

Introduction to Aphasia and Communication Strategies after Acute Stroke



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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



**Imagine losing the ability
to talk?**

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



Speaking



Understanding

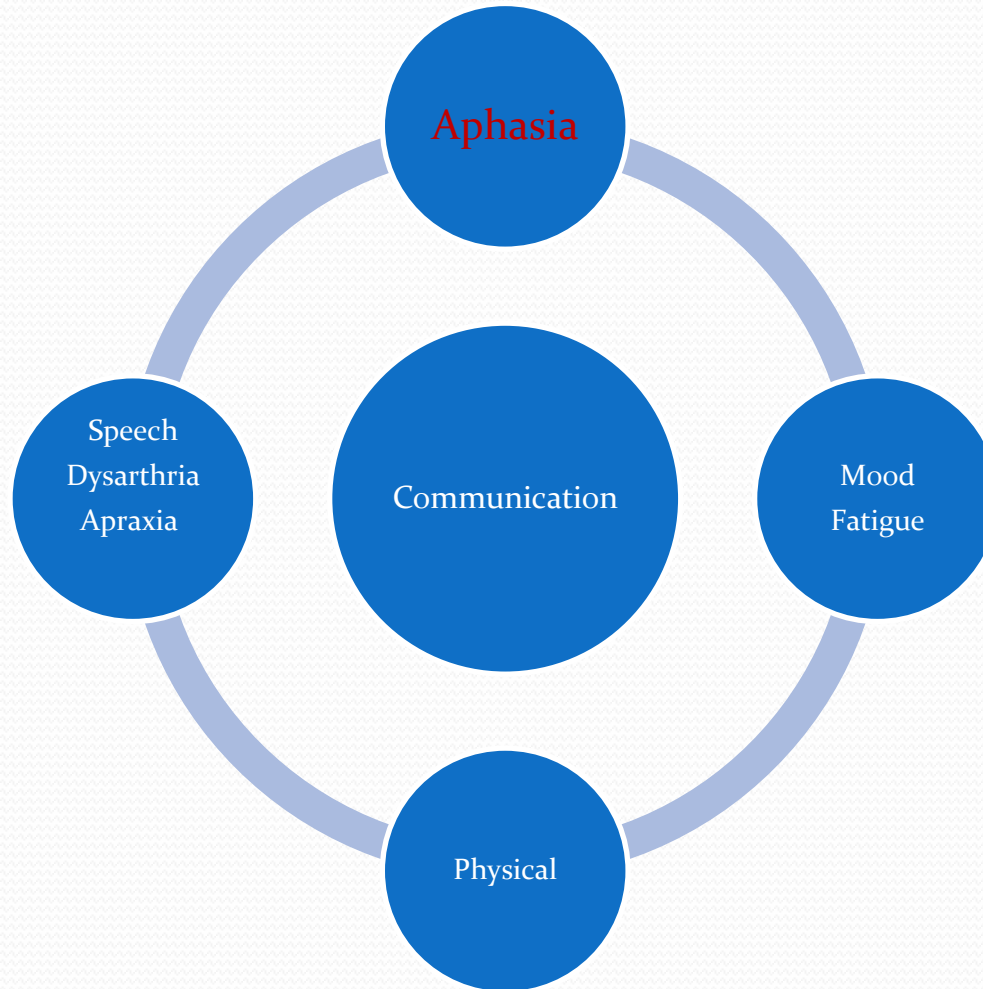


Reading



Writing

Communication after a stroke





Non-Fluent Aphasia

**comprehension is better
then
verbal expression**

Picture
Of
Brain

Fluent Aphasia

**verbal output is
better than
comprehension**

General Types of Aphasia

Nonfluent
Aphasia

Fluent
Aphasia

Global
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=mcafee&p=fluent+aphasia+video#id=1&vid=fb4occo9fb9251c1abf4341fba14f55f&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)

