15 Minutes TODAY
TOP TIPS for
APHASIA COMMUNICATION
+ SELF-CARE FOR YOU

IMPROVE COMMUNICATION IN JUST 15 MINUTES

Start today, better yet, start now to improve communication with your loved one with aphasia in just 15 minutes!

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THE STRUGGLE IS REAL

You struggle to have a basic conversation with your spouse since his stroke. It's difficult to understand what he is trying to communicate when he sees or is concerned with when he is pointing out the window.

Saying "good morning" is easy. Asking him to tell you his preference for dinner is frustrating. You don't know his thoughts or feelings or what he want's to do today.

How we give and receive messages is complicated. As you've been in this relationship for years, you already know what works and doesn't for communication with your spouse. Add aphasia, and you know you must start communicating again from scratch. Let this guide give you a starting place to improve your communication. Start with 15 minutes today. Grab one tip and practice it. The more you can understand how his brain is processing language, the easier it will be to make adjustments to improve communication.

We'd love to hear your feedback. Consider sending an email by clicking the link below.

-Geneviere

EMAIL HERE

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GET STARTED

Who is this for?

Spouses and families are living with aphasia. Aphasia is any speech, listening, reading, writing, or thinking impairment.

What is the goal?

To give you perspective about aphasia and to provide you with five action steps to objectively look at how you send messages to your loved one and how your spouse receives messages with aphasia.

How to get started?

First, in your mind's eye, think about your interaction at breakfast, for example. Then, use the questions on the next page to evaluate how effective the communication was.

Next, read through the guide. Select one of the five ideas. Commit 15-minutes a day to being mindfully present when communicating with your spouse and applying one of the principles. Was it useful? What could have been done differently?

Continue to take just 15 minutes a day to apply a different principle and determine what worked and didn't and what you'd do differently next time.

Communication is complex. Some strategies will apply to specific persons with aphasia, and some will not. We created this guide as a jumping-off point. Get mindful. Analyze. Assess. Apply. A guide such as this *will not address* the communication impairments the stroke survivor may be experiencing. Therefore, the burden of communication at home falls on you.

I **encourage you** to work through your **feelings by acknowledging them** in words aloud or preferably written down. Your role has changed, and you have even more responsibility on your shoulders. We want you to know **that you are not alone.**

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Ask yourself the following questions

- Did you get his attention and make eye contact?
- Were you only talking to him, or were you doing other activities?
- Did you ask a clear question? Did he understand??
- Did you provide enough time for him to respond to the question?
- Did you rush him?
- Did you interrupt him trying to help him say a word?
- Was he looking at you?
- Was he struggling to find his words?
- Was he getting frustrated?

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WHAT DID YOU FIGURE OUT?

DOES THINKING ABOUT COMMUNICATION FEEL OVERWHELMING? YOU MAY FEEL RESENTFUL THAT THE BURDEN FALLS ON YOU. BEING MINDFUL OF HOW YOU SPEAK, WHAT YOU SAY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT YOU SAY IT IN TAKES A GREAT DEAL OF EFFORT.

YOUR FEELINGS ARE VALID.

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What did you learn by answering the questions?

How does your spouse understand you and express himself?

Comprehension of words, phrases, sentences

NOTES

Expression of words, phrases, sentences

NOTES

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Bring back that lovin' feeling

Aphasia Communication

Top 5 Action steps you can start NOW

01 Return to dating

Remember dating when you hung on each other's every word? Revive those memories and get back to dating basics to improve communication. Select one 15-minute period to connect each day.

- sit down and make eye contact
- be present
- eliminate distractions
- touch their hand when speaking

02 Acknowledge feelings

Watch their facial expression, body language, and eyes—Check in with them to determine if you correctly read their body cues. Encourage communication in all forms. If your person is non-verbal, encourage a head nod or shake or thumbs up or down. Ask simple questions or make statements about the situation and wait for their response.

03 Reflection

Say what they said, precisely as they have said it. Wait for their response. Often, a person with aphasia needs an extra moment to process what you reflected. Be quiet and patient to give them time to think and formulate a response.

