

Using QuickFires

QuickFires provide a fast and easy way to communicate words and common phrases needed throughout the day.



A person with aphasia can use QuickFires to:

- Answer a yes/no question.
- Tell someone how they feel.
- Let a caregiver know that something is wrong.
- Ask a visitor how they are doing.

QuickFires can sometimes trigger a verbal response. Encourage the individual to try to speak the word or phrase when pointing to pictures and words.

In the TD Snap® app, additional QuickFires categories are available, and the selections speak aloud when activated.



Use QuickFires while you are speaking so the person with aphasia can see how they work. If this is difficult, try hiding some of the options.

Using Rating Scales and Pain Scales

The scales are used to share opinions (1-5) or to rate one's pain level (0-5).



You may want to show the person with aphasia how the scale works first. For example, say "I think the weather today is great! It is a 5," while pointing to the number 5.

Engage the individual in discussions and use a rating scale to express opinions.

A separate pain scale is provided for speaking specifically about pain or illness. Additional layouts and choices of rating scales are available in the TD Snap® app.



Use the rating scale to help the person with aphasia identify areas of interest and favorite topics. This will ensure they are still participating in activities and conversations they enjoy.

Using the Whiteboard

The last page of the Communication Book is a plain white page. Laminate it and write with dry erase markers to use it as a portable whiteboard.



Strategies for using the Whiteboard



Write keywords while speaking to support better understanding. Write only the 2 or 3 most important words you are saying.



People with aphasia often draw a picture or write a word or letter to communicate a word they cannot say. You can also draw pictures to highlight the things you are discussing.



Write 2-4 options as you say them aloud. When words are written down, a person with aphasia may have an easier time accurately communicating their preference.



Pair written words on a whiteboard with photographs to help support conversation.



In the TD Snap® app, photos can be imported into whiteboards and saved to use as often as needed.

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Aphasia Communication Pocket Guide for Caregivers



People with aphasia know what they want to say but have difficulty saying it. As their communication partner, you may need to help the person with aphasia to communicate what they are thinking. You may accidentally start speaking for the person with aphasia or guessing what they are trying to say. That often increases frustration for everyone involved. This Pocket Guide gives you practical ways to improve communication with your loved ones with aphasia at any stage of their recovery.



What is aphasia?

Aphasia is a language disorder caused by an injury to the brain (e.g., stroke).

A person with aphasia has difficulty speaking, understanding language, or both. They know what they want to say but are unable to say it.

Consider someone who speaks a foreign language. Their intelligence is no different than yours, but you both need to find ways to communicate without relying on speech.

This guide provides strategies that help a person with aphasia communicate their thoughts and better understand spoken language. Using communication supports will NOT slow down the recovery of speech.

Communication supports may facilitate language recovery.

Interactions may feel different now but communication supports can help fill the gaps when communication is difficult.



Being a good communication partner

Communication success is often dependent on the skills of the partner. Integrate communication supports into a conversation to help the person with aphasia understand and express themselves effectively.

- Be supportive and encouraging
- Be patient and provide enough time to have a good interaction
- Be invested in communication success

Communication partner strategies



Slow down

Slow down your rate of speech and pause after speaking, but don't "talk down" to them.



Write keywords

Write down keywords while speaking to reinforce understanding.



Use gestures and pointing

Gestures, facial expressions, and pointing add cues and context.



Using a Communication Book

Most of the communication strategies to help people with aphasia express themselves can be illustrated using the TD Snap® Aphasia Communication Book.

Top Tips for Using a Communication Book:

- Always have the communication book available for use. If needed, make multiple copies to keep in various places.
- Point to the pictures and words as you talk to show the person with aphasia how to use the book.
- Limit the choices you provide if the person with aphasia seems overwhelmed.
- Ask them to point to their choice and try to say it.
- Use printed photographs and personal information such as a calendar, grocery list, or recent family photo to supplement the communication book.

The following sections of this guide highlight how to best use the tools in the TD Snap® Aphasia Communication Book. This book is based on a more robust, app version called TD Snap®.

Learn more

These tools and more are available in the TD Snap® app. TD Snap® Aphasia page set allows you to customize the pages with photographs, special symbols, personal phrases, and more. TD Snap® is available in the Apple app store and on Tobii Dynavox devices.