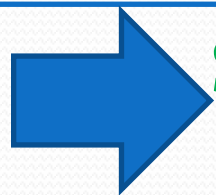
Acute stroke team

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

*Listen to their experience
I hear you...*

APHASIA QUICK GUIDE

Communication Strategies

- Face to Face
- Block out background noise
- Give MORE time to answer questions(5 +seconds)
- Use SHORT and SIMPLE sentences, one idea a at time(<10 words)
- Be visual. Use gestures
- Write down KEY topic words

- Ask YES/NO questions
- Give verbal choices
- Give written choices
- Repeat back what you understand
- Encourage, Encourage, Encourage
- *You know the words, it's just hard to get them out. What you're doing is working!! I hear you...I'm listening.*

Communication Tools

- Glasses, Hearing aids
- Pocket talker
- Marker and paper, clipboard
- Write and Draw
- YES/NO board
- Real Pictures
- Simple topic board
- *Can you show me?* Encourage pointing, gestures, writing, drawing.
- Ask what tools help?
- Simple familiar activities-family photos, magazines, games, greeting cards, menus, writing
- _____

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.



Assistive Devices in the Room

Glasses

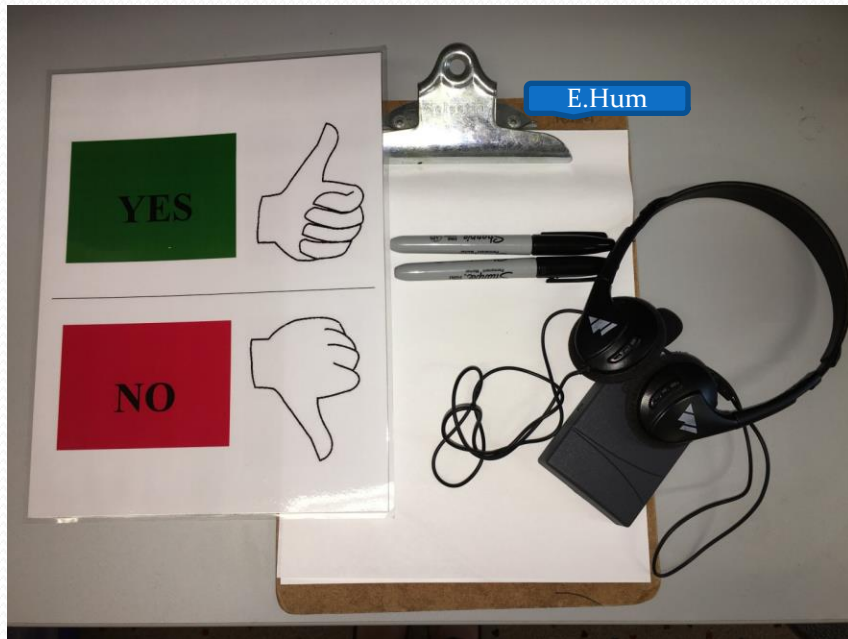
Hearing aids

Pocket talker

Dentures

Reduce background noise

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

Simple and familiar is better!

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



Clip art

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*

< 10 words

5 + second
rule

Gestures,
write down
KEY words
pictures

Is my message clear?

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?

E.Hum

How are you
feeling ?

