


The Brain, The Body, and You: Communication

Monika Bhatnagar, M.S, CCC-SLP, Reg.CASLPO

Initial Reflection



*“Communication means sharing
together, thinking together,
not agreeing or disagreeing
together but thinking, observing,
learning, understanding
together.*

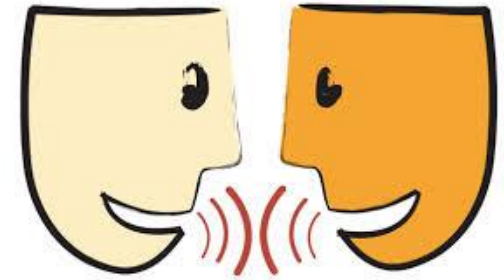
*Both you and the speaker have
to take the journey together.”*

~ J. Krishnamurti

www.flowingfree.org

Overview of Workshop

- Successful communication
- Accessibility/Barriers
- Post-stroke problems and communication
- Communicating with survivors
- Various communication impairments
- Communication tips
- Video Demonstration & Reflection
- Resources



Imagine what it would be like

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JWC-cVQmEmY> (1st 1min30s)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3oef68YabD0> (1st 45 seconds)

Characteristics of Successful Communication Partners

- Respect
- A clear message
- A desire to understand the other person's message
- Trust in the other person to listen
- Empathy for each other



Communication Breakdown

- Optimism
- Patience and persistence
- Creativity
- Honesty – “I’m sorry...”



Accessibility Matters!

Communicative Access refers to the ability of people with language/communication disorders such as aphasia to:

- gain barrier-free access to services
- participate in communicative events
- give and get information
- make informed decisions

(Simmons-Mackie et al, 2007)

Types of Barriers

- Physical/Architectural
 - Lack of clear signage
- Information/Communication
 - Background noises; people speaking too fast
 - Lack of skilled facilitators and appropriate resources
- Organizational
 - Staff not receiving adequate training
 - Forms not being made aphasia friendly

Barriers (cont.)

Attitudinal/lack of understanding & awareness:

- Discrimination
- Being ignored and excluded from decisions
- Being treated as incompetent
- Losing friends due to inability to participate in conversations

Post-Stroke Problems That Make Communication Challenging

- Physical limitations
- Cannot communicate eye-to-eye
- Impaired hearing / vision
- Cannot alter facial expressions
- Slower or inappropriate responses
- Cannot manage personal care

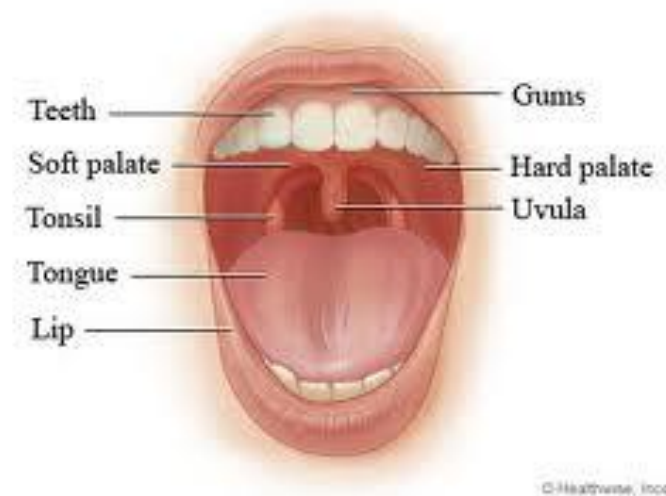


Communicating with Survivors: The Basics

- **Ask** how the person wants to be addressed
- **Introduce yourself** and your purpose in being there
- Deal with private matters **privately**
- Be **calm, direct and positive** in all communication
- **Adjust** the environment
- Be aware of **non-verbal messages**

Speech

- The motor movements of the lips, tongue, jaw, vocal tract, etc. that work together to create the SOUNDS we use to communicate
- Impairments: Dysarthria and Apraxia



© Healthwise, Incorporated

Language

- The agreed-upon code that a group uses
- Made up of words, grammar, rules, etc., that allow communication to take place
- Impairment: Aphasia



