




COMMUNITY-BASED APHASIA GROUPS

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OVERVIEW

- 1. Efficacy and benefits of group therapy**
 - 2. Structure**
 - 3. Our role in group therapy**
 - 4. Types of Activities**
 - 5. Outcomes**
 - 6. Future Endeavors**
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WHY DO GROUP THERAPY?

Aphasia groups have become increasingly more popular because they offer so many potential benefits to group participants.

- ❖ Targets are related to personal and environmental aspects of life.
- ❖ Purpose is to facilitate the achievement of life goals.
- ❖ It can be used with clients of any severity of aphasia and at any stage of recovery.
- ❖ Provides a safe, beneficial social outing for individuals who no longer feel comfortable in social settings.

EFFICACY OF GROUP THERAPY

- ✓ **Groups focus on collaborative, practical activities as well as authentic conversation.**
- ✓ **Generalization of language skills is more likely to occur when more complex language forms are targeted.**
 - More complex language forms occur more frequently and naturally in conversation.
- ✓ **Communication supports can be programmed to support specific communication genres, or favored methods of engaging with others .**
 - Examples: quoting facts, relating events in amusing monologues, discussing recent events in pre-planned, scripted speech.
- ✓ **Group therapy is a prime example of a social approach to intervention that is consistent with the Life Participation Approach to Aphasia (LPAA).**

ADVANTAGES TO GROUP THERAPY

It gives the members a sense of community.

May prevent depression or other negative consequences if started early in recovery.

Negative psychosocial reactions may be avoided.

Can be cost-effective method of providing service

Increases the variety of communicative function or speech acts (different structure and syntax, questions and statements, imperatives).

Improve psychosocial function both directly and indirectly.

Wide array of communication partners increases generalization into other environments.

Fosters interpersonal flourishing interactions and shown to affect overall health and well-being.

Excellent environment for language improvisation which is dire for novel and creative language use.

BENEFITS OF GROUP THERAPY FOR CAREGIVERS

Caregivers observe and learn to use multimodal strategies in conversation and also positive techniques for communicating with PWA

pausing, giving time to process, providing visual support with writing, etc.

visuals, writing, iPad/tech tools

Caregivers also gain perspective and a better understanding of aphasia and may become more empathetic and compassionate toward their loved one.

Caregiver can observe their loved one's strengths in communication.

Caregivers provide emotional support and guidance to each other.

THE ROLE OF THE SLP

❖ Communication Partner and Coach

❖ Problem Solver


- The SLP's ultimate role should be to support communication when breakdowns occur. SLP may facilitate the group conversation at first but, the ultimate goal is for PWA to facilitate conversation/taking on a leadership role, while the SLP helps support communication repairs during breakdowns.

❖ Reinforcer

- Giving praise and encouragement for all efforts to communicate a message.



TARGETED SPEECH AND LANGUAGE SKILLS

- Verbal Expression
 - Auditory Comprehension
 - Multimodal Communication
 - Conversational turn-taking
 - Topic Maintenance
 - Reading
 - Word-Retrieval
 - Writing
 - Communication Strategies
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HOW TO GET STARTED

Structured Activities vs.
Open conversation

Frequency?



Size?
Big groups vs.
small groups or
both??

Caregiver involvement?

Length of time?

Clientele
Restricted enrollment vs.
Open enrollment

Cost??



UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN APHASIA COMMUNITY

UMAC

Clients of all severities and stages of recovery.

Meets weekly, each session is 3 hours.

Pay per monthly session and drop-in availability.

Open Conversation
(with support)



Structured expressive tasks

Big Group Conversation

- multimodal lots of visuals, etc.



Small Groups focusing on specific areas of improvement

- reading, writing, speaking, naming/word retrieval, auditory comprehension, etc.



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BIG GROUP CONVERSATION

Purpose: To facilitate conversational discourse between participants who are at any level of impairment.


Ideas for Big Group Conversation:

- Begin with having members provide updates about themselves and what they've been doing.
- Connecting group members by sharing commonalities through commenting and questioning, or humor.
- Utilize specific topics that are high-interest to all members to initiate engagement.
- Provide questions that group members read aloud to target verbal fluency and oral reading.
- Promote Question formulation to facilitate social interactions with each other.

Successful topics: Travel, current events with visuals, Would you rather Questions, driving, hobbies.



