



Enriching Lives

A.C.T. NEWSLETTER

June 1, 2009

May 3 - 9 is National Aphasia Awareness Month—During June 2009, communities across the nation will observe National Aphasia Awareness Month. The month of June is a period to focus our awareness on aphasia that affect approximately one million Americans. According to the National Aphasia Association, 100,000 Americans acquire the disorder every year. This campaign is part of a national effort to increase awareness and the understanding that resources are available for individuals and their families in dealing with aphasia.

Aphasia is an acquired communication disorder that impairs an individual's ability to produce speech sounds and comprehend speech. Aphasia do not affect intelligence, as IQ remains intact. Aphasia influence the manner in which individuals process language and make it difficult for individuals to read and write. The most common cause of aphasia is stroke and it is most common in the elderly. It is suggested that 25 – 40% of stroke survivors acquire aphasia. Acquired brain injury of other neurological disorders can contribute to the onset of the disorder.

Given that our society heavily depends on communication, individuals with aphasia and their families are deeply affected by this acquired communication disorder. Depending upon the severity of the language impairment the individual has, may affect their ability to return to work. As many types of jobs require oral and written communication skills, aphasia can make it challenging for an individual to work in such a setting. Individuals with mild or moderate aphasia may be able to sustain employment, however they may have to find another job that does not rely heavily on language skills.

Recovery from aphasia may take many years. Nevertheless, if symptoms of aphasia persist beyond two or three months following a stroke, complete recovery is improbable. Improvement is a lengthy process that is characterized by educating the individual and their families regarding aphasia and learning compensatory measures to communicate.

Tips for Communicating with an Individual with Aphasia

- **Give the person time to speak, do not finish their sentences unless asked**
- **Be sensitive to noise in the environment; try to turn off all sound producing devices**
- **Utilize various means of speech (i.e., gestures, drawing, etc.)**
- **Confirm that you are communicating effectively**

A.C.T. is committed to raising awareness of all individuals and families affected by aphasia and the need for education and rehabilitation. A.C.T. will provide **information** to promote public education about aphasia during the annual observance for the entire month of June. For more information, please contact **Dr. Drecun at Dr.Drecun@a4ct.com or (858) 792-3541.**