



## **Tips for Improving Communication Between Family Members and their Loved Ones with Aphasia**

1. Schedule a period of time daily for you and your loved one to have a meaningful conversation. Each participant should have the opportunity to communicate about their daily activities and share their feelings with one another. All participants should be alert and converse in a quiet environment.
2. Determine the topics of conversation. It is suggested that you use a topics card, a daily planner, a calendar or a “wh” questions chart to facilitate positive social and verbal interactions.
3. Speak slowly, simplify your verbal messages, provide verbal repetitions and write down key words. These techniques can improve your loved one’s comprehension of the information.
4. Accompany your conversation with gestures, drawings or writing when speaking with your loved one. By using these strategies, you will be a positive model for your partner and also may improve his or her comprehension of the conveyed information.
5. Be patient! Give your loved one ample time to process and respond to the presented information.
6. Acknowledge what your loved one with aphasia has indicated to you. Verbal and/or nonverbal affirmations provide your loved one with positive reinforcement that their message was communicated successfully.
7. Request clarification for any message told to you that you failed to understand. Your loved one can write, gesture, draw, point to pictures or words in a communication book or speak to modify his or her message. You may need to encourage your loved one to use these other strategies. Communication will be easier and frustration will be reduced when these techniques are used routinely.
8. Write down and review the information that was conveyed to you. This confirms what was communicated as well as improves the likelihood that the message was fully understood by each participant.
9. Expand, reflect or introduce a new topic of conversation after a successful verbal interaction has been completed. Written cards or gestures can alert each participant to a new topic of discussion.
10. Use humor – it encourages social interaction and ownership in the conversation.