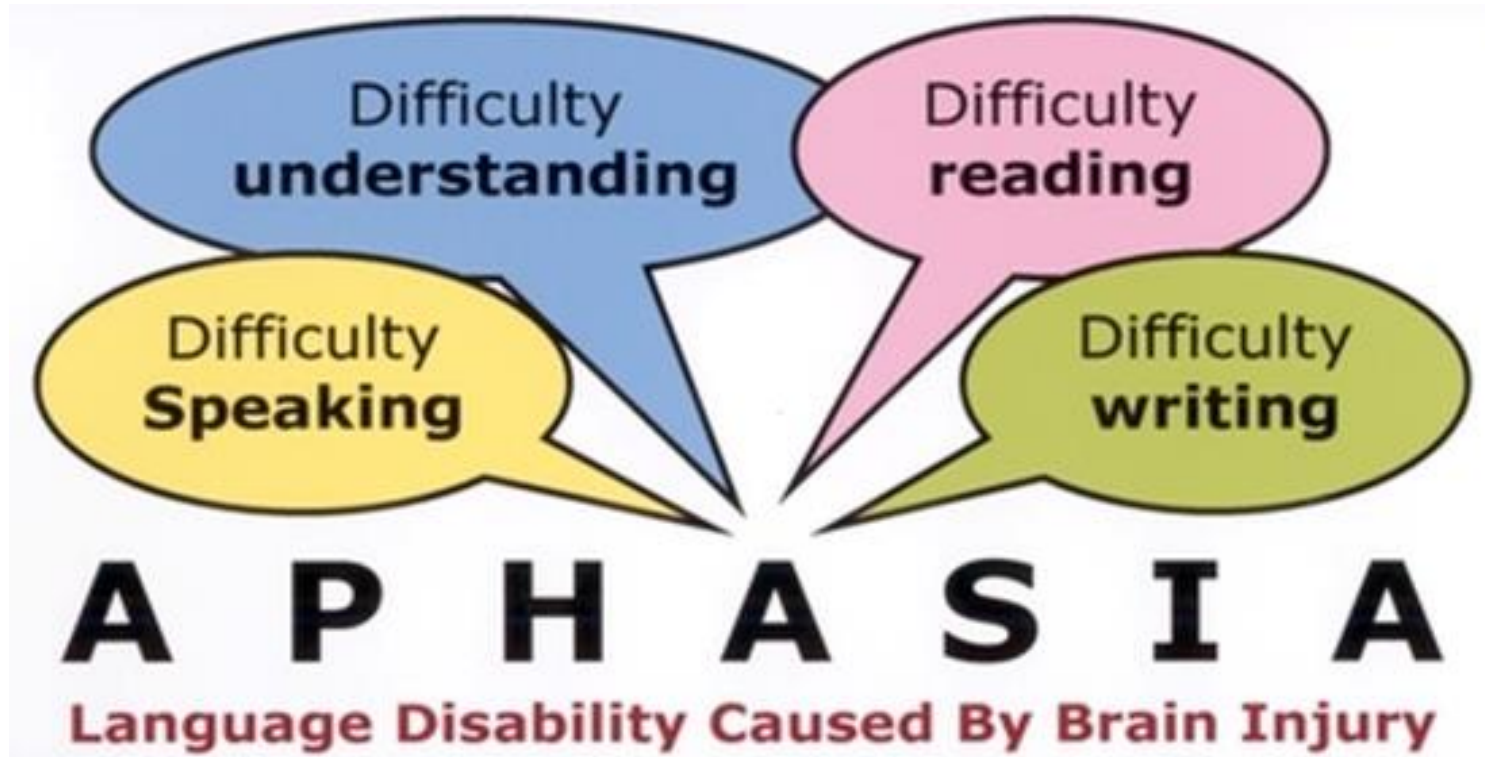
What communication disorders can occur after a stroke?

- Dysarthria
- Apraxia
- Voice Impairment
- Cognitive-Communication
- Aphasia
 - Different types



