

# THE CENTER FOR SPEECH EXCELLENCE

## Aphasia

**Definition:** A collective term referring to a disorder in the ability to express, recognize, or comprehend language or symbols. These types of difficulties are due to brain injury as a result of stroke or head injury.

**Characteristics:** Individuals with aphasia may demonstrate difficulty:

1. Extracting meaning from incoming verbal materials, for example the individual may have difficulty in:
  - understanding long and/or complex messages
  - understanding written material
  - changing tasks and adjusting to new requirements, possibly due to slow transition time, causing the individual to miss the first part of a word or sentence
  - understanding words on the first try (may require repetition of words)
  - understanding the main point
  - understanding all of the information
  - drawing conclusions from information
  
2. Organizing and producing outgoing messages using grammatical and semantic rules of language, for example:
  - Retrieving semantic material from memory
  - Comprehending, manipulating, and producing words
  - Responding in the normal amount of time (delayed response time)
  - Performing well on tasks which utilize few verbal components
  - Giving an incorrect answer, then correcting it
  - Demonstrating progressive deteriorating performance on speech & language tasks
  - Omitting words or sounds or difficulty sequencing the sounds in a word or sentence
  - Substituting incorrect words or sounds for their correct versions
  - Use nongrammatic, nonfluent, slurred or misarticulated speech
  - Having slow and halting speech
  - Using only nouns
  - Having good rhythm and intonation of speech, but it will not make sense
  - Using writing and spelling which contain mirror reversals of letters, errors in letter sequences within words, omission of letters, or syllables, phonetic confusions, and perservation
  - Using written language which is telegraphic, agrammatic, and deficient in meaning
  - Having impaired ability to gesture needs, or to point to words or pictures that represent needs

**Pamela H. Bashor and Associates**

Speech and Hearing Building, Suite 202, 320 Lillington Avenue, Charlotte, NC 28204, 704/375-5231

*Adapted from An Introduction To Aphasia, by R.H. Brookshire and "A Nursing Communication Assessment Guide",  
by Pamela H. Bashor.*

*Fact Sheet compiled by Susan E. Hance, M.S., CCC-SLP*

### **Assistance**

We can offer the following assistance:

- Evaluation of speech and language skills.
- Reports to be shared with family, physicians, caregivers, and others.
- Therapy to focus on strengthening communication skills.
- Others may join therapy to learn strategies for home reinforcement.