



## Our Vision

There are no barriers to living successfully with aphasia.

## Our Mission

Give hope to people with aphasia and their families by developing and sharing innovative solutions that reduce language barriers to full life participation.

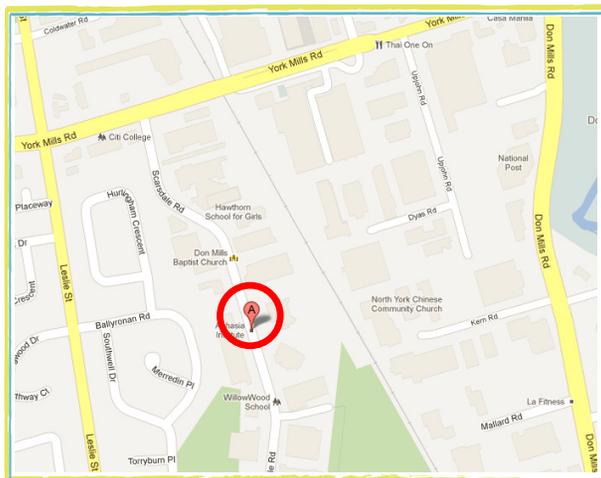


over 30 years of touching lives  
and rebuilding conversation

For more information, please contact:

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The Pat Arato Aphasia Institute

Communicating  
with someone  
who has aphasia



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# Understanding Aphasia

Aphasia is a language difficulty. Imagine yourself living in a foreign country where you do not speak the language. You would continue to have thoughts, possess all your former knowledge and have the same ability to make decisions. But you would be unable to speak to the residents of the country. You could not rely on their spoken or written words to help you understand. This is similar to living with aphasia.



Communication requires at least two components: speech and language.

Speech refers to the muscles you use to produce sounds. The muscles of your lips, tongue, throat, and lungs are all used to produce sounds that make up words. Language refers to the "dictionary" of words, word meanings and rules for combining words into sentences. This "dictionary" is located in your brain. Aphasia occurs when a stroke has affected the part of the brain that holds the language "dictionary".

People with aphasia are competent adults who know more than they can say. This supplement is intended to provide you with some tools to help you in communicating with people with aphasia.

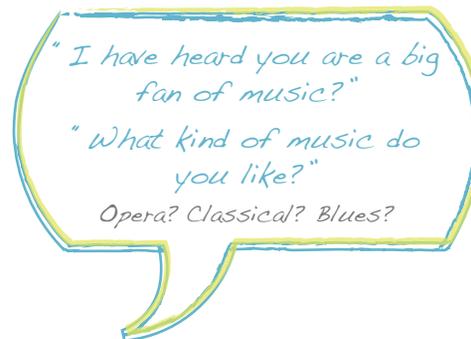


## Strategies to help the PERSON WITH APHASIA get a message across:

- ✓ Encourage the person with aphasia to write down a word or draw if they can.

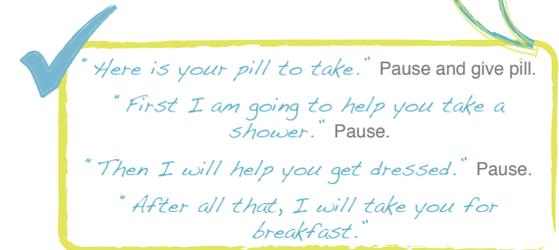
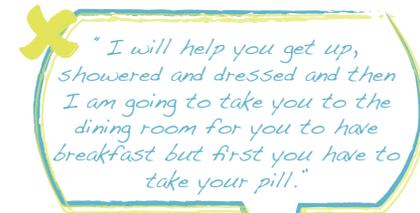


- ✓ Encourage the person with aphasia to point to something.
- ✓ Attempt to identify the general topic first and then move onto understanding the details.
- ✓ Ask YES / NO questions.
- ✓ Use a written YES / NO if needed.
- ✓ If you do not have the time to communicate explain this and give a time when you will return to finish your conversation. Make sure you do return.
- ✓ Encourage the person with aphasia to use some of the words you have written down to communicate.



## Strategies to help YOU get YOUR message across:

- ✓ Look at the person with aphasia when speaking. Your facial expression can help the person with aphasia understand you.
- ✓ Speak in a tone of voice appropriate for communicating with an adult. Do not sound condescending. Do not sound like you are speaking to a child.
- ✓ Communicate one idea at a time.



- ✓ Write down key words. Use a thick black marker and printed letters.
- ✓ Use gestures and facial expressions.
- ✓ Use objects from the environment to help get your message across.
- ✓ Use YES / NO questions.
- ✓ Draw.
- ✓ Acknowledge that the person with aphasia is a competent, knowledgeable person who can make decisions. Acknowledge that the person with aphasia knows what they want to say but cannot say it.