3 minute pause 😊

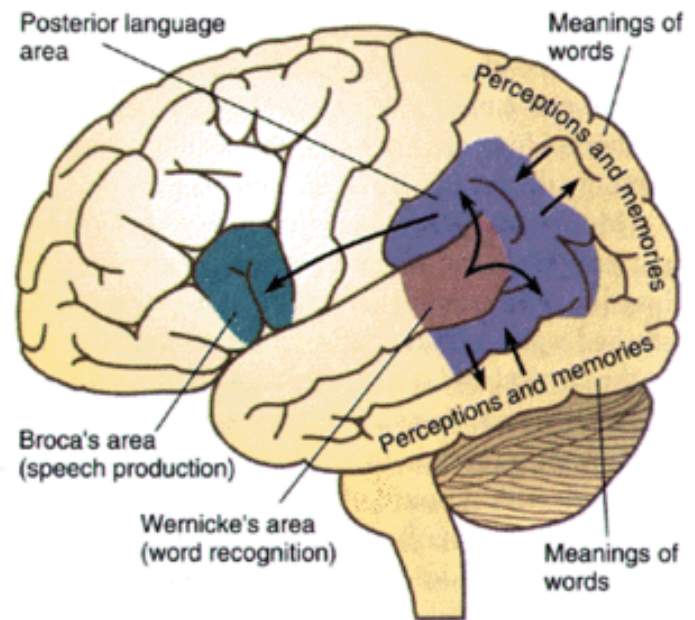
Aphasia



<http://www.milkaclarkestrokefoundation.org/aphasia.html>

Aphasia: A Loss of Language

- When a stroke has affected parts of the brain that are responsible for language
- People with aphasia are intelligent adults who **know more than they can say**



Communicating when a Survivor has Aphasia

- **Survivors with aphasia can:**
 - Think, plan, decide, and reason
 - Usually produce some clear words
 - Understand facial expressions and gestures
- **They often have:**
 - Difficulty expressing words and sentences
 - Difficulty understanding spoken language

Strategies to Help You Get Your Message “IN”

- Allow time!
- Speak face-to-face
- Appropriate tone of voice
- Communicate one idea at a time
- Short sentences
- Print key words
- Use gestures and facial expressions

More Strategies

- Use objects or simple pictures to help get your message across
- Be honest when you don't understand
- Acknowledge that the person with aphasia knows what they want to say but cannot say it

“I know you know...”

Strategies to Help the Person with Aphasia Get the Message “OUT”

- **Encourage:**
 - Writing
 - Gestures and pointing
 - Ask yes/no questions (use a written y/n if needed)
 - Use a communication/alphabet board, pictures
 - Encourage all attempts at communication
 - Verify what you have understood
 - Acknowledge lack of time if needed

Yes/No Questions

- Requires practice to ask yes/no questions effectively and efficiently
- Use a written YES/NO for pointing
 - YES NO I DON'T KNOW
- Start with broad questions (general topic), then specific
 - “Is it about a person?”
 - “Is it about your family?”
 - “Is it your daughter?”
 - “Are you wondering if she is coming to visit today?”



A Communication Scenario

- “I’ll help you get up, showered and dressed and then I’m going to take you to the dining room for breakfast but first you need to take your pill.”
 - “Here is your pill to take”
 - “Now I am going to help you take a shower”
 - “Then I will help you get dressed”
 - “After all that, I will take you for breakfast”
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KWVoqM9jmEM> 4m40s

Pictographic Topic Pages

- Pictograph pages are a tool to facilitate communication.
- Use the pictographs to provide visual cues to the topic of the conversation.
- Encourage the person with aphasia to point to the relevant pictograph.

www.aphasia.ca

<https://www.participics.ca/search/listing?mainsearch=help>

Aphasia Institute Free Pictographic Resources

- <https://www.aphasia.ca/shop/>

The screenshot shows the Aphasia Institute's online store. At the top, the logo features a stylized figure with a speech bubble and the text "APHASIA INSTITUTE" and "Life's a Conversation.". Navigation links include "Us", "Aphasia", "Living with Aphasia", "Health Care Professionals", "Online Store" (highlighted in blue), "Volunteer", and "Donate". A blue header bar contains the word "PRODUCTS" on the left, "Home » Shop" in the center, and a "SEARCH" button on the right.

Below the header, a "Cart" section indicates "No products in the cart." and shows "Showing 1-40 of 59 results" with a "Default sorting" dropdown menu. A blue banner states: "If you work or live in Ontario you may be eligible for free downloads of our products."

On the left, a "Product Categories" sidebar lists: "Health Care Professionals", "People with Aphasia and Family", and "LANGUAGE".

The main product area displays three items. The first is "TALKING TO YOUR COMMUNICATION HEALTH ASSISTANT" with the subtitle "Help Your Communication Health Assistant to HELP YOU". The second and third items are "TALKING TO YOUR DOCTOR APHASIA THERAPY KIT" with the subtitle "A tool for speech-language pathologists". The second item is labeled "COMPLETE VERSION" and the third is labeled "LITE VERSION" in large red text.

Case Study –Video Analysis

- What are some of the strategies used to get the message IN?
- What are some of the strategies used to get the message OUT?
- What were some of the barriers to communication for the patient?
- Was the communicative interaction effective?
- Did the communication partner reveal the individual's competence?

