Keeping Conversations Alive:
Spotlight on the Living Your Best Life Education and Support Group
For Clients and Families living with Primary Progressive Aphasia

Living Your Best Life – Supporting Couples to Keep Conversations Alive
The Living Your Best Life education and support program is offered as the signature program for clients with PPA and their families at the Aphasia Institute. During initial assessment, client needs, abilities and identity are explicitly discussed in order to inform clinical decisions regarding individualized programming options.

As is the case for assessment and the majority of PPA programming at the Centre, Living Your Best Life is delivered by a Speech-Language Pathologist (S-LP) and a Social Worker (SW); due to unique nature of the PPA journey, a high level of skill in Supported Conversation for Adults with Aphasia (SCA™) and counselling are required. When available, it is recommended that support personnel (e.g. Communicative Disorders Assistant/Speech-Language Therapy Assistant) contribute to the program as co-facilitator or to develop program resources as needed.

Goals and Objectives of the Program
Design of the Living Your Best Life program was guided by principles of the Life Participation Approach to Aphasia and the Framework for Outcome Measurement in Aphasia (A-FROM). The specific goals of the program include:

- Provide education about language, (Primary Progressive) Aphasia and its impact on conversation
- Provide training in Supported Conversation™ for Adults with Aphasia (SCA™) and its benefits
- Increase life participation by reducing communication barriers
- Provide framework for Living Your Best Life coaching model
Design of the Program
Clients with PPA and their families gain education and are able to practice SCA tools and strategies to reduce the barriers created by aphasia in the four domains of the A-FROM. Additionally, embedded within the service model is the consistent use and modeling of transformative language to enable active thinking and actions (i.e. language of life as opposed to loss).

The program is designed to be seven weeks in duration, and it is broken into two major components:

- **Component I (4 weeks)** - Provide education about PPA and training in Supported Conversation for Adults with Aphasia embedded within the Living Your Best Life coaching model. Clients with aphasia may participate in the Community Aphasia Program (CAP) simultaneously while learning the tools and can incorporate them into practice week by week.

The agenda for **Component I** program includes:

Clients and families living with PPA may have difficulty understanding their challenges in the context of a predominantly stroke-based population. The following resources have been particularly helpful, regardless of aphasia severity:

- **Component II (3 weeks)** - Partners are provided with a facilitated caregiver support program and introduction to community resources (e.g. Alzheimer’s Society). Concurrently, members with PPA continue in CAP conversation groups in order to practice skills and build community
Impact of the Program
At the beginning and end of the four-week couples component, participants independently complete an aphasia friendly survey. The themes represented by the questions include: impact of PPA on their life; knowledge about aphasia and supported conversation; confidence sharing their journey with others; and concerns for the future. Survey questions are listed below, followed by recent group responses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Number</th>
<th>Themes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1</td>
<td>Today, which one is you?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q2</td>
<td>I understand what primary progressive aphasia means</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q3</td>
<td>I understand how aphasia causes communication breakdown</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q4</td>
<td>I know what to tell others about primary progressive aphasia</td>
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<td>Q5</td>
<td>I am comfortable telling others that I am affected by PPA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q6</td>
<td>I have concerns about my communication skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q7</td>
<td>I am concerned about other abilities (memory, multitasking, prioritizing)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q8</td>
<td>My family and I are able to have important conversations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q9</td>
<td>My family and I know how to help each other communicate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q10</td>
<td>My family and I adapt well to change</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q11</td>
<td>My family and I are able to focus on quality of life</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q12</td>
<td>I have fears about how PPA will continue to affect my life</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q13</td>
<td>My family and I know which community supports are available to us</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Themes represented:
- **Impact**: 1, 8, 10, 11
- **Knowledge**: 2, 3, 9, 13
- **Confidence**: 4 & 5
- **Concerns**: 6, 7, 12
References