Fine

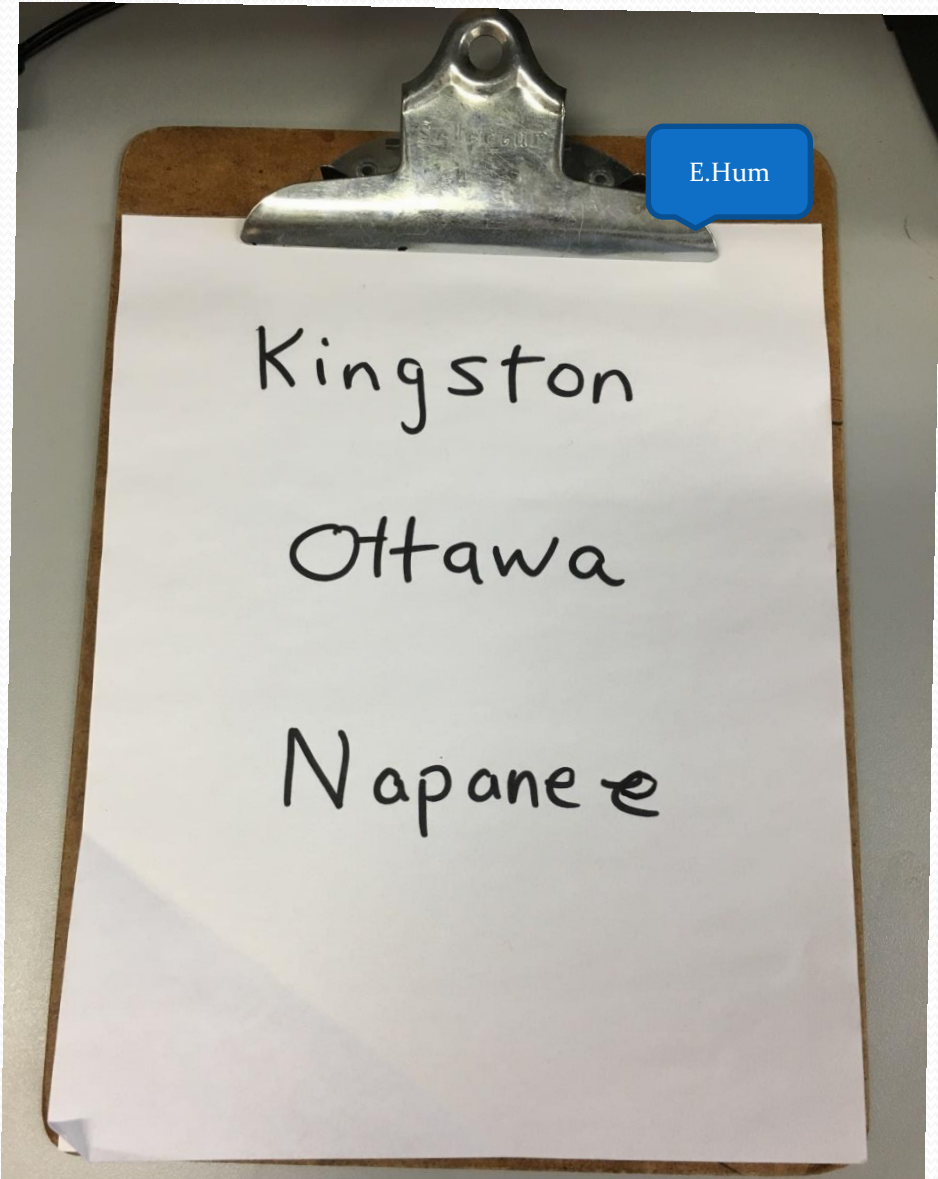
Tired

Pain

Answer a
question

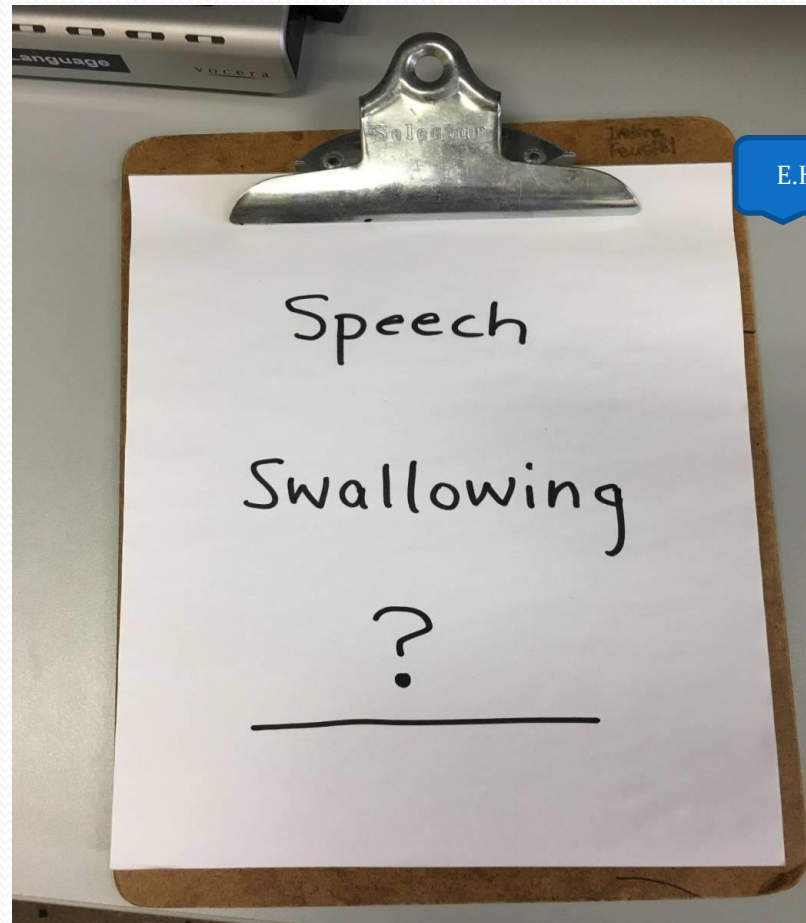