Video: Paul

- Scenario 1

<https://youtu.be/6p96Hilt6FA?t=1142>



- Scenario 2

<https://youtu.be/6p96Hilt6FA?t=1319>



Case Study –Video Analysis

- What are some of the strategies used to get the message IN?
- What are some of the strategies used to get the message OUT?
- What were some of the barriers to communication for the patient?
- Was the communicative interaction effective?
- Did the communication partner reveal the individual's competence?

Remember...

- Be natural
- Use tips and tools when breakdowns occur
- Start with gestures and gradually add as needed



STOP

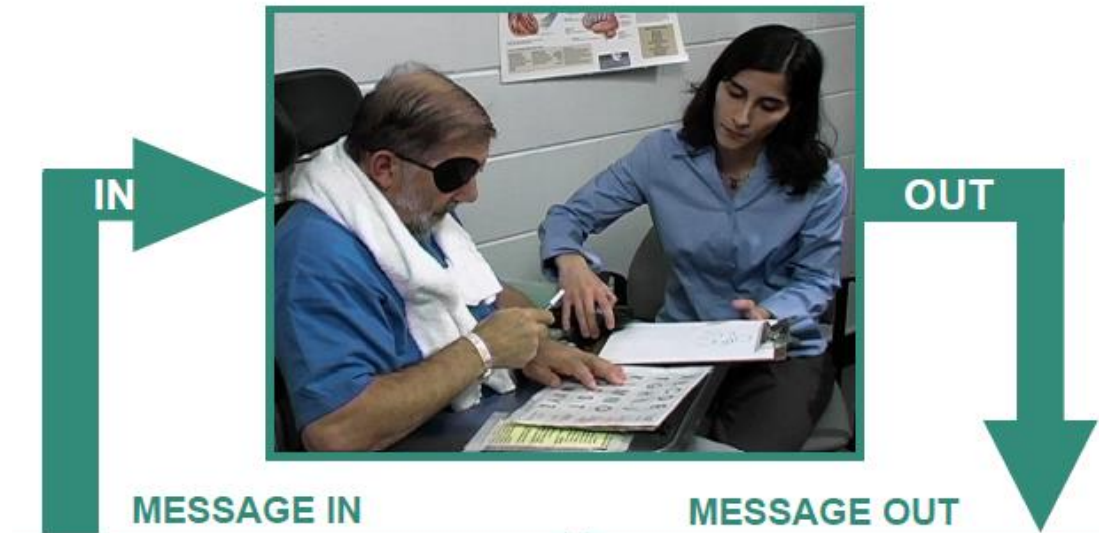
**Helping
Paul
Communicate**



GO

DON'T	DO
Raise your voice. Do not assume the person has a hearing problem.	Use short, simple sentences in a normal tone of voice.
Stand over a seated person.	Position yourself at eye-level.
Frown, cross your arms, or use non-verbal cues that indicate frustration or impatience.	Use positive facial expressions and body language to support your message.
Ask open-ended questions.	Ask simple yes/no questions (e.g., "Would you like orange juice?").
Rush communication.	Be patient. Allow time for a response.
Jump into a topic or move quickly from one topic to another. Don't ask many unrelated questions.	Make each individual topic clear and all topic changes clear (e.g., "Now, let's talk about your pills"). Then get more specific with questions.
Feel like there are no options if words don't work.	Print key words, use pictures, specific gestures, simple drawings, and facial expressions.
Get frustrated with the person.	Acknowledge the difficulty, take a break and come back later (e.g., "Can we please try again later?").
Forget to acknowledge the person's intelligence.	Use phrases like: "I know you know".
Assume that you understood the message.	Always confirm and summarize the response (e.g., "Yes, you want to go to the bathroom.").





- ✓ Position face-to-face
- ✓ Use gestures & facial expressions
- ✓ Establish topic
- ✓ One topic at a time
- ✓ Use short sentences
- ✓ Print key words
- ✓ Use simple drawings & pictures
- ✓ Watch for body language to ensure understanding
- ✓ Ask YES/NO questions

- ✓ Allow extra time
- ✓ Use support & encouragement
- ✓ Identify general topic first
- ✓ Encourage gestures & pointing
- ✓ Ask YES/NO questions
- ✓ Use picture/word boards
- ✓ Encourage writing
- ✓ Verify the message



Tools & Resources



Canadian Stroke Best Practice Recommendations

www.strokebestpractices.ca

STROKE NETWORK of Southeastern Ontario

www.strokenetworkseo.ca



Aphasia Institute: More Free Resources Coming Soon!

