### KNOW THE "GO-TO" PERSON

Communication not working?  
Say something like:

"I am not understanding. Is it ok for me to get [go-to person] to help us?"

# HOW TO BE HELPFUL

## WHEN A GUEST HAS APHASIA



### IF STRUGGLING TO FIND THE RIGHT WORD

- Repeat back what you heard and then pause
- Ask clarification question(s) as needed
- Be patient and wait for a response



### IF UNDERSTANDING THE TABLE CONVERSATION IS DIFFICULT

- Offer to summarize the conversation or provide highlights
- Adjust the environment -- a quieter setting could be best
- When possible, take turns speaking
- Slow speech just a bit when speaking directly



### IF SPEECH IS CHALLENGING TO UNDERSTAND

- Be patient and attentive when they speak
- Avoid finishing their sentences unless you ask their permission
- Ask them to repeat if needed
- Offer positive feedback and reassure them that their effort is appreciated
- Ask their 'go-to' person for assistance

# 10 Powerful Strategies for Modeling Effective Communication with Aphasia

## 1. Slow & Clear Speech

Demonstrate speaking slowly and clearly so that everyone can follow along.

## 2. Repetition & Paraphrasing

When necessary, repeat or rephrase your statements for better understanding.

## 3. Non-Verbal Communication

Utilize gestures, facial expressions, or written words to support spoken language.

## 4. Turn-Taking

Encourage a slower-paced conversation that allows your loved one to engage without feeling rushed.

## 5. Offer Choices

Present multiple options for easier decision-making and expression of preferences.

## 6. Using Props or Aids

Incorporate visual aids like pictures or written words to facilitate better understanding -- keep pencil and paper handy!

## 7. Open-Ended Questions

Ask questions that invite fuller responses, offering the person with aphasia a chance to express themselves more comprehensively.

## 8. Using Gesture and Facial Expression

Exaggerate your own gestures and expressions to normalize this form of communication.

## 9. Fostering a Supportive Environment

Maintain a calm and supportive demeanor to diffuse tension during interactions.

## 10. Reinforcing Successful Communication

Offer immediate positive feedback when someone successfully communicates with your loved one.



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