



Mission: A newsletter for individuals with Aphasia and for the community

Created by: Individuals with Aphasia —

— Supported and encouraged by the University of Washington Speech & Hearing Clinic

**IMPACT!:** We Ask Others  
- We Push Awareness of Aphasia

by *Bev*



Dear Oprah,  
I have aphasia. I go to the Speech & Hearing Clinic at the U. of Washington and have gone weekly for 13 years. I was very fortunate to find it. I credit the University with improving my speech so that I can

be understood.

I want you to bring awareness to all those in TV-land that there is such a thing as aphasia. It is very common after a stroke. Even my brain surgeon asked me if I always speak like this and I had to explain to him that I could speak perfectly until he did his operation.

When people hear my distorted speech they often make inaccurate assumptions. Some think I am drunk; others think I am developmentally disabled. I would like them to understand that I have my full intelligence, that I'm sober, and that I have an ongoing language impairment.

You can do a lot to help bring awareness and compassion in this area.

Thank you.

*Bev*

*The National Aphasia Association (NAA) thought of a way to help improve public awareness and understanding of aphasia (among other things).*

*Could Oprah bring this subject up for discussion on her TV show?*

*Our group discussed this possibility. We decided it would be worthwhile—and we have asked her to do so. The above letter is an example of our requests for Oprah to think about.* - ed. <<

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**Yes, we have an impact.**

Aphasia can be the result of a stroke or a trauma and impacts our lives in many ways.

Which also impacts the lives of many other people—our caregivers, family, friends, doctors, nurses, rehabilitation therapists.

We continue our lives; **how** we live spreads our impact like the waves of a pebble dropped into a pond.

See a few of the waves that we create—by our **IMPACT!** - in (and on) this newsletter.

In our next newsletter, we'll try to bring in some stories of our impact onto our caregivers—and the critical impact that their love and support has upon each of us. - ed. <<

**Aphasia DOs:**

Keep communication simple but adult.

Simplify your own sentence structure and reduce your own rate of speech.

Give them time to talk and a reasonable amount of time to respond.

Repeat a statement when necessary.

Encourage them to be as independent as possible.

Encourage and use other modes of communication in addition to speech.

Make sure that you have the person's attention **before** communicating.

**IMPACT!:** **We Are Needed**  
- A Study About Word-finding  
 - by *Cathy Off*



Researchers in the Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences at the University of Washington are investigating the processes in the brain that allow us to speak,

and how these processes are disrupted by an injury to the brain (for example, stroke).

**What is involved?**

Participants will be asked to participate in a preliminary screening (including a brief biographical & medical questionnaire, and hearing and vision screening); testing of speech, language, and cognition; and 23 experimental sessions.

Testing of speech, language, and cognition should last approximately 2-4 hours, which may be split across 2 sessions (within one day or across two separate days).

During experimental sessions, participants will be asked to quickly read words or name

pictures as they appear on a computer screen.

Participants will be asked to attend 3 training sessions per week for a maximum of 5 consecutive weeks or until they are able name pictures with 80% accuracy. Each session will last between 1 and 2 hours. Participants will be asked to return for 3 follow-up sessions between 3 and 6 weeks after they have completed the experiment.

Participants will be reimbursed for parking at the UW and/or public transportation costs.

**Who can participate?**

Right-handed adults between the ages of 21-85 years old who had an onset of aphasia at least 6 months ago with no subsequent decline.

Participants also need to have some difficulty with speech or language as a result of stroke.

No known history of psychiatric conditions or substance abuse problems.

Corrected (e.g., glasses, contacts, hearing aids) to normal hearing and vision.

**How can I learn more?**

Call Catherine Off, doctoral student, at 206-579-6877.

Or send an email to:

**IMPACT!:** **We Push Ourselves**  
Pushing the Boundaries  
 - by *Valerie*

**Before** our strokes, we probably were constantly adjusting our way of doing things and our way of thinking to accommodate changes in our lives.

**After** our strokes, we all had drastic changes and challenges in our lives. We had doctors, nurses, therapists and relatives. All had new information, opinions and input that we were trying to assimilate and sift through to form our own opinions.

Some people accept their condition with resignation. Other stroke survivors hope that they can face this new challenge in their lives with the same control and force that they had always used before their stroke.

**After your stroke, do you challenge yourself to keep improving?**

Mentally?

Physically?

What tools and aids do you use?

Community programs, support groups, family, medical, assistance, etc.

What goals do you keep pushing for?

