



# Does your Family Member have APHASIA?

What to look for and What you can do

**Your family member may 'know more than they can say'!**

## Does your family member have Aphasia?

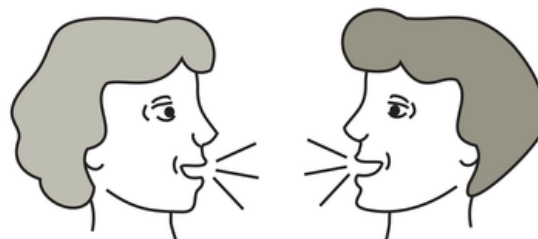
### What to look for...

- He/She can't speak, or their words don't make sense
- You aren't sure if he/she understands you
- He/She may not say 'Yes'/'No' correctly, even if they know what they want

**Aphasia may get better over time. Even if it does not, we know people can live successfully with Aphasia.**

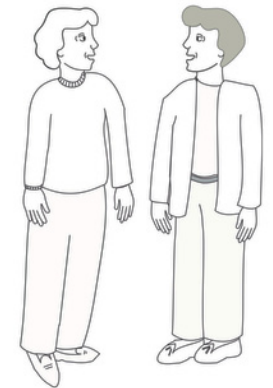
### What YOU can do:

- Ask a speech-language pathologist (SLP) about aphasia
- Show your family member you understand that he/she may 'know more than they can say'
- Keep talking with him/her. Include them in conversation. Encourage others to do that too



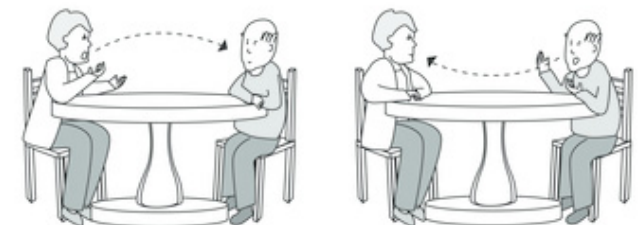
## HOW TO COMMUNICATE with a person with aphasia:

- Imagine what they are trying to say, instead of focusing on mistakes
- Keep the place quiet, when talking with him/her
- Try to have only one conversation at a time, if other people are in the room

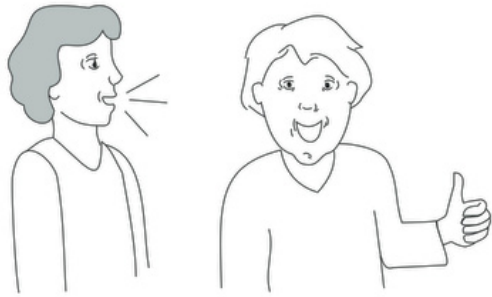


### Be prepared:

- Marker
- Paper or Whiteboard (portable)



## COMMUNICATION TIPS:



### Help them feel respected:

- Speak to him/her directly, naturally, and kindly
- Make eye contact
- Don't shout. Be patient
- Use an adult tone of voice
- If you need to speak on their behalf, ask him/her if it's OK
- Acknowledge their frustration
- Say/show, **"I know you know!"**

## GETTING THE MESSAGE IN...

### Help him/her understand you:

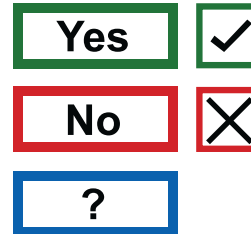
- Speak clearly & slowly. Pause frequently
- Use short sentences
- Write large key words
- Draw/point to pictures/things
- Use your hands + face to show what you mean
- One topic at a time
- Let him/her see your lips

## COMMUNICATION TIPS:

## GETTING THE MESSAGE OUT...

### Help him/her communicate:

- Ask yes/no questions, one at a time
- Give him/her time to answer
- Don't complete their sentences (unless asked)
- Give him/her choices to point to (e.g. 'YES' / 'NO' / '?' )



- See if their face/actions are saying something
- If they say the wrong word, imagine what they may be trying to say

### Double-check:

- Check what you think they have told you. (Say it again, or sum it up)
- Ask if they have more to tell you, before moving on
- Sometimes, you can ask, "Should we take a break? Can we try again later?"



## QUICK TIPS\*:

- A:** ask simple + direct questions
- P:** provide many ways to help talk
- H:** help communicate, if asked
- A:** acknowledge their frustration
- S:** speak clearly, slowly, and pause
- I:** if you don't understand, say so
- A:** allow extra time

*\*Adapted from National Aphasia Association  
- "The Aphasia Caregiver Guide"*

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Aphasia Institute  
**(416) 226-3636**  
[www.aphasia.ca](http://www.aphasia.ca)



**Life's a Conversation.**

*This resource was developed by the Aphasia Institute. We gratefully acknowledge input from North York General Hospital stroke and reactivation unit staff, as well as from many family members of people with aphasia.*