FOCUS POINTS OF BIG GROUP

- Use less structure, keep it more social.
 - Promote interest in social interaction and leadership/independence in communicating.
 - Maintain engagement – selecting topics or themes that are high-interest for a variety of people.
 - Encourage use of multimodal communication and strategies.
 - Use visuals and supports of all kinds.
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USE OF MULTIMODAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

A variety of communication supports can allow a PWA to relate a story to others and produce more language.

Using SFA/
related words

inflection

drawing

circumlocution

technology

photographs

writing

gestures

graphic media

number lines

picture dictionaries

calendars

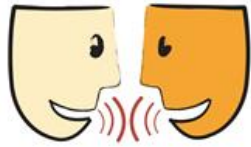


Auditory Stimuli – playing clips of familiar music, movie lines, short scenes from popular shows/movies.

**Use of multimodal communication also helps with the listeners' comprehension.

Communication Strategies & Tools
 For People with Aphasia
 University of Michigan Aphasia Program

SPEAK



GESTURE



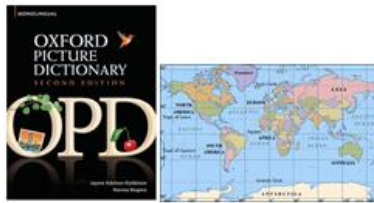
WRITE



DRAW



PICTURE
 DICTIONARY, MAP



IPAD



The whiteboard contains several sections:

- Who?** Person/People: Includes a cartoon man and a group of silhouettes.
- When?** Time (Day, Season, Year): Includes a clock, a calendar, and a globe with a clock face.
- How?** Amount/ Number/ Length of time: Includes a number line from 1 to 10, a stack of money with a question mark, and a cartoon man with a scroll.
- Where?** Location/ Place: Includes a photograph of a Walmart store.

VISUALS

Visuals serve as a shared communication space that can be understood by most everyone. A great resource when engaging a group of individuals at various severities.

Written Visuals

- Supporting comprehension with written visuals of key words being spoken.

Visuals through photographs

- Visual Scene Displays (VSDs)– portray situations, places, or experiences that show relationships and interactions with people.

Visual Tools that provide accessible ways of communicating for individuals who are more verbally restricted:

- Maps
- Calendars
- Number lines/timelines
- Picture Dictionary
- Remnants (menus, brochures, programs, billfolds)



- Not stimulating
- No situations, interactions, or any action being displayed

Poor Example VS. Good Example



“Portrays situations, places, or experiences that show relationships and interactions with people.”



Barriers: A picture of a guard dog outside Mexico City taken by D'Arcy Vachon.



A father saved his son. A fan instinctively stretches his arm to deflect the lethal trajectory of the stick as it flies wildly towards his son's oblivious face.



A pair of red squirrels prepare for the Easter break as they fill their shopping trolley with eggs. The Easter preparations were captured by photographer Geert Weggen in his garden in Bispgården, Sweden.



Sunday: "This is Joseph, our cat, lazing the day with my wife, Anita, and daughter Ida. For Joseph, every day is a Sunday." --Leonardo Fugoso

SMALL GROUPS

Purpose: To break participants into smaller , specialized, groups based on abilities and points of interest.

Ideas for Small Groups:

- Toastmasters
- Role-Playing
- Reading Group
- Writing Group
- Introductions
- Problem-Solving
- Word-Retrieval Activities
- Social Greetings
- Functional Situations
- Social Situations



TOASTMASTERS

Purpose: Focuses on communicating fluently and effectively in challenging situations.

Simplified Toastmasters group :

- Participants each prepare and present a short speech in front of peers.
 - Each speaker selects 2-3 personal goals to focus on for each presentation. These goals change weekly.
 - They are then provided with feedback from group members.
 - Each speaker reflects on their own performance by completing a self-evaluation.
 - Whole group engages in a general discussion after each presentation to discuss strengths and areas of improvement.
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- ❖ Length of speech varies per participant.
 - ❖ For clients who have more difficulty with verbal expression, topics that are functional and familiar are more appropriate. For higher-level clients a time pressure and novel topics can be utilized.
 - ❖ Promote use of multimodal strategies to convey messages during times of communication breakdown.

TOASTMASTER EXAMPLE VIDEO



TOASTMASTER EVALUATION FORMS

Self-Rating Form

UMAC: Group Rating Scale for the Speaker

Could you understand the speaker's speech?

Poorly So-so Very Well

Did the speaker use different strategies when he/she could not talk?

Poorly So-so Very Well

How well did the speaker get his/her message across to you?