Written choices

Orientation



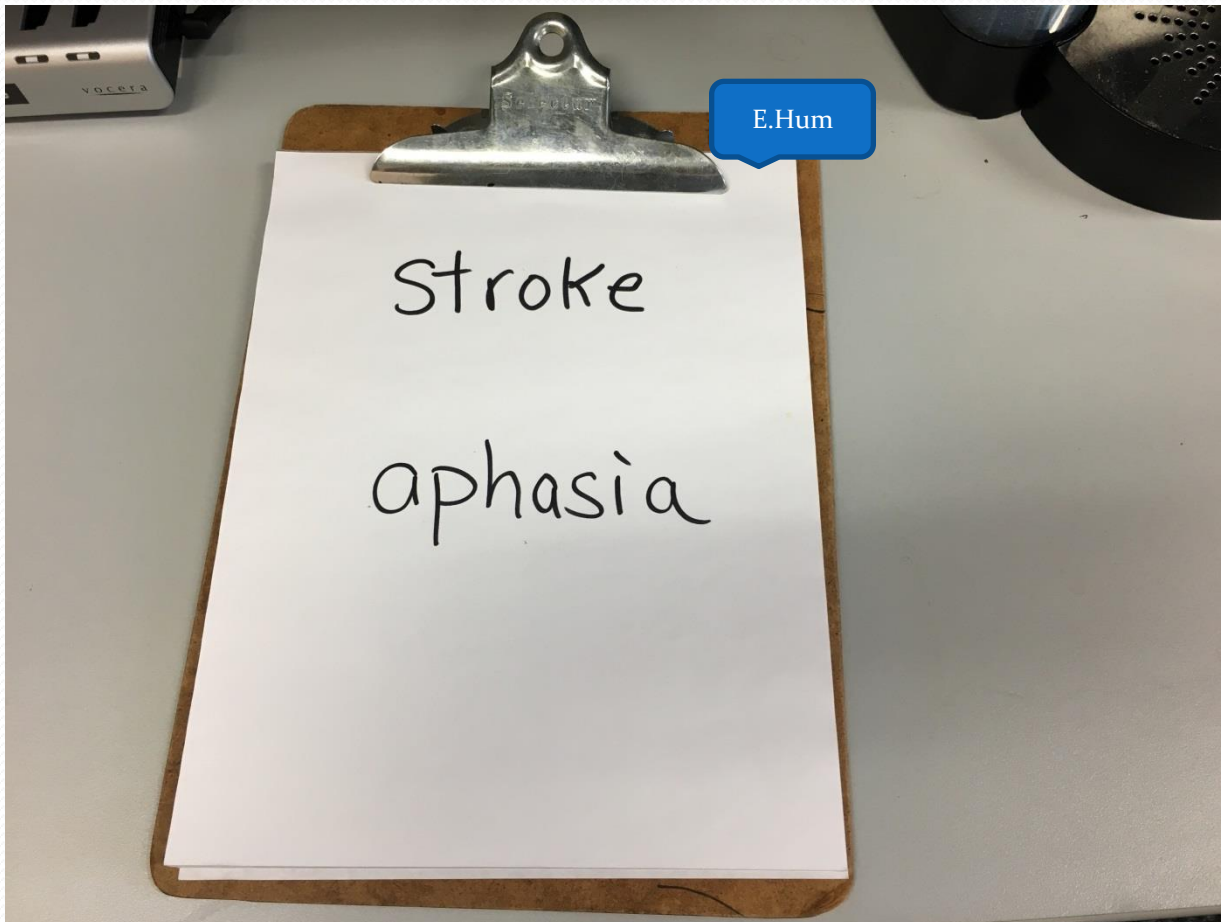
I want to talk about...

