

ALL ABOUT DYSPHAGIA?

NOT ALL DISABILITIES ARE VISIBLE

Dysphagia is a swallowing disorder which affects the **ability to eat or drink safely and efficiently**. For some people, it may be temporary however, it may become a permanent condition for others.

What is the role of the Speech Pathologist?

Speech pathologists help people with dysphagia to eat and drink safely so they can enjoy meals with their family and friends. This may involve modifying their diet to certain food or drink textures, learning safe swallowing techniques, or practising exercises to strengthen the muscles involved in swallowing.

Invisibility of Dysphagia

Eating is an important part of our lives, especially because eating is one of the best ways to socialise with family and friends. Disabilities like dysphagia, are easily forgotten because it is not visible to others. Therefore, it is critical to be aware of the social challenges faced by people with dysphagia.



Characteristics of Dysphagia

- Choking on food or drink
- Coughing while eating or after eating
- Taking a long time to chew or finish a meal (<30 minutes)
- Difficulty eating certain types of foods
- Frequent throat clearing
- Withdrawing from mealtimes
- Losing weight due to eating less
- Difficulty swallowing saliva

Social Impact of Dysphagia

- Difficulty having meals with family or friends
- Feeling embarrassed or anxious about eating with others
- Avoiding eating with other people
- Becoming less interested in eating due to difficulties
- Being restricted to certain types of foods or drinks
- Requiring assistance during mealtimes
- Requiring more time to finish a meal

DID YOU KNOW?

Swallowing Awareness Day is coming up in March 2021!

This is a campaign you can get involved with to spread awareness about dysphagia.

Search #swallowaware2020

on social media to see how awareness was spread this year!



IT'S AAC AWARENESS MONTH!

COMMUNICATION IS A BASIC HUMAN RIGHT, LET'S MAKE IT ACCESSIBLE TO EVERYONE!

AAC stands for **Augmentative and Alternative Communication** and is a mode of communicating, other than or in addition to using speech for people who have complex communication needs.

Why use AAC?

The aim of AAC is to make communication accessible for all and give individuals the opportunity to live their lives to their full potential. AAC allows people to build relationships, express their needs/wants and gain or share information. Did you know that 'Over 2 million people who have expressive language difficulties use AAC to facilitate communication' (ASHA)?

Two types of AAC:



Aided

Aided AAC systems are ones that require a physical support, such as a voice output device or a picture exchange system. These consist of tools that available in both low-tech and high-tech forms.



Unaided

Unaided AAC refers to tools that rely solely on the body and ability set of the user. This may consist of forms of sign, gesture, body language and expressions.

Often, both aided and unaided AAC are used in combination for effective communication.

How we can support people who use AAC?

Below are some general strategies that can be used when communicating with individuals that use AAC:

- **Patience:** Allow the individual time to get their message across. While you think you may be helping someone by guessing and filling in the gaps or awkward silences this can be detrimental to progress. Allow the AAC user to finish communicating their message always.
- **Environment:** Ensure that the area that you are communicating in is quiet or the individual is able to use technology/gesture to enhance their message past any distractions/noise.
- **Accessibility:** Make sure that communication devices are in reach and accessible to the individual at all times.
- **Opportunity:** Allow equal opportunity for a person who uses AAC to participate in conversations. It may be difficult for this person to get the attention of others or initiate conversation so ensure that you're opening conversations up to them and that you are readily available to communicate.

An AAC Celebrity Example:

Stephen Hawking used many different AAC devices. Despite his degenerative condition that impacted his ability to talk, Stephen Hawking was able to express his intelligence through high-tech computerised AAC devices. This example highlights the importance of giving a voice to individuals and allowing them to continue living the life they desire.



At GRP Speech Pathology we strive to not only assist people in rebuilding their voices, but also to support people in their journey to exposing their individual communication potential, whatever the journey may be.

AAC AWARENESS MONTH

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October is the month of AAC Awareness.

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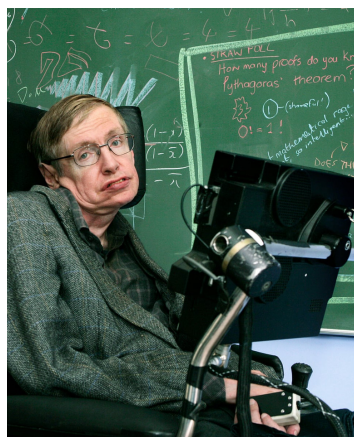
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WHAT IS APHASIA?

Aphasia is a language disorder that affects the **ability to communicate**. It is often caused by injury to parts of the brain that control speech and language. People with aphasia may have difficulties speaking, finding their words, writing, reading and understanding.

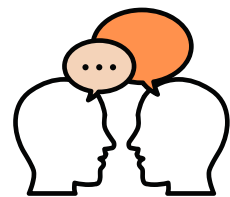
What is the role of the Speech Pathologist?

Speech Pathologists help people with aphasia communicate confidently with family, friends and within their communities. This is done through re-learning and practicing communication skills. It is the Speech Pathologist's role to help find the way that works best for people with communication difficulties.

How we can support people with Aphasia?

Communication partner training allows family and friends to assist in improving the individual's communication, access and participation.

Below are some strategies that can be used with people with Aphasia.



Strategies to Support Communication

- Ensure you have the person's attention before you start
- Use short, simple sentences in a natural tone and volume
- Use gestures when talking (e.g. pointing to objects/pictures, use hand signals)
- Write down keywords or topics in large, bold writing
- Use basic pictures to demonstrate an idea. Try to focus on one picture at a time
- Eliminate distraction – noises (e.g. tv, radio), other people
- summarise and clarify the person's understanding

Strategies to Repair Conversation

- Show that you are patient and remain calm
- Provide reassurance (e.g. "I know that you know")
- Acknowledge the breakdown (e.g. "That's not what you meant?")
- Acknowledge the feelings of the person with aphasia (e.g. "I can see that you are frustrated")
- When appropriate, demonstrate that communication breakdowns to your limitation as a communicator ("You know that I'm not good at explaining some things clearly!")
- Ensure to verify your understanding (e.g. "Are you saying that?")

DID YOU KNOW?

Aphasia Victoria is launching a new Support Program!

Aphasia Victoria can provide a Gift Card to help you buy an app for an iPad or another device.

For More Information:

www.aphasiavic.org.au/asp/

info@aphasiavic.org.au

0498 481 158



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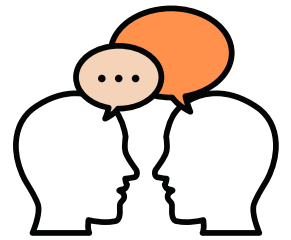
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- Write down keywords or topics in large, bold writing
- Use pictures to demonstrate an idea. Try to focus on one picture at a time
- Eliminate distraction – noises (e.g. tv, radio), other people
- Closely observe the person's facial expression, eye gaze, body posture or gestures to determine if they are understanding

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Information Required

- Name & Postcode
- Email Address & Phone No.
- App you're wanting to purchase
- Device you have
- Your Speech Pathologist's details

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