



Monthly e-newsletter connecting stroke survivors, caregivers and the community. Focuses on stroke education, updates on stroke research and treatments, and information on local resources.

## WHAT IS APHASIA?

Aphasia is a disorder that results from damage to areas of the brain that produce and process language. People with aphasia can have trouble speaking, reading, writing, and understanding language, both verbal and written. Aphasia typically occurs suddenly after a stroke or a head injury. Impairment can range from mild to very severe (nearly impossible to communicate in any form). Some people with aphasia have difficulty in only one area of communication, such as trouble reading, or difficulty understanding what others are saying. More commonly, people with aphasia are limited in more than one communication area. Nearly all patients with aphasia have word-finding difficulties.

## APHASIA TREATMENT

- Speech and language therapy- Focused on assisting patients in recovering language abilities, teaching how to make up for lost language skills, and training the patient and family members in alternative strategies for communication.
- Drug Therapy- No drug has shown definitely long term benefit. Some have shown promise in small studies, but more research is needed before these drugs can be recommended.
- Communication Aids- such as a communication board
- Assisted Technology- such as language apps for your ipad or iphone at [Tactus Therapy](#).

## COMMUNICATION BOARD

A visual representation of language used to communicate one's needs



## MANAGING STRESS & ANXIETY IN A 24-HOUR NEWS CYCLE

by Jennifer B. Hughes

As we continue to deal with the stress of COVID-19 and other information online and in the media, many people are feeling irritated and anxious. For some, this might affect how they interact with their family and friends and how they feel at work. With all the information bombarding us every single day, sometimes it feels like there is no way to escape it! Fortunately, we can take back some control and choose how much and what types of media we have in our lives. It is recommended that you decide how much media is healthy for you personally and when you want to watch the news or be on social media. You might think about choosing a specific time of day, say from 4pm- 4:30pm, and ONLY allow yourself to watch the news or be online during that time. This can be tricky at first, and it's so tempting to go to social media during down times in our day, but by making this choice and sticking to it, you are taking back your power, which can help decrease anxiety and irritation.

## CAREGIVER CORNER

### Who Are the Caregivers of People with Aphasia?

Lingraphica's 2020 Aphasia Caregiver Report provides a never-before-seen look at the individuals who care for someone with aphasia. Here is what you need to know.

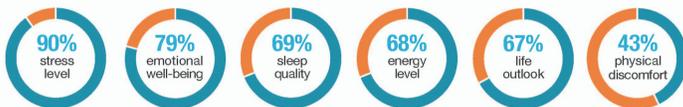
#### By the Numbers: A Closer Look at Caregivers

Caregivers come from all different walks of life, reside in different geographic regions, and have diverse backgrounds. But they also share a lot in common.



#### The Mental, Emotional, and Physical Impact

Caregivers report a worsening in all of the following since their loved one acquired aphasia.



#### Caregivers Experience Worsening Relationships

Caregivers say these relationships have worsened since the person acquired aphasia:



#### Activities Aphasia Caregivers Help With

Approximately 2 out of 3 caregivers spend one third of their waking day assisting their loved ones with activities like:



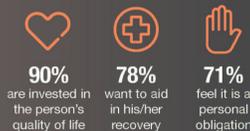
#### Biggest Challenges Caregivers Face:

Caregivers share a variety of challenges. But the single most common is their inability to communicate or converse with the person who has aphasia.



#### Biggest Motivations for Doing What They Do:

Despite all of the challenges caregivers have largely altruistic intentions for doing what they do.



#### Getting Aphasia Caregivers the Support They Need

Because communication is the biggest challenge, we recommend resources like:

- Aphasia Communication Tips**  
Learn fundamental principles you can use for everyday communication.
- Life with Aphasia Blog**  
Insights around everyday communication, and much more.
- Find a Speech Therapist**  
Speech therapists can help you both improve your communication.