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DO LIFE

04 Ask good questions

When asking a question, be sure to wait for the answer. To maximize the success of getting the answer you seek, be sure to

- Introduce the question "I have a question for you."
- Be sure to establish eye contact
- Mute the TV
- Put your hand over his to get his attention
- Pause
- Breathe

05 Monitor for Aphasia Stress

Aphasia stress is natural and detrimental to receiving and sending information.

The brain has two levels of processing: thinking and emotional. Think of these brain processes as having an inverse relationship. For example, when stress builds, the emotional brain becomes primary, and the person loses higher-level cognitive thinking abilities. As a result, the emotional brain must return to neutral before problem-solving and thinking occur.

Notice stress, acknowledge it, identify what brought it on, and take deep, cleansing breaths to neutralize the emotional brain.

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MANAGING STRESS
APHASIA SELF-CARE

Identify the sources of your stress

Take a moment to think about your household routines and responsibilities. Utilize the following pages to jot down your notes. Bullet points are great. You may find it therapeutic to write more, to leave it on the page. You do what you need to do!

Make time for gratitude

Notice good things, seek them out, and appreciate them. Open your bedroom curtains, look out the window, and find something to be thankful for. Say aloud what you are grateful for. Take a deep breath for 5 seconds, hold 4 seconds, and release out for 8 seconds. Give yourself grace, then start your day.

Do something healthful

Caregivers are the last to take care of themselves. Please make a decision and take on one of these ideas today.

- drink water before anything else
- spend time outside
- eat sitting down
- go for a walk
- cook a simple meal

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Welcome!

LIFE Speech Pathology is a private practice specializing in the customized treatment of chronic aphasia, acquired apraxia of speech, dysarthria, and cognitive-communication impairment resulting from stroke or neurological conditions. The clients and families we work with have completed the traditional rehabilitation process, but they want more. These clients want to return to work, socialize with family and friends, travel, and return to the life they knew before a stroke. By understanding each client's thinking and language processes with chronic aphasia, treatment is tailored to the underlying deficit while focusing on and targeting the client's goals.

Many clients have been told they have 'reached a plateau.' We don't believe in plateaus. We have the knowledge, experience, and skills to help you reach your goals and Do LIFE!

Schedule a complimentary consultation to discuss your goals and life improvement opportunities. Then, we can help you meet your goals! We are Medicare providers and offer a client-directed wellness program.

SERVICES

- Medicare provider
- Out-of-network all other insurances
- Client-directed Communication Wellness

LET'S EXPLORE YOUR GOALS
Schedule a Complimentary Aphasia Consultation

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Quick, easy way to save contact information to your contacts

ABOUT

Genevieve Richardson is the founder of **LIFE Speech Pathology and LIFE Aphasia Academy℠**. The LIFE companies are dedicated to the treatment of and support of families living with chronic aphasia, apraxia, dysarthria, and cognitive-communication challenges resulting from a stroke or neurological condition. Her twenty-eight-year career in stroke and neurological rehabilitation, the last eight working exclusively with the chronic stroke population via telepractice, have demonstrated that traditional insurance-directed treatment is not enough for many families.

LIFE Speech Pathology provides outpatient treatment via telepractice to clients nationwide. **LIFE Aphasia Academy** is filling the gap in information, support, and resources that many families need to navigate their journey with aphasia. LIFE has the dedication, knowledge, and experience to support various clients and families and telepractice provides the opportunity to reach clients and families with specialty services regardless of their location. Survivors and their families do not have to travel the rehabilitation path alone; their journey is just getting started after discharge from rehabilitation. We are here every step of the way. Learn more about our mission by visiting DoLIFESpeechPathology.com.

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WHOLE PERSON + WHOLE FAMILY

SUPPORTING STROKE SURVIVORS + THE FAMILIES WHO LOVE THEM

LIFE Speech Pathology

Innovative Treatment for Adults with Chronic Aphasia

Empower

Advocate

Educate

YOUR GOALS ARE OUR GOALS

LIFE Aphasia Academy℠

An Aphasia Village for Spouses and Families

Education

Podcast

Private Facebook Group

SUPPORTING YOU SUPPORTING YOUR FAMILY

WE ARE YOUR VILLAGE

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