Provide topic choices



E.Hum

Introduce a topic



Verify: checking to make sure you have understood

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

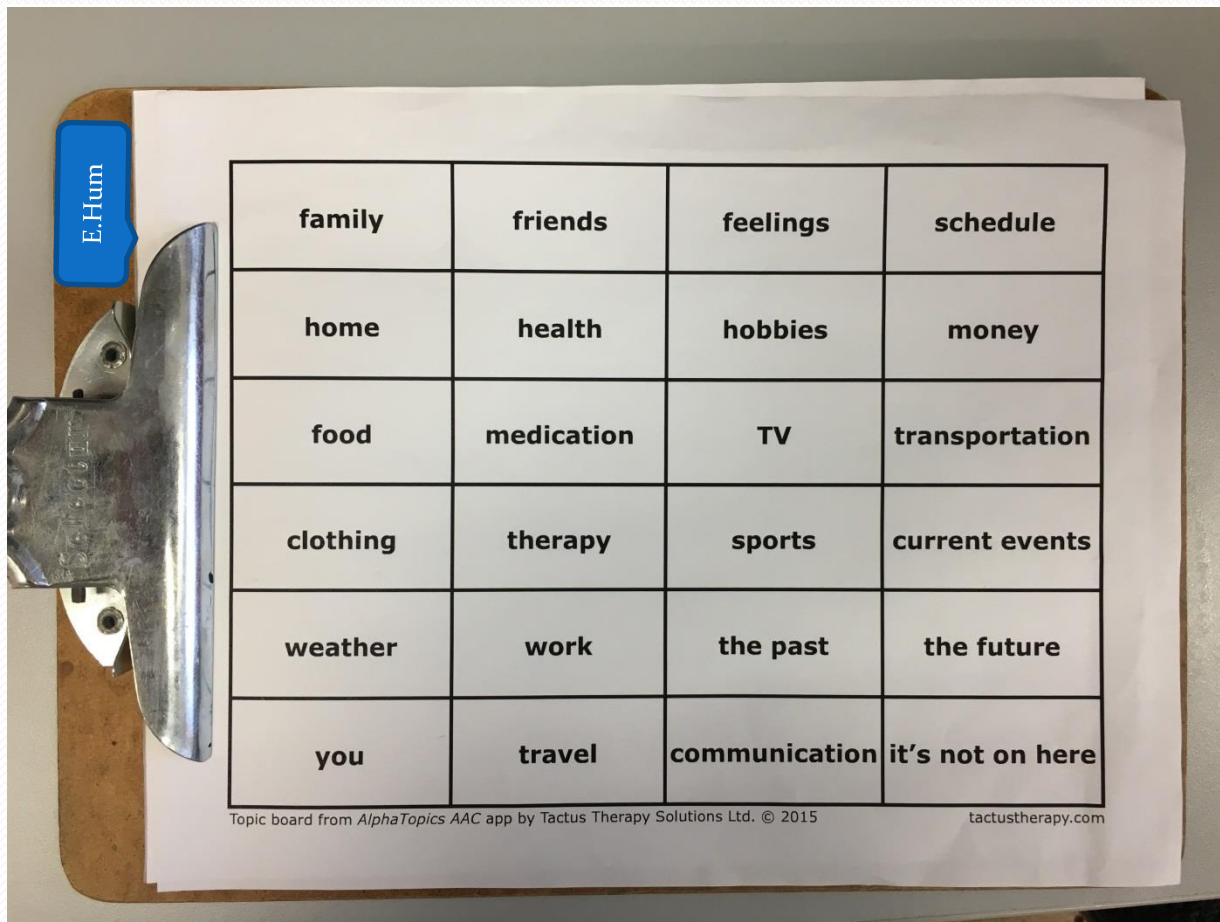
So let me just check that I understand...
Am I close?