#### Lingraphica Can Help

Finally, Lingraphica offers free one-on-one consultations for caregivers who want to improve communication with their loved ones and help to aid their recovery but aren't entirely sure where to start. Learn more at: [www.aphasia.com/improve-communication](http://www.aphasia.com/improve-communication)

To download the full report and get more insights, visit: [www.aphasia.com/2020-caregiver-report](http://www.aphasia.com/2020-caregiver-report)



## HOUSTON APHASIA RECOVERY CENTER (HARC)

HARC is open for people with aphasia, their caregivers, and families. The entry point for new participants and caregivers is the Introductory Program that evaluates communication ability and provides techniques for communicating with aphasic people. To start, call for information and schedule a facility tour. After your screening is complete, you will participate in the Introductory Program. Then, you and your caregiver will be part of the HARC family.

Address: 5005 Woodway Drive, Suite 110,  
Houston, Texas 77056 Phone: 713-781-7100

## Do You Know Aphasia Facts?

Take the Aphasia Facts Quiz to test your knowledge. [HERE](#)

## APHASIA ID CARD

Free online tool! From the National Aphasia Association for people with aphasia. Create a personalized Aphasia ID card that you can print and start carrying right away. Helps to communicate with people who are unfamiliar with aphasia.. [HERE](#)

## PATIENT ORGANIZATIONS

- [Aphasia Hope Foundation](#)
- [National Aphasia Association](#)
- [National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders \(NIDCD\)](#)
- [American Speech-Language-Hearing Association \(ASHA\)](#)

# STROKE STRIDES

JUNE 2020

A UTHHealth Stroke Institute Monthly Newsletter

## STROKE RESEARCH

We're looking for stroke patients to enroll in VAST-Rehab, a clinical trial providing physical, occupational, and speech therapies over a video conference platform so you or a loved one may have access to rehab from the comfort of your home.

Eligibility criteria: Men or Women. Age 18+. Treated for a stroke (ischemic or hemorrhagic) at Memorial Hermann in the last 6 months. Time commitment of 12 weeks. Recommended to receive rehab services in the home or outpatient facility. For more information, please contact 713-500-7085 or [Dorothea.M.Parker@uth.tmc.edu](mailto:Dorothea.M.Parker@uth.tmc.edu).

## STROKE SUPPORT GROUPS

West Houston Stroke Warriors is Houston's largest stroke support group with over 120 stroke survivors & caregivers. Meet new friends, enjoy fun activities, or share your story. Meets every Saturday @ 10 am. For further information, contact Wanda Adams at [wanda.adams@hcahealthcare.com](mailto:wanda.adams@hcahealthcare.com) or 281-588-8590.

OR To FIND stroke support groups near you, go to the [American Stroke Association Stroke Support Group Finder](#).



## ★ STROKE VOLUNTEER STAR ★

Maria Oquendo Chan BSN, RN, CRRN, known as Dolly by her co-workers, friends and patients, is a Brain Injury and Spasticity nurse at TIRR Memorial Hermann Outpatient Medical Clinic. Dolly completed her Bachelors of Science in Nursing from West Visayas State University in the Philippines. She has over 30 years of clinical experience and is a long standing member of the Association of Rehab Nursing - Southeast Texas Chapter.

Dolly has been nominated several times for the Daisy Award by patients and their families. She is proud to be a nurse and is dedicated to caring for her patients. and frequently volunteers in the hospital, for church and in many community outreach programs. She has been a tremendous support for our Stroke Institute Community Engagement program, participating annually in our Stomp Out Stroke Festival. Dolly has one daughter, also a nurse, who joins her on some of her volunteer services. We are excited to recognize Dolly as June's Stroke Volunteer Star!



**Maria Dolly Chan, RN,  
BSN, CRRN**

**STROKE STRIDES**  
**A Community Newsletter**

**Sign up Now!**

## SHARE YOUR STROKE STORY

Share your stroke story or request a topic for us to cover. Please email your story or topic to Dr. Noser at [Elizabeth.Noser@uth.tmc.edu](mailto:Elizabeth.Noser@uth.tmc.edu).