Poorly So-so Very Well

How interesting was the speaker?

Boring Ok Very interesting

Did he/she do a commendable presentation?

Yes Almost No

What could the speaker do better next time?

Peer- Evaluation Form

Self-Rating Scale for UMAC Clients

How well did you say the words you wanted to?

Poorly - So-so - Very well

How well did you use different strategies when you got stuck?

Poorly - So-so - Very well

How well did you get your message across?

Poorly - So-so - Very well

How interested was your listener?

Bored - OK - Very Interested

Did you accomplish what you wanted to?

Yes Almost No

- ❖ By evaluating their performances they take ownership and gain insight into their deficits and how to better themselves.
- ❖ Group members help support one another through the peer-rating by supporting each other and problem-solving to become better speakers.
- ❖ Provides positive yet realistic feedback from others who also have aphasia.

INTRODUCTIONS

Purpose: To practice functional daily communication tasks, help build confidence and feel more socially assimilated.

Participants are provided with visual prompts for introducing a variety of people including family members, friends, themselves, pets, each other.

Advantages:

- Carry-over into the big group conversation
- Socially appropriate and highly functional in daily interactions
- Critical skill in any environment

ROLE-PLAYING

Purpose: To help with verbal expression, word-finding, conversation skills, auditory comprehension and reinforce the need to use multimodal communication in daily situations.

❖ Functional role-play

- Introductions
- Social Situations
- Disagreements
- Phone conversations

❖ Self-Evaluations

- ❖ Video record for self-reflection and discuss strategies that could have been used.



ROLE-PLAYING EXAMPLES

You've hired someone to clean your home. Explain to the worker which rooms need to be cleaned and what you want him/her to do.

You are visiting a local animal shelter because you want to get a dog. Speak with someone at the shelter about the dog you'd like to get. Explain what qualities you are looking for in a dog and ask questions about the dogs available.

ROLE-PLAYING EXAMPLE VIDEO



Prompt:

You have just ran into a friend whom you haven't seen for several years. Tell him/her what you've been doing during that time and find out something about him/her.

ROLE-PLAYING EVALUATION

How Did You Do in the Conversation?

1. How do you think you did?

1 2 3 4 5

Poor Fair Good Very Good Excellent

2. What did you do the best? Please check "Yes" or "No".

a. Speaking YES NO

b. Using strategies: gestures, writing, drawing, facial expression, repeating, etc. YES NO

c. Maintaining eye contact YES NO

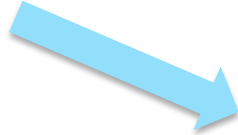
d. Listening to the other speaker YES NO

e. Verification of conversational partner's message YES NO

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FOCUS POINTS

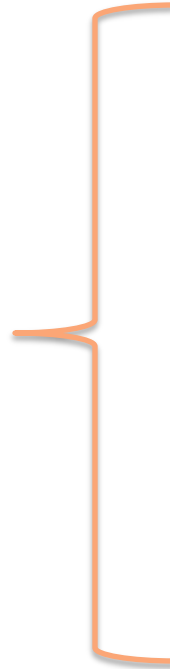
Toastmasters



Role-Playing




Introductions



- Opportunities to expand expressive skills
- Utilize multimodal communication in daily tasks
- Increase awareness of their strengths and areas of improvement
- Build self confidence and motivation to engage in social interactions outside of the group
- Allows opportunities to be a role-model to others

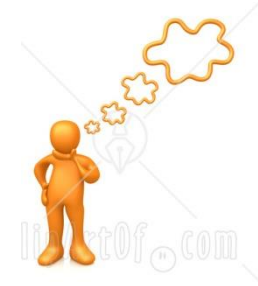
GENERAL OUTCOMES

- ✓ **Promotes successful communication in a social setting.**
 - Some PWA will never accept their limitations/challenges caused by their aphasia and continue to focus on pre-stroke abilities.
 - Others are able to embrace their limitations and make adjustments to have fulfilling lives.
 - ✓ **Group therapy can help shift the focus (even if temporarily) from their own deficits, to helping others in the group.**
 - ✓ **Can increase self-confidence in their own abilities compared to other PWA.**
 - ✓ **May promote altruistic behaviors towards other PWA.**
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FUTURE ENDEAVORS

Some things to consider:

- Some type of informal pre-post evaluations
- Reading group
- Technology Group
- Incorporation of ADLs (cooking activities, games, etc.) into group activities



QUESTIONS

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