



Communication Quick Tips

Keep It Simple

Speak slowly and in short, simple sentences, focusing on one idea at a time. Phrase questions so people can respond using “yes”, “no”, or giving a “thumbs up” or “thumbs down”.



Be Creative

Provide a variety of communication options such as gestures, facial expressions, writing and pointing to key words, or using special tools such as a pictograph.



Be Patient

Allow extra time and don't rush. People with aphasia may tire more easily due to the additional effort required to communicate. Resist the urge to speak for them or assume you know what they are trying to say.



Remove Distractions

Find a quiet location with minimal background noise. Turn off radios and TV's. Speak at a normal volume. Maintain eye contact and keep the conversation on topic.



Confirm

Repeat back what you think they said to confirm. If you don't understand, say so. Acknowledge their frustration, (and yours) and avoid dwelling on communication errors. Pay attention to body language and facial expressions.



Communication/Aphasia Key Messages



This resource is a supplement to a short educational video that can be found at www.swostroke.ca

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW:

- Aphasia is a communication impairment that results from an injury to the brain
- A person with aphasia may have a variety of challenges such as difficulty speaking, expressing ideas, understanding language, reading and writing
- 1 in 3 people who have had a stroke will have aphasia
- Aphasia impacts a person's ability to use language. It does NOT impact their intelligence
- Persons with aphasia can become reluctant to communicate which could lead to social isolation and depression
- It is important to include them in conversations and encourage others to do so as well
- Overcoming communication barriers can take time and effort. Getting to know the person and the recommended communication strategies from the care plan can help improve interactions
- Better communication can lead to improved quality of life for the person with aphasia and increased satisfaction for their caregivers and health care providers

For more information, resources or further educational opportunities go to:
Aphasia Institute www.aphasia.ca or

Southwestern Ontario Stroke Network at www.swostroke.ca