THE APHASIA INSTITUTE HAS SOME EXCITING NEWS!

Internationally recognized tools & training will be FREE in Ontario



- Information about aphasia in an accessible pictographic format
- A large searchable database of pictographic images relevant to aphasia
- A basic e-learning module
- On-site basic SCA™ training spots
- Consultation services
- An online quality improvement measure for institutions treating stroke patients




USEFUL APPS

The mobile phone/device applications listed below are to be used in addition to medical therapy to improve abilities. Some applications may have an associated fee.







***Disclaimer:** These applications are meant to be used in addition to therapy to help develop skills, NOT as an alternative to medical advice or treatments.

Thinking Programs				
Name	How to access	What it does	iOS or Android	Price
Lumosity 	www.lumosity.ca Apple App Store Google Play Store	A collection of games geared towards practicing a variety of cognitive skills	BOTH Lumosity (iOS) Lumosity (Android)	Free (in-app purchases Premium: \$16.99+)
Dots: A Game about Connecting 	Apple App Store Google Play Store	Problem solving	BOTH Dots (iOS) Dots (Android)	Free (in-app purchases for extensions)
Brainbean 	Apple App Store		Apple (iOS) Brainbean (iOS)	\$0.99
iMimic 	www.imimicgame.com Apple App Store	Memory	Apple (iOS) iMimic (iOS)	Free
Pictoword 	Apple App Store Google Play Store	Word and image association	BOTH Pictoword (iOS) Pictoword (Android)	Free

USEFUL APPS

Stroke Specific				
Name	How to access	What it does	iOS or Android	Price
3D Brain 	Apple App Store Google Play Store	Learn about brain functions, disorders, damage, and research	BOTH 3D Brain (iOS) 3D Brain (Android)	Free
Spot a stroke FAST 	Apple App Store	Help spot the symptoms of a stroke F.A.S.T	Apple (iOS) Spot a Stroke FAST (iOS)	Free
Brain tutor 3D 	Apple App Store Google Play Store	Explore the structure and function of the brain	BOTH Brain Tutor 3D (iOS) Brain Tutor 3D (Android)	Free (in-app purchases for extensions)





USEFUL APPS

Speech Assistance & Text-to-Speech				
Name	How to access	What it does	iOS or Android	Price
Speaking assistant 	Apple App Store Google Play Store	Speech practice	BOTH Speaking Assistant (iOS) Speaking Assistant (Android)	Free (In-app subscription purchases)
Dictation Talk to Text 	Apple App Store	Speech to Text voice recognition for social media and text messaging	Apple (iOS) Dictation Talk to Text (iOS)	Free (In-app purchases)
Speech sounds on Cue 	Apple App Store	Speech therapy software for articulation difficulty	Apple (iOS) Speech Sounds on Cue (iOS)	\$17.99
Conversation Starters 	Apple App Store	Conversation starters, tips for having a great conversation	Apple (iOS) Conversations	\$0.99
Speak and Translate 	Apple App Store	Speech to speech, speech to text, and text to text translations between many global languages	Apple (iOS) Speak and Translate (iOS)	Free (In-app purchases)
Text to Speech 	Apple App Store Google Play Store	Converts typed words and sentences into speech	BOTH Text to Speech (iOS) Text to Speech (Android)	Free

COMMUNITY STROKE RESOURCES for the Regions of Halton, Peel, Dufferin & Etobicoke

75

USEFUL APPS

Voice Test 	Apple App Store	Test voice and check for vocal cord health risk	Apple (iOS) Voice Test (iOS)	Apple: \$2.59
Language Therapy Lite 	Apple App Store Google Play Store	Boost language skills and enhance speech therapy	BOTH Lite version (iOS) Lite version (Android) FULL version (iOS) FULL version (Android)	Lite: Free 4-in-1 full app: Apple: \$74.99 Android: \$104.99
Writing therapy 	Apple App Store Google Play Store	Spelling and word association from sounds and pictures	BOTH Writing Therapy (iOS) Writing Therapy (Android)	Apple store: \$24.99 Google Play store: \$34.99
Constant Therapy 	Apple App Store Google Play Store	Practice speech, language, cognition, memory, reading, attention and comprehension skills	BOTH Constant Therapy (iOS) Constant Therapy (Android)	Free (in-app subscription purchases)

COMMUNITY STROKE RESOURCES for the Regions of Halton, Peel, Dufferin & Etobicoke

74