



Let's Talk

Aphasia: Language Problems in Adults

“My father had a stroke and now has trouble communicating. He knows what he wants to say but can't get the words out. He gets confused when people talk. He is very frustrated and doesn't want to talk to people. He can't even enjoy other things he used to do, like reading the newspaper.”

—Steven

What If You Couldn't Communicate?

If you have aphasia, it may feel like you are living in a place where you don't speak the language. You may be having problems:

- Talking with other people
- Asking for help
- Understanding what others say
- Reading and writing

You may feel alone, angry, frustrated, or sad.

Aphasia is Different

Aphasia is a language disorder. It is usually caused by a stroke or injury to the parts of your brain that allow you to understand and use words. This can make it hard to remember what things are called or put words together into sentences. You may also have trouble understanding what other people are saying, or problems with reading or writing.

Not everyone with aphasia is the same. You might be able to talk but don't always say what you mean to say. Or it may be hard to get out even a few words. People may not understand why you are having trouble.

Do you speak more than one language? You may have trouble speaking in all languages. Or you may have more trouble with one. Everyone is different.

One thing to remember—aphasia does not make you less smart or less able to make decisions. It just may be harder to tell others what you are thinking.

Speech-Language Pathologists Can Help

Speech-language pathologists, or SLPs, are experts who work with people who have aphasia. SLPs work in hospitals, clinics, private

Fast facts

- People with aphasia (uh-fay-zhuh) can have trouble talking, understanding, reading, and writing.
- Strokes, brain injuries, and other diseases can cause aphasia.
- Speech-language pathologists (SLPs) can help.



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offices, and nursing homes, and can even come to your home.

Your SLP will talk with you and your family about the problems you are having. Your SLP will test your speaking, understanding, reading, and writing. Together, you will develop a plan to work on what is most important to you.

Treatment Can Make a Difference

Your SLP can show you and your family ways to communicate better. This may help you feel less frustrated. Your SLP may give you homework and tips to practice in addition to what you work on in treatment. Homework activities may include:

- Saying familiar things, like greetings, counting, or the alphabet
- Using pictures or letters to help you think of words

- Listening to short paragraphs or instructions to help your understanding

- Reading and writing words and phrases

There are also ways to communicate without speaking. You may be able to use gestures, pictures, or electronic devices. This is called augmentative and alternative communication, or AAC. Your SLP can help you find out if AAC is right for you.

You and your family may find it helpful to talk with other people who have aphasia. Your SLP may be able to help you find a support group in your area.

You can get more information about aphasia from National Aphasia Association (www.aphasia.org).

“The SLP helped my family learn to use shorter sentences that my father could understand. He carried a small notebook of pictures and words to point to when he got stuck. My father and mother started going to a Stroke Club so they could meet with other people who were living with aphasia. He still has trouble, but he’s doing much better now.”

—Steven

Aphasia can change your life. Help is available.

To learn more about aphasia or to find an SLP near you who has been certified by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), visit www.asha.org or call 800-638-8255 or TTY-301-296-5650.

My SLP’s name is

Appointment

Compliments of
American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)
and