

## what participants say

*When I first went into the group, people came to me and welcomed me and they have never stopped. They let me take my time and the facilitators helped me out with prompts that were constructive. I would want to try to do more than I had done than the last month. I have grown with every new experience that I have had at WAI and I look forward to many more. I think that because of WAI I am a better person.*

*Jo, conversation group participant*

*I honestly don't know where we would be without the services of WAI. The workshops and conversation groups are invaluable tools. It is so helpful to be able to consult with experts and volunteers who provide coaching with different methods of communication and also point us in the right direction to the many resources that are out there. Sometimes it just helps to know that we are not alone.*

*Monica, caregiver*

*The best part of the workshop was meeting people with aphasia and realizing they have very different experiences with it. Practice with the program participants and support from the clinicians was also very beneficial.*  
**Speech-Language Pathology Student**

*As a Geriatric Medicine Specialist working in the community, I learned valuable new techniques for communicating with my patients who have aphasia from strokes and dementia. I feel more comfortable engaging them in meaningful conversations. I now recommend the workshop and support available from WAI whenever I am aware of communication difficulties. I hope other health care providers will contact WAI to help improve their ability to communicate with people who have aphasia.*

**Dr. Elizabeth Rhynold, MD, FRCPC**

## how you can help

Please email [westmanaphasia@gmail.com](mailto:westmanaphasia@gmail.com) or call us at 204-571-0802 if...

- ... You or someone you know lives with aphasia or is a caregiver and you would like to join our monthly programs.
- ... You want more information about aphasia and how it affects those living with it.
- ... You would like to volunteer with our monthly conversation and caregiver support groups, assist with providing information and awareness about aphasia at community events, or join our Board of Directors.



*WAI is a United Way Brandon and District funded agency, but we also rely on other public and corporate support. If you would like to help, please accept our thanks and send your donation to our mailing address at 100-1300 18th Street, Office 156 Brandon, Mb., R7A 6X7; or by e-transfer to [treasurer.westmanaphasia@gmail.com](mailto:treasurer.westmanaphasia@gmail.com); or via our website at [www.westmanaphasia.ca](http://www.westmanaphasia.ca). Receipts issued for donations \$10 or more.*

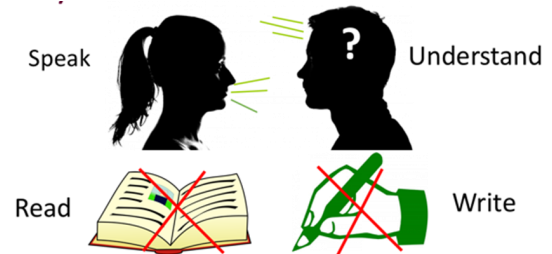
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Communication is much more than words



[www.westmanaphasia.ca](http://www.westmanaphasia.ca)

**Aphasia is a chronic communication disorder often caused by a stroke or dementia. Aphasia can make it difficult to...**



**We can help those living with this disorder, and those who give care (including family, friends and health care providers) to that person**



## about aphasia

### *What is aphasia?*

**Aphasia** is a communication disorder that affects a person's ability to process, use and understand language. It can cause difficulty for the person to talk, comprehend, read, write, and express themselves.

Aphasia can be mild, moderate, or severe. It is an invisible disability and not well known or understood, even by some health care professionals.

### *What causes aphasia?*

Aphasia is caused by damage to the language centre of the brain. Its most common source is stroke, but it can also come from dementia, head injury, brain tumour, or progressive brain disease.

It is estimated that over 35 to 38% of people who suffer a stroke will have some degree of aphasia.

*"Aphasia affects my language...not my intellect."*

Aphasia can mask an individual's ability to express their thoughts or to make even simple decisions. This difficulty to communicate can often lead to depression and social isolation from family and community.

## who we are

**Westman Aphasia Inc. (WAI)** is dedicated to helping meet the needs of individuals who live with aphasia and their caregivers, family, friends, and health care providers.

We do this by...

- ... **Providing specialized training** to those affected by aphasia so they can communicate more effectively.
- ... **Developing resources and delivering support** to help people adapt to living with a chronic communication disorder.
- ... **Educating and informing** the community—including health care professionals—to increase awareness of aphasia, its causes and effects, and available resources and supports.
- ... **Working together with local agencies, educational institutions, and community groups** to further develop aphasia-friendly services in Westman.



WAI is a non-profit, community based, charitable organization led by a volunteer Board of Directors. Our programs and services are delivered by specially trained program clinicians and volunteers.

## our programs

Our two monthly programs offer encouragement and guidance to people whose lives are affected by aphasia. They are also the only programs of their kind offered in Canada west of Toronto.

- **Building Communication Bridges** is a conversation and support group to help those with aphasia further develop and practice their communication skills.
- **Caregiver Support Groups** offer caregivers, family, and friends a forum to talk about specific challenges, including psychosocial issues, that come with caring for and about their loved one.



A *Let's Talk Aphasia* workshop is also offered twice a year to help people understand aphasia and what it means for those who live with it and those who care for them. Workshop participants also learn how to improve their ability to communicate effectively with someone who has aphasia.