

## Aphasia

### **What is Aphasia?**

- Aphasia is a communication disorder that is acquired, meaning it is caused by neurological damage later in life, rather than a communication difficulty that someone is born with.
- The major characteristic of Aphasia is “anomia”, or difficulty with naming or retrieving words.
- No two Aphasia presentations are the same; some persons with aphasia may have extensive difficulty with understanding language, while another person may understand language perfectly but may have difficulty with talking in full sentences.
- Aphasia is often caused by a stroke affecting the language dominant side of the brain (for right handers this is usually the left side, for left handers this is often the right side). Aphasia can also be caused by other degenerative neurological diseases as well as traumatic brain injury.
- Aphasia affects LANGUAGE, not cognition. Some people may have difficulty with some aspects of cognition in addition to having Aphasia, but having Aphasia does NOT mean that a person is any less intelligent.

### **How do we diagnose Aphasia?**

- We use a combination of medical records from doctors, standardized tests (tests that have normative data for typical communicators so we can compare a client’s results and see where weaknesses lie), and language samples.
  - Some standardized test we use include the Western Aphasia Battery, the RIPA-2, and the SCCAN
- We also consult with the client and their family regarding what areas they see as strengths, which they see as weaknesses, and what their functional goals are for therapy.

### **How do we treat Aphasia?**

- There are many evidence-based treatment approaches available for treating Aphasia. As with all of our treatment plans at SLPC, we individualize treatment based on the client’s strengths and weaknesses.
- Treatment may focus on any of the following:
  - Oral Naming
  - Sentence Production
  - Auditory Comprehension
  - Repetition
  - Reading
  - Writing
  - Conversation skills
  - Functional skills



References:

Chapey, R. (2008). Language Intervention Strategies in Aphasia and Related Neurogenic Communication Disorders, 5th ed. Lippincott Williams & Wilkins: Philadelphia.