

12 Tips for **Successful Communication** with a Person Who Has Aphasia

Let's face it: Communication can be a tough task for everyone when aphasia is part of the equation. Instead of allowing both sides to become frustrated, impatient, and defeated, a good communication partner can implement these 12 tips for a more productive and satisfying exchange with their friend or loved one with aphasia.

Helping the Person with Aphasia Understand **YOUR** Message:

As a communication partner, try these SIX tips when you are trying to help the person with aphasia understand your message:

- Use short, simple sentences in a normal tone of voice
- Use gestures and body language to help convey your message
- Write down keywords or topics, so that you can both see them
- Use pictures or drawings to share an idea, working with one picture/image at a time
- Reduce distractions and external stimulation, including noises, other people, or multiple visual materials
- Look at the person's facial expressions, eye gaze, body posture, and gestures to determine his/her level of comprehension.

Helping the Person with Aphasia Communicate **THEIR** Message:

As a communication partner, try these SIX tips when you are trying to help the person with aphasia communicate their message:

- Ask "yes or no" questions
- When asking a series of "yes or no" questions, start with general ones and work your way to more specific
- Ask one question at a time
- Ask questions that already contain an answer or a choice of answers such as, "Do you want tea or coffee?"
- Ask him/her to gesture, point to objects or pictures, or write keywords, such as "Can you draw/write/show me what you mean?"
- Give him/her adequate time to respond without your interrupting.



Materials adapted from <http://www.aphasia.ca/communicative-access-sca/>