Are communication boards helpful?

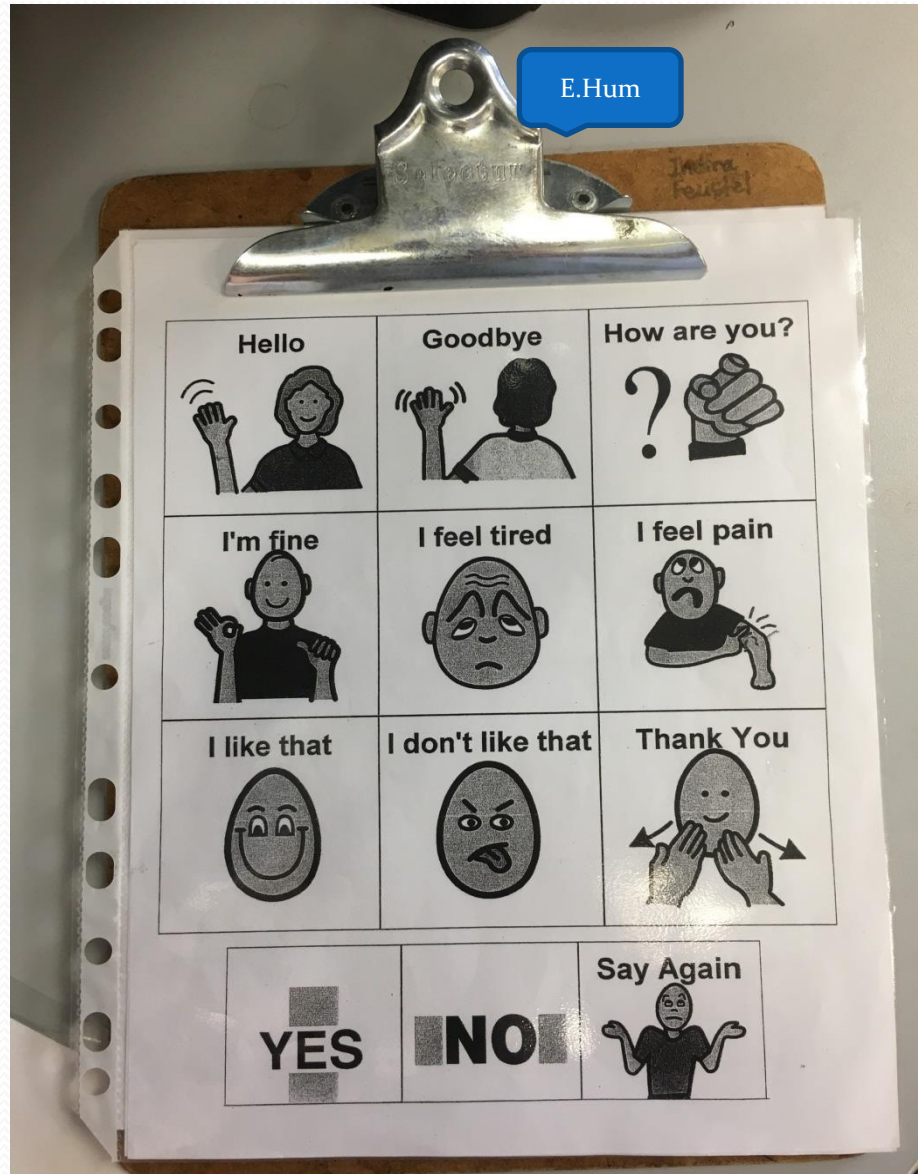
1. Pen and Paper
2. Picture based boards
3. Word boards
4. Alphabet boards (difficult!)