Reading, puzzles, word games, math games, driving, exercise, sewing, cooking, music, traveling, volunteering, etc.

When things are not going well for you, what have you done to adjust your goals?

Try an easier task;

Do a routine that is already established;

Take a break, but try, try again.

<<

## **IMPACT!: We Can Push Others** **Post Office Aphasia Stamp**

*The US Postal Service designs new postage stamps periodically (pretty often!)*

*We can push others—to encourage awareness of aphasia.*

*Try pushing this way—write a letter asking for a **postage stamp about aphasia**.*

*Do it now!*

*Make it a Xmas wish!*

*Address your letter to the Citizen's Stamp Advisory Committee as below.*

*Use the following suggested sample as just that—a suggestion. But it's better with your words.*

*Sign it!*

*Mail it to:*

**National Aphasia Association**  
**7 Dey Street, Suite 600**  
**New York, NY 10007**

*The NAA will forward all letters in one package to the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee. - ed.*

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*(Sample letter)*

Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee  
Stamp Development  
US Postal Service  
1735 North Lynn St Rm 5013  
Arlington VA 22209-6432

Dear Sir or Madam:

Although more than one million Americans suffer from *aphasia* (uh·fay'·zhuh), most people have never heard the word.

Aphasia is a language problem in which a person has difficulty finding words and forming sentences to express thoughts. Aphasia does *not* affect a person's memory or intelligence, but can impede understanding of others' words. Imagine if you were living in a foreign country where you did not speak,

read, or write the language. Like the person with aphasia, you'd be fully aware of what was happening around you, but unable to answer questions, share your thoughts or ask for help. Think of the impact this would have on your ability to work, form friendships, or take part in recreational activities like going to the movies or reading a novel!

Aphasia affects not just stroke or brain injury survivors, but also their friends, relatives, and employers. People with aphasia lose more than just their words; they lose jobs, relationships, and often, their sense of self.

In a 2003 survey conducted by the National Aphasia Association, the most frequently cited need of people with aphasia was for greater understanding and awareness of aphasia. There may be no better way to raise awareness of aphasia among the American public than through a postage stamp.

We hope the Post Office will issue an aphasia postage stamp to "speak" on behalf of those who cannot.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

My name: *(Please print)*

*(Street address)*

*(City) (State) (Zip code)*

***(SIGN it! Mail it to the NAA! Now!)*** <<

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### ***Aphasia DOs***

Minimize or eliminate background noises.

### ***Aphasia DON'Ts:***

Don't be overprotective.

Don't 'talk down' to one with aphasia.

Avoid speaking **for** the one with aphasia.

Don't ignore the one with aphasia in the

## **IMPACT!: We Work Together**

Join our special

### ***APHASIA Clinic - Summer 2007***

This special clinic is designed to help individuals with aphasia develop and strengthen their communication skills for participation in life. Clinic goals will include:

Developing multi-modality communication skills for individuals with aphasia

Strengthening supportive communication strategies for individuals with aphasia and their communication partners

Building successful communication opportunities in a small group setting

Providing a supportive learning environment for individuals with aphasia and their communication partners, and our graduate clinicians

#### **Who is this Program For?**

This special program is for individuals with aphasia who:

Have been living with aphasia for 3 months or more; this will include individuals who have been living with aphasia for many years after their stroke  
Are currently being seen by a speech and language pathologist in the community, or may no longer be receiving treatment services

Are able to attend and participate 4 days per week for 4 weeks: this includes a 1.5 hour group session 4 times per week and 2 additional 50 minute individual sessions each week

Are able to have consistent transportation to and from our clinic for services, as outlined below

Have a communication partner (i.e., family members, caregivers or friends):

who wants to support the individual with aphasia in participating in social activities, is willing to complete the application, is willing and able to accompany the individual with aphasia in attending a pre-treatment assessment during the Spring Quarter 2007. The

assessment will consist of 2 sessions, one week apart, of approximately 2 hours each and will help us to plan your summer treatment.

Total  
\$300  
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Cost:  
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#### **Contact Information:**

For an application and more information contact:

#### **University of Washington Speech and Hearing Clinic**

4131—15th Ave, NE  
Seattle, WA 98105  
Phone: (206) 543-5440  
Fax: (206) 616-1185

*<http://depts.washington.edu/sphsc/clinic>*

Visit our web site to:

- learn more about our services; and,
- to access past issues of the Writer's Guild quarterly newsletter:

***"In Search Of. . ."***

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