Introduction to Aphasia and Communication Strategies after Acute Stroke

Emma Hum, MClSc, SLP
Kingston General Hospital
hume@kgh.kari.net
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Centering Thoughts

- We communicate in ways to connect with others
- To learn, to express needs, ideas, and feelings
- Spans from birth to end-of-life
Aphasia

- Over 100,000 Canadians
- 21-38% of stroke patients during acute phase.
- BUT may persist during chronic phase and impact on overall recovery
- OUR SUPPORT for individuals with aphasia can improve their quality of life, mood, and participation in rehabilitation
This is your communication worksheet

What 3 words represent YOU?
- Communication
- Here
- Patience
- Possibility
- Time
- Quiet
- Alive
- Gratitude
- Love
- Always
- Choice
- Breathe
- Calm
- Pause
- Think
- Understanding
- Motivation
- Determination
- Direction
- Hope

List 3 Communication strategies you are using NOW
1.
2.
3.

List 3 NEW communication strategies or tools to try
1.
2.
3.
Learning Objectives

- How does a stroke affect the way we communicate?
- What is aphasia?
- What can I expect during early stage of recovery?
- What can I do to help?
- Communication tools and strategies
- Resources
Resources

- Aphasia Recovery Connection
  www.aphasiarc.org
- Aphasia Institute
  www.aphasia.ca
- Stroke Care Tips and Tools
  www.heartandstroke.on.ca
- Tactus Therapy
  www.tactustherapy.com
- Counselling in Communication Disorders
  by A. Holland
What is Aphasia?

Language disorder, results from damage to the language centres of the brain.
Communication after a stroke

- Aphasia
- Speech
  - Dysarthria
  - Apraxia
- Mood
  - Fatigue
- Physical
Non-Fluent Aphasia
comprehension is better than verbal expression

Fluent Aphasia
verbal output is better than comprehension
General Types of Aphasia

- Nonfluent Aphasia
- Global Aphasia
- Fluent Aphasia
- Anomia
Non-fluent Aphasia (Broca’s)

I know what I want to say but the words come out wrong...
Non-fluent Aphasia

- Sarah Scott, 18 year old with aphasia
- International communication project
- Series of videos that document progress over years

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1aplTvEQ6ew&app=desktop

Video clip example
Fluent Aphasia (Wernicke’s)

I have a hard time understanding what you mean...
Fluent Aphasia

- Bryon Peterson

https://ca.video.search.yahoo.com/search/video?fr=mcfee&p=fluent+aphasia+video#id=1&vid=fb40cc09fb9251c1abf4341fba14f55f&action=click

Video clip example
Global Aphasia

- Severe form of aphasia
- Limited words
- Significant expressive and comprehension impairment
- Communicate through facial expressions, intonation, gestures
My Clinical Perspective

Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP)

Acute stroke team

Assess communication needs

Provide education and support

Aphasia therapy approaches

Impairment-based vs. Communication-based

Socialization & Social Conversation
Early Onset of Aphasia

Patient Family Perspective

- What is Aphasia?
- What can I expect?
- What resources available?
- Physical
- Fatigue, emotion

Spontaneous recovery

Type of aphasia

Extent of the stroke
Acute Stroke Team Focus

- Orientation
- Ability to follow 1-3 step commands
- Ability to participate in therapy activities
- Education leads to insight/understanding
- Ability to improve communication with strategies and support from team (including family)

Start with basic communication skills
How else can we help?

- Provide positive SOCIAL INTERACTION
- Encourage and accept NEW ways to communicate
- Keep track of spontaneous recovery, daily changes, strengths
- Helps with understanding nature of aphasia
Aphasia is a communication disorder from injury to the language centres of the brain. This makes it difficult to talk, read, write, and understand language.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assistive Devices in the Room</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Glasses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing aids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pocket talker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dentures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce background noise</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Communication Tools

- Black marker and paper!
- Simple communication boards
- YES/NO Board
- Real pictures (family, friends, pets)
- Personal pictures/albums

Simple and familiar is better!
Simple Communication Activities

- Looking at menus together
- Looking at family photos together
- Picture based magazines
- TV
- Pen and paper-taking notes
- Orientation information
Social conversation optimizes recovery

- Social interaction is more natural (not drilling)
- Conversation encourages strengths to emerge
- Encourage use NEW ways of communicating
From Illness to Wellness

- Journey progresses from illness to wellness
- To find ways to live positively and live with a communication disorder
- Through resilience and optimism
Supported Conversation for Adults with Aphasia (SCA)

A communication method that uses a set of techniques to encourage conversation (A.Kagan-aphasia institute)

- Acknowledge Competence
- Reveal Competence
- Techniques to give (IN) and get (OUT) accurate information

www.aphasia.ca self-directed learning module
Basic Communication Strategies

Encourage all ways of communicating besides speaking & listening

Such as writing, drawing, pictures, gestures, facial expression
To improve comprehension (IN)

- Speak SLOWLY using SHORT simple sentences
- Give EXTRA TIME to process what you are saying
- Repeat or rephrase
- Be visual
- One idea at a time
To improve expression (OUT)

- Allow EXTRA TIME for answers/questions
- Ask YES/NO questions
- Offer 2 choices
- Encourage all forms
- Show slower speech is easier
- Ask for a topic word

**5+ second rule again!**
- verbal, objects, written, pictures
- pointing, gestures, writing, drawing

Am I providing ways to ask & answer questions?
How are you feeling?

- Fine
- Tired
- Pain
Written choices

Orientation

Kingston
Ottawa
Napanee
I want to talk about... Provide topic choices

Speech
Swallowing

?
Introduce a topic

Stroke
aphasia
Verify: checking to make sure you have understood

- Repeat back what you understand
- Add gestures or written key words

So let me just check that I understand... Am I close?
Are communication boards helpful?

1. Pen and Paper
2. Picture based boards
3. Word boards
4. Alphabet boards (difficult!)

Yes, with re-learning and practice if reading and writing skills impaired
I want to talk about …

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>family</th>
<th>friends</th>
<th>feelings</th>
<th>schedule</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>home</td>
<td>health</td>
<td>hobbies</td>
<td>money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>food</td>
<td>medication</td>
<td>TV</td>
<td>transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clothing</td>
<td>therapy</td>
<td>sports</td>
<td>current events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>weather</td>
<td>work</td>
<td>the past</td>
<td>the future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you</td>
<td>travel</td>
<td>communication</td>
<td>it's not on here</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Picture communication board

Hello    Goodbye    How are you?
I'm fine  I feel tired  I feel pain
I like that I don't like that Thank You

YES  NO  Say Again
Alphabet Board
Acknowledging competence

I know that you know what you want to say.

I know it hard to get the words out.

This must be frustrating.

Empathy and understanding the experience
Words of support

Ask what strategies seem to be working?

How did you get that word out?

That’s amazing how you got your message out!
Living with Aphasia

“I know what I want to say but I can’t say the words.”

“Totally wrong and weird words are coming out!”

“Sometimes I feel left out and lonely.”

“Give me extra time to talk. I have so much to tell you.”

“Take your time. Speak to me clearly, using simple words. One topic at a time.”

“Thank you for listening. It helps to talk to you. I think my communication is improving.”

“Thank you for listening. It helps to talk to you. I think my communication is improving.”
Thank you, From Emma

I hope you found this presentation helpful
Please share the Aphasia Quick Guide with patients, family, colleagues...

This will help improve Aphasia awareness