



## Different Types of Aphasia

### What is Aphasia?

Aphasia is a complex disorder of language and communication resulting from damage to the language centres of the brain. This neurological damage can occur following a stroke, accidental head injury (traumatic brain injury), brain tumour, brain infection or progressive neurological disease. It is also called Dysphasia.

People with Aphasia can have various problems because of the damage to the language centres of the brain:

- Speaking
- Reading
- Writing
- Understanding
- Dealing with money
- Counting and doing calculations
- Gesturing
- Telling the time

It often occurs alongside other impairments affecting:

- Swallowing (Dysphagia)
- Speech (Dysarthria)
- Cognition (e.g. Dementia)
- Vision
- Movement

Aphasia in itself does not affect a person's intelligence. People with Aphasia still think in the same way but are unable to communicate their thoughts easily. However it will affect people differently – no two people with Aphasia have exactly the same difficulties.

### **Receptive Aphasia**

People do not understand what is being said to them.

### **Expressive Aphasia**

The person with Aphasia will have difficulty in finding the words that they want to use.

People will generally have a combination of both types of Aphasia.

### **Primary Progressive Aphasia**

This type of Aphasia has a slow onset with progressive loss of language skills.

Aphasia may affect all aspects of a person's life including health, relationships, work and leisure.

## Recovery

The amount of recovery that a person with Aphasia will attain is unpredictable. Even though the most rapid recovery usually occurs in the first few months, many people continue to show improvement for many years.

Recovery is dependent on:

- The severity of the brain damage
- The parts of the brain damaged
- The age of the person
- Whether there are any other communication problems apart from Aphasia
- The motivation of the person with Aphasia and their family/friends
- The emotional and psychological well-being of the person with Aphasia

Recovery also includes methods of acknowledging, managing and using the communication skills that remain. Even people who do not regain their speech are usually able to communicate in some way – using communication books, drawings and gestures. For some people, but not all, a computer may be useful.

## Getting help

Speech and Language Therapists can provide support and advice on how best to provide communication support to a person with Aphasia – including advice on whether they will benefit from speech and language therapy. It is important, therefore, that a person with Aphasia has an early assessment of their communication and linguistic disability. The assessment can also be a way of monitoring improvement as it gives a 'baseline' from which the therapist can work.

The assessment will also highlight the aspects of language recovery which are most important to the person with Aphasia. The ability to speak again is vitally important to all people with Aphasia. The loss of the ability to read and write may be of secondary importance.

Therapy can be given at a 1:1 session or within a group setting.

Aphasia is a long-term problem. Many people will continue to need help and may seek re-referral to a speech and language therapy service many years after the onset of Aphasia.

There is a nationwide shortage of Speech and Language Therapists and so waiting lists may be long.

You may wish to contact the **Speakability Helpline 080 8808 9572** for information on how to access Speech and Language services and/or other sources of help.