

## Stroke Recovery Association of BC Helps People with Aphasia

- Our mission is to assist stroke survivors and their caregivers throughout BC to improve their overall quality of life.
- Each year in BC about 6,500 people will have a stroke. Approximately 1600 of these people will experience aphasia.
- SRABC has around 35 local Stroke Recovery Branches across BC.
- Some branches offer aphasia services run by speech-language pathologists. Others provide communication activities that are run by volunteers.
- SRABC's provincial office maintains a list of resources and locations in BC where you can receive treatment for aphasia.
- Visit our website at [strokerecoverybc.ca](http://strokerecoverybc.ca) for more information about aphasia.



SRABC Provincial Office  
301-1212 West Broadway  
Vancouver, BC V6B 3V1  
604-688-3603  
Toll Free: 1-888-313-3377  
Fax: 604-688-3660  
[office@strokerecoverybc.ca](mailto:office@strokerecoverybc.ca)

**TO DONATE:** Please visit our website at [www.strokerecoverybc.ca](http://www.strokerecoverybc.ca) or send a cheque to the above address. SRABC is a BC incorporated non-profit society and a Registered Canadian Charity.

The Stroke Recovery Association of BC gratefully acknowledges the support of our partners:

- Heart and Stroke Foundation of BC and Yukon
- Province of British Columbia
- Provincial Health Services Authority
- Columbia Speech and Language Services Inc. [www.columbiaspeech.com](http://www.columbiaspeech.com)

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## Stroke Recovery Association of BC (SRABC)

## Understanding Aphasia



## WHO IS THIS BROCHURE FOR?

- People with aphasia who are able to read, especially those recently diagnosed.
- Family and friends wishing to understand more about aphasia.
- Anyone who wants to learn about communicating more effectively with people who have aphasia.

## WHAT IS APHASIA?

- Aphasia is a speech and language impairment which can occur after damage to the brain - most commonly following a stroke.
- Aphasia can affect understanding, listening, speaking, reading and writing.
- Aphasia can result in very mild problems, such as having trouble recalling or finding the right words.
- For some people, aphasia is so severe that they cannot speak at all.
- Many people with aphasia can listen and understand better than they can speak.
- Some can read and/or write, whereas others cannot.
- Some people with aphasia struggle to say even simple words and phrases.
- Intelligence is not usually affected.

## RECOVERY FROM APHASIA

- Aphasia may be temporary, longer term or lifelong.
- Even if you or your family member with aphasia cannot speak at all in the early days after a stroke, there is hope for improvement. Aphasia is usually at its worst in the period immediately following a stroke.
- Most people will improve at least a little; others will improve a lot.

## WHO CAN HELP?

- Stroke Recovery Association of BC helps people with aphasia.
- A speech-language pathologist can advise you and your family member on the best ways to communicate, and can provide treatment that will help you improve to the highest degree possible.
- Most hospitals in BC have at least one speech-language pathologist. Ask your doctor for a referral.
- Follow these weblinks:
  - [strokerecoverybc.ca](http://strokerecoverybc.ca)
  - [ITAWC.com](http://ITAWC.com)
  - [aphasia.ca](http://aphasia.ca)
  - [aphasiacorner.com](http://aphasiacorner.com)
  - [aphasiaaction.com](http://aphasiaaction.com)
  - [ukconnect.org](http://ukconnect.org)
  - [aphasia.org](http://aphasia.org)
  - [aphasia.org.au](http://aphasia.org.au)

## WHAT CAN HELP YOU TO COMMUNICATE WITH SOMEONE WHO HAS APHASIA?

There are different types of aphasia which cause different kinds of communication problems. Always remember that every person's aphasia is different. Here are a few general suggestions that will be helpful for most people with aphasia.

- 1. Use anything that helps you to communicate:**
  - Use pen and paper
  - Write down key words
  - Draw pictures or diagrams
  - Point to photos, objects, maps and calendars
  - Use tone of voice and facial expression to help communicate
  - Use gesture or pantomime
- 2. Remember that understanding can be difficult:**
  - Relax - don't rush
  - Be natural
  - Be patient
  - Don't speak too quickly
  - Say one thing at a time
  - Don't yell
  - Don't pretend you understand
  - Recap to check that everyone got the right message