Yes, with re-learning and practice if reading and writing skills impaired

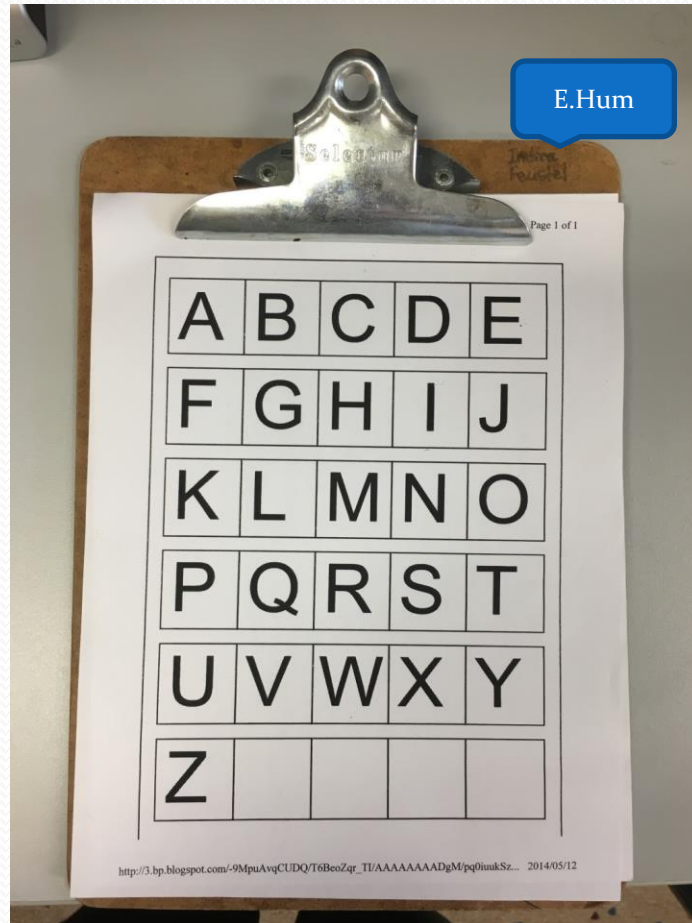
I want to talk about ...



Picture communication board



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.”

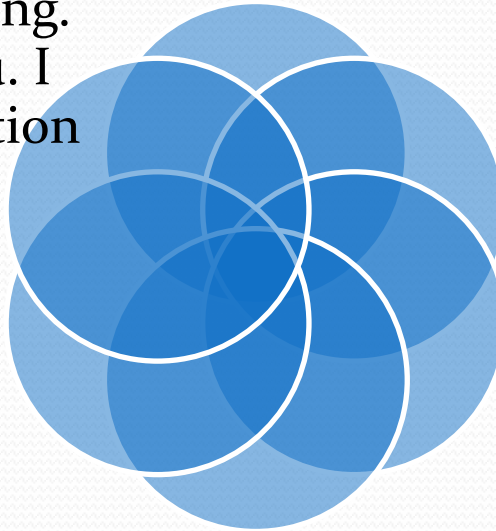
“Thank you for listening. It helps to talk to you. I think my communication is improving.”

“Totally wrong and weird words are coming out!”

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

“Sometimes I feel left out and lonely.”

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



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