



Let's Talk Aphasia

Glenda Gandza MD

Brenda Rust MA SLP (C)

Westman Aphasia Inc. (WAI)

- 2008, a group of six professionals **recognized the need for a community-based resource** for people living with aphasia
- An incorporated, charitable, community organization
- Volunteer Board members, 3 clinicians and trained volunteers

WAI

- Funded by the United Way, grants, donations, local fundraising
- NOT part of the formal health care system

Aphasia

A language or communication disorder resulting from damage to parts of the brain responsible for speech and language

What is Aphasia?

It may be difficult to...

Speak



Understand

Read



Write

Everyone's aphasia is unique

People with aphasia often know what they want to say

What Are the Causes of Aphasia?

Most common cause is a **STROKE**:

- Approximately 25% to 40% of people who survive a stroke have some degree of aphasia

Other causes:

- Brain tumor
- Head Injury
- **Dementia** such as Alzheimer's disease
- Other neurological progressive diseases of the brain such as Parkinson's Disease
- Primary Progressive Aphasia

Dementia and Aphasia

Communication abilities can change on a daily basis

- Can depend on the quality and amount of sleep, stress levels and other medical conditions

Living with Aphasia

IMAGINE:

- Not being able to say what you are thinking
- Not being able to understand verbal or written words
- Not being able to read or write
- Not being able to answer questions before others tire of concentrating on what you are trying to communicate
- Saying Yes when you mean No

Living with Aphasia:

- Communication:
 - Allows interaction with family, friends and others in your environment
 - Impacts participation in life
 - Is a large part of WHO WE ARE

Living with Aphasia

- Individuals with aphasia **often know more** than they can say
- Communication difficulty **can** be the reason for disruptive behaviors
- Individuals with language impairment may be acting out because they are frustrated with:
 - **not being able to communicate what they want to say**
 - **not being understood**

Supported Conversation for Adults (SCA): Exercising the Brain – Forming New Connections



Supported Conversation For Adults With Aphasia (SCA™)

- Used to teach individuals with aphasia and their conversation partners to communicate effectively without relying on the spoken word
- Developed by Aura Kagan, SLP, of the **Aphasia Institute** in Toronto, Ontario over 30 years ago
- Research has shown SCA™ is an effective approach for people with **moderate** and **severe** aphasia

Supported Conversation For Adults With Aphasia (SCA™)

- **Not a treatment or a replacement for speech therapy**
- An approach that involves the use of a set of communication tools and techniques
- Provides “**communication ramps**” similar to wheelchair ramps for physical challenges

Westman Aphasia Inc: www.westmanaphasia.ca/

- Conversation and support group for persons with aphasia
- Communication supports for persons with aphasia
- SCA education for caregivers, families and healthcare providers
- Caregiver support group
- Outreach program

Resources

Westman Aphasia: Aphasia Facts and Resources

www.westmanaphasia.ca

How to communicate with a person who has aphasia: Aphasia Institute

<https://www.aphasia.ca/home-page/about-aphasia/>

Participics: A free, searchable database of pictographic images developed by the Aphasia Institute. Specially designed for communicating with people with aphasia

<https://www.aphasia.ca/home-page/health-care-professionals/resources-